

“You know, I was honestly expecting a bit more of a fight from a hero like you...”

A quick leap left the concrete ground shattered, as a tan streak leaped across the deserted city street. Kerrilian wasn't the fastest, but his super strength sure left a trail of destruction when he landed a blow. Before him stood a tall lynx, chuckling at the predicament the lion hero was in.

“You seriously don't stand a chance...”

Pooling his strength, he quickly lunged forward and put his fist right through her. However, instead of finding contact, his target dissipated in an electric cloud. Kerrilian sighed, stamping a foot to the ground in frustration while cracking more of the concrete. All around him stood more copies of the lynx, her pink gloves glowing bright as she snapped her fingers. In an instant, all the copies disappeared before a voice sounded as if in his own head.

“You *want* to give in...”

The street disappeared from his vision, a swath of pink and black assaulting his vision like a psychedelic trip. Each second sapped his energy, the lynx's words echoing in his head as he tried to close his eyes. A pair of eyes the size of the hero materialized before him, pink irises staring into his core.

“I can make you see whatever I want, believe whatever I say...”

The lion's eyes opened wide, transfixed by the swirling display before him. His power was draining as his muscles relaxed slightly, leaning forward and falling into the lynx's gaze. He fell to his knees, resting both of his hands on the ground in an attempt to steady himself.

“I... I can't let you win...” He muttered, his eyelids shuttering as he tried to put up his best defense. He felt a gloved finger lift his chin, before another snap from her fingers left his eyes wide and waiting for the visual display before him. The lynx materialized before him, her finger already on his chin as if she was there the whole time.

“Oh, I think it's a little too late for that. I had won the second you tried to take me on, sweetheart!” She said with a smile, her voice dripping with seduction as she waved her hand before Kerrilian's face. His once turquoise eyes adopted a pink glow, his jaw dropping as she released it from her grip.

“Much more agreeable, wouldn't you say?” the lynx teased with a laugh, knowing full well what was going through the lion's head.

“Y... yes, ma'am...” came the soft reply, the hero's eyes shining with a growing devotion towards the villain before him. Her hand brushed through his hair, Kerr pushing his head into her touch adoringly.

“You are in *love* with me...” the lynx said with a giggle, testing just how far her thought pushing powers could affect the poor hero.

“I am in love with you...” the lion droned. Every word the lynx said seemed to give his mind a wipe, pulling his desires into something more favorable to the villain. On top of the illusions her technology created, her words seemed to drill directly into his soul.

“You are *helpless* before me...”

Like clockwork, the lynx heard the lion mindlessly repeat her statement. Her words were rewriting his mind, until there would be nothing left but her own desires. The only thing left was to tell him his place.

“You desire to *obey* me, and therefore, you are my *slave*...” As the final word left her mouth, she could almost hear the hero’s mind breaking for good. He repeated her words on command, his mind an empty slate for her to mold as she wished. She brought him to his feet, the hero draped over her arm lovingly as she dragged him off. The lynx flicked a small device from her glove, a small projector that found itself lodged in the cracks left from the previous battle. A scribbled insignia, it’s text intertwined with pink glow.

“Purr-Ception”

Two Days Later

Flashing lights and yellow tape surrounded the decimated city street, small craters dotting every meter on the block. Investigators and police covered the area, taking samples and running tests to find out what exactly had taken place. One policeman lifted the yellow tape, admitting a leopard draped in blue dress to enter the scene. Ash wasn’t much of a fighting hero, but solving puzzling scenarios like this was why his hero group depended on him. Pressing a finger to his mask, his visor screen lit up with its standard holographic display. A sonic pulse was emitted from the leopards hand, mapping the scene and all of the destruction for analysis. Before walking further into the debris, he turned back to the wolf who had let him on site.

“You sure this was a fight?” he asked, “All the damage here is marked by only one impact signature.” His analysis software had completed its scan and had quickly returned the only result from the hero databases that could match the craters’ shape and severity: Kerrilian.

“Still unsure, but I don’t think this much damage would be done by a hero having fun. Sadly there were no bystanders who had an easy view but we did have reports of flashes of light from this block two days back. Hence why we started looking into it,” the wolf replied. Straightening his overcoat, he lowered the caution tape back to its original position. “Besides, I am sure you’ll figure out a lot more than some of the novices in the academy that they brought along today.”

Ash gave a nod, turning back and stepping over the first few meters of cracked concrete. Thankfully the investigation crews had already covered this area and were off about thirty meters down the street near one of the largest dents in the road. He crouched, putting a hand to the ground and activated his visor a second time. While there may be no physical bystanders, there may be stationary cameras around the area he could catch a view from, or even catch wind of a mobile device that was around the block during the night of the disturbance. Invisible to all but the leopard, a trail weaved out from under his fingers, snaking through a few craters until it dipped below a small crack in the sidewalk.

“I knew it!”

The hero sprang to his feet and stepped carefully over the markers the investigators laid out.. Reaching the end of the trail, he dug his finger into the crack and pulled out a small device. A small projector, equipped with a now dead battery and a microcamera. The leopard eyed it up between his fingers, before using his suit to route a path of electric flow for remote charging. If he could get this device up and running, he should be able to scour its contents for details that would aid the current case. With the path in place, Ash pressed the device to his knuckle to

administer a small bit of charge. The projector immediately came online, its bright light flashing in the hero's face as he quickly pointed it towards the ground.

"Purr-Ception," it read, a shade of pink intersecting with the black font.

"That's nothing Kerr's ever said, so it must have been a fight after all," the leopard said aloud. He abruptly shifted his focus, using his tech powers to break into the machine's data. First came the image projected, a simple .png that would be shot out the projector's lens. Then came the more important bits. No saved recordings, there was not enough storage on the device to hold much more than the image. However, with the battery charged, there was a new process running. Some sort of video streaming packets were quickly being sent off device through a private network. It was no problem for the leopard to quickly splice his way through the security in order to get a look at the content being passed along. In the upper right corner of his display, he opened a video tab to pull the information in real time, only to be met with a live image of himself.

"I wonder who is getting the opportunity to stare at my lovely mug? Whoever you are, I hope you're a big fan, because chances are I won't be so easygoing when I dig up where you're hiding!" he finished with a wink. Having had enough time to follow the data to its source, he quickly saved the information and used his new on-device privileges to end the stream of content. Walking past the police wolf on his way off site, Ash pressed the device into the wolf's hand.

"Let your academy boys know they need to learn to dig a little deeper," he said with a sly smirk.

The display cut to fuzz as the video stream was ended. The pink clad lynx sighed, leaning back in her plush chair and resting her cheek on the palm of her hand.

"That one seems fun, you know him?" she asked aloud. On cue, Kerrilian stepped into the room, a glass of wine in hand.

"Yes, he's one of higher ranking members of the network, Mistress Zaide. I could pull up his file for you if you'd like!" he said with a smile, his glowing pink eyes shimmering as he placed the glass on the small table beside her. Like a trained dog, he was quick to try and appease his owner, stepping behind her to get a grip on her shoulders for a quick massage.

Zaide smirked, leaning into the remarkably tender touch of her new super-strengthened possession. "Good boy, and I'd very much like that file. I think this one would make an excellent addition..."

It didn't take long for the leopard hero to track down the physical destination of the signal. A renovated indoor skatepark inside a warehouse in the dockyards was easy to make out from the information he had gathered. The area was a newly uplifted district of the city since the waterfront properties had risen in price. A few fancy shops, brand new sidewalks, it was sure to soon have it all.

"Good thing that fight didn't happen here," Ash said with a snicker, imagining how well a super-strength hero punch would go over in the frozen yogurt shop he sat atop. Right across the street, he peered through the windows of the warehouse. Nothing too out of the ordinary, except for the fact that for the past two hours, he hasn't seen a single person enter or exit the building,

despite the hours listed online placing him in peak business hours. The leopard leapt from rooftop to rooftop, quickly traversing the connecting decorations that hung above the street. He slipped through a third story window, finding his footing on hard tile.

The lights were low and no sound came from any direction in the hallway he found himself in. Ash powered up his visor, using his abilities to create a map of the technological connections throughout the warehouse. Thankfully, his command of technology usually meant he could never get lost when infiltrating an enemy's base. As his tech pulse surged outward, his holo display showed a rough overview of the structure. From the looks of it, it wasn't a skatepark at all. A central chamber took up much of the space, with small stacking rings of hallways and observation decks. Ash slid his way to one of the doorways, opening the door slowly and slipping into the empty room. A glass window faced the interior chamber, showing a room bathed with bright pink light.. Towards the north side sat a set of furniture: A plush chair, end tables, with a desk and monitor facing them. The hero hunkered down as a lynx woman walked through the adjacent doorway, jumping softly onto the central seat to relax. Buzzing sounded above him, a PA system coming online. Over the system a female voice came through.

"You can just take the stairs and come say hi, hero."

The lights flashed on in the observation room, and Ash stood up to look through the window. Sure enough, the lynx was staring right at him. She beckoned, curling a finger before raising a mic to her mouth.

"Stairs are on the south side, sweetheart."

Ash quickly pulsed the building again, sensing that there were only two mobile devices within the perimeter. So long as someone wasn't walking around without any tech on them, there wouldn't be any traps laid. He made his way to the steps, descending the stairwell to arrive through the main chamber's first floor's entrance.. Across the room, the lynx sat with her legs kicked up, obviously enjoying herself. Ash stepped cautiously towards the furnished corner, his open paws feeling the cold, slick tiling beneath him.

"Care to explain yourself? I am assuming you're this... Purr-Ception? Fancy little device you left at the scene, don't see many calling cards these days," the leopard said, propping a hand on his hip and pulling the device from his pocket. He tossed it towards the villain, who raised a hand with lightning fast reflexes to snag it from the air. The leopard could see glowing pink wires run along the length of her gloves, as she crushed the device with a pinch.

"They do their purpose, apparently. After all, it got you here, didn't it?" she laughed, snapping her fingers. A lion boy walked from the nearby doorway, full hero suit but with a new pink makeover. "I'm sure you were wondering where your hero friend went, right?"

Kerrilian knelt before the lynx, her larger stature apparent despite both knowing the lion had much more strength than both Ash and the lynx combined. She brushed her gloved fingers through his hair, patting his head with a tender touch. "He's done a great job telling me all about you, but I am sure he can tell you all about himself as well. Isn't that right, hero pet?"

Ash watched in shock as his fellow hero subjected himself before the villain. The lion leaned into her touch, his headstrong attitude clearly tamed. His voice was light and airy, as if his very being was drained from him.

"I am Mistress Zaide's obedient hero pet..." he droned, his pink eyes alight in affirmation.

“What the hell did you do to him?” the leopard asked, his visor analyzing the scene in front of him. Sure enough, it was the same Kerrilian he knew, no smoke and mirrors to make it seem so.

“Oh, he’s just completely *smitten*,” she teased, drawing a heart in the air while leaving a pink trail. “Although that’s true, I also brainwashed him, duh. Same thing I am going to do to you.”

‘Tech illusions...’ the leopard thought, putting two and two together on how she was able to leave traces behind. If he could target her gloves and shut them off, he may not be able to free Kerrilian right away but he would at least lessen the threat to himself. Unknown to the villain, he was rather quick at worming his way into technology. In almost an instant, the glow of her gloves flickered, before extinguishing.

“Well, you’re gonna have to try without your tech enhancements, which judging by my analysis is all you have,” Ash chided, smirking wide. Out of all the city’s villains, he finally ran into one that he could shut down with a single thought.

“Knew it wasn’t going to be easy, which is why it’s great to have a puppet to do that hard work for me. Care to water down this pest for me, sweetheart?” Zaide said, taking her hand off the head of the super-strengthened hero. The lion got to his feet, his eyes still glowing despite the removal of power to Zaide’s gloves.

“Anything for you, Mistress Zaide...”

Kerr stepped menacingly towards the leopard hero, with the lynx smiling wide on her makeshift throne behind. Ash could already feel the power in his form. Despite the mind wipe, he still carried the same headstrong attitude and stance as his hero self.

“Hey pal, it’s probably best you think this one through first, yeah?” Ash stalled, quickly running through the holo display for whatever information he could pull from the hero group data records. ‘I don’t know why I didn’t expect that outcome, considering the circumstances,’ he thought. There was no chance he could take Kerr on in a battle of pure strength, so he had to improvise something quick.

The PA system buzzed to life again, and Ash could see that Zaide already had the mic to her lips.

“He only thinks what I tell him to, bargaining ain’t gonna help you much!” she laughed.

Thankfully, the data requested came right as the first punch was thrown. Ash leaned back and rolled as a super powered punch sailed right through the space his head had just been. His info lined up as well. Kerrilian was headstrong and offensive, and Ash had to do his best to tire him out. A dodge right, followed by a dodge left, all the while the leopard cooked up a plan. One close call after another, followed by the fur of Kerrilians arm brushing the blue sheen of Ash’s tech-fiber suit.

‘Wait, I can use this!’ the leopard realized, chipping off a piece of his gauntlet. While his outfit was part of his tech for the purpose of camouflage and density shifting to tank hard blows, he could perhaps utilize parts of the shape-shifting mesh to create a stasis field around his foe. The next punch Kerrilian threw, the leopard was sure to wrap a bracelet shape around the lion’s left wrist. The fabric dangled as it was torn from Ash’s grip, but with some mental direction was able to fully encircle itself on the lion. The leopard’s weary footwork felt invigorated, as he caught a second wind. A low punch left the leopard riding along the lions back, flipping up high

and landing behind the brainwashed hero in a three point landing. Ash tilted his head up, pleased to see he had wrapped another strand around the lion's neck like a collar. It seemed as though Kerrilian's headstrong nature prevented him from recognizing the foreign material as part of Ash's plan, as he merely stepped forward again to deliver blow after blow. A right jab resulted in another circlet, a sliding dodge added one to Kerr's right leg. It was apparent the hero puppet was getting frustrated, as each lunge and attack was more desperate than the last. Ash used this to his advantage, rolling out of an exasperated combination attack to leave the final strip along Kerrilian's left ankle.

Sliding back, Ash took a second to catch his breath. His energy was surely depleted, but he just had to pull out one more attack to trigger the paralysis.

"What's the matter, Kerr? Too slow?" the leopard taunted, as the lion readied both fists in a fiery rage. Instead of trying to punch, the lion reached for Ash, much to his surprise. The bearhug, or lionhug in this case, wrapped Ash up in a hurry. While the density shifting fabric on Ash's outfit adjusted to handle the force wrap, it slowly gave his planted strips enough energy to do its work.

"P... Please kick in already..." the leopard heaved, feeling his own energy supply in the outfit wearing out. Sure enough, a hissing sound leaked from the lion's new cuffs, as the pressure around Ash's body subsided. The leopard hero's fur stood on end as the static field loosened the muscles of the villain's puppet. He stepped forward, the arms giving way as the lion's body was frozen still.

"Sorry pal, we'll get ya undone here in a second, promise" Ash said, taking a deep breath and giving a slight double tap on Kerrilian's cheek with his hand.

"Oh good, I like it when I get a smart one," Zaide teased, standing up from her perch. Her stature was much more menacing than Ash had perceived before. The lynx was easily over six foot tall, with a fit body that easily put even the hero to shame. She brushed her braid from her shoulder, cracking her knuckles in her now power-sapped gloves.

"You can just give up now, I already blocked all power to those gloves of yours," the hero started, trying to hide his exhaustion. Even without powers, he had a feeling that this fight was going to be a lot faster paced than the previous.

"Even though you stripped *all* I got, I don't give up so easily," Zaide teased back, pulling her gloves tight before stepping out onto the open floor. "*After all, you'll still be kneeling before me by the end of this...*"

Ash shrugged, shaking his head as he tried to summon as much energy as he could. He leaped forward, throwing a blow by the lynx's cheek. In a flash she was no longer there, a sidestep that left the leopard overexposed. Despite the exposure, Zaide didn't capitalize.

"That all you got? It's almost as if *you want to be my brainwashed slave.*"

Ash grunted, swapping to the defensive as the rapid lynx sent blow after blow into his density tech suit. He retreated unscathed, but more and more energy was spent by the leopard to recharge the dwindling reserves of the suit. He tried to compose himself, but he struggled to find the inner reserves to build his physical resistance. It was almost as if the lynx was targeting his suit, but he couldn't quite place a reason for it. Another barrage, another recharge from his reserves to the suit. Physically he was exhausted, but nearly every punch was seemingly thrown without the attempt to harm him.

Zaide giggled casually. "It's not hard to see that you're dwindling your reserves to keep that cushioning up, 'Strings.' *I know all your tricks.*"

The leopard crouched, using the time to catch his breath with his hands to the ground. He shook his head in slight confusion. 'Something isn't right...' he thought. Many of the villain's words echoed in his head, causing a noise that was growing too loud to be ignored. It was as if a switch was flipped, causing distractions that took away from his ability to fight back.

Ash inhaled deeply, knowing full well that his reserves were used up. He met the eyes of the smiling lynx, only to be surprised once more. Instead of plain black gloves, a glow was building in the data strands that ran from base to finger. The lynx laughed evilly, taking a step towards the leopard.

"Seems you're so distracted that you forgot about something important. *You're ready to give up.*"

The gauntlets reached maximum charge as Zaide pressed a glowing finger to the leopard's forehead.

It was as if Ash was falling, the floor dropping out from below him despite not feeling the rush of wind through his fur. He 'landed' in an empty, grey room. The walls erupted into psychedelic swirls, a mix of pink luster and black expanses that caught the eyes of the leopard. His mask was gone, his energy sapped. He couldn't sense the villain's tech to shut it off if he wanted.

"I know this isn't real," he shouted, his voice echoing in the dark chamber. The lynx was nowhere to be seen, but he could still sense her presence.

"*Anything is as real as I dictate,*" came a response from behind him. He twisted around, but was met with the same swirls that painted every wall of his enclosure. The leopard managed to get to his feet, putting his arms out to get a feel for his fake surroundings.

It didn't last long, however. An object dropped from above, a reflective panel that pounded the floor in front of the leopard. In his reflection, he could see himself, but something was different. He was dressed in a black suit with pink highlights, his eyes blazing a bright pink to match.

"*The best version of you is obedient to me...*" came the words. The white noise in his mind was starting to fade. No, it was the white noise that was becoming more pronounced. Instead of drowning out all else, it was silencing it. The leopard looked down, relieved to see that he was still in blue. But just out of sight, the upper parts of his scarf had started fading in hue. Another object dropped, meeting the other mirror at a perfect right angle. Again, it mirrored his movements but in a corrupted version of his outfit.

"*The best version of you is obedient to me...*"

The words weren't coming from his surroundings anymore, it was as if they were sounding in his own head. Ash's legs shook as he tried to turn away from the mirror. Another joined the display, commanding his vision from multiple sides now.

"*The best version of you is obedient to me...*"

Without time to react, a final pane dropped into the missing slot, pinning the hero in a box of reflections. His mind was swimming, the words taking root as the visions before him only cemented the reality Zaide presented.

“The... the...” he stuttered as his jaw went slack. The reflections started closing in, the hero unable to look away as his new truth moved upon him. He looked down, turning his hands before his eyes he saw his upper uniform was black and pink. As the mirrors closed in further, he closed his eyes in a last ditch effort to fight back against her words. There was no sensation of touch as the mirrors passed over him, instead, it was a sensation of clarity.

“The best version of me is obedient to you.”

The leopard’s eyes opened, before him was a vast white expanse. The voices had gone quiet, as if they were the provider of his clarity. A pair of pink eyes appeared before him, sending waves of awe through his body. The eyes were immediately joined by a smile, and finally by the lynx in full. However, this time, her stature was much more imposing. She was larger than life, her eyes the size of the hero like a man to a mouse. But what the hero felt wasn’t fear. He felt adoration, devotion, submission to the being before him. Her hand reached out, gripping him all around like an action figure, a plaything.

“My words write your reality. My illusions write your dreams”

Every word was etched to Ash’s mind, as the goddess before him smiled evilly at the toy in her hand. He could feel every touch, every breath of her voice blowing wind through the fur on his cheeks. Ash leaned forward, enamored by the awe inspiring power of his controller, his Mistress, his Goddess. His hands pressed down to her fingers, trying to get the best look he could on her image.

“You long to be my slave”

SNAP

Ash’s eyes fizzed with pink glow, overrunning his natural brown eyes with ease. While the massive visage of Zaide ceased to exist, before him stood the object of his desire. The lynx stood posed, her right arm outstretched towards him, pink wires of her gloves glowing bright as she smiled wide.

“And what is your purpose, my lovely hero?” she teased, stepping forward to lift his chin to meet her gaze.

“To obey you, Mistress Zaide!” the leopard responded, his tongue almost drooping from his mouth in pure bliss.

“Good boy. Let’s get your friend untangled and get you right up to speed on that command!”