

(Every character depicted in the story below is a consenting legal adult over the age of 18)

A/N: The brother.

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Cameron hated hospitals. There was just something about them that rubbed him the wrong way. The sterility combined with the certainty that innumerable people had died within its wall.

But at the same time, he can't help being at least a little grateful for the work going into keeping his brother breathing. As he steps into his brother's private hospital room, completely paid for with Felicia's money, he makes his way over to the bedside and sits down with a heavy sigh.

"... Hey Brandon."

His brother doesn't answer him, of course. The only thing that does answer him is the steady beeping of the life support that's keeping Brandon alive in his coma. All of the machines, all of the equipment... seeing Brandon in this state, so diminished... it makes Cameron sad. More than sad though, it makes Cameron angry.

Brandon was the older brother, if only by a couple of years, and he'd always acted like it too. Shielding Cameron as best as possible from their piece of shit old man, protecting him with every fiber of his being. And when their father had kicked the bucket, they'd even seen a glimpse of what the world could be like without him. They'd made it out, they'd felt the sun shining on their faces for just a moment.

And then Brandon had gotten sick... and there didn't seem to be anything the doctors could do for him. Even now they said he was living on borrowed time. This coma would prolong his life, sure, but the longer it lasted, the more he would degenerate. Even if he came out of the coma today, there was a chance he wouldn't be cognizant or the brother that Cameron remembered.

But Cameron doesn't dwell on that. Instead, reaching out, he slips his fingers through Brandon's, holding his brother's hand and smiling crookedly.

"Things have been going pretty good. I've been working hard... for us. Though I guess she's right in a way... I could have just flubbed that final test if I really wanted to."

If he'd failed Felicia's last test for him, then everything might have stayed the same. Like she'd said, she probably wouldn't have kicked him to the streets. She would have continued training him, she would have continued paying Brandon's hospital bills. After all, six months was... an insanely short amount of time for Cameron to reach the point where the Black Cat of all people thought he was ready to join her on a proper heist.

Cameron knew his progress was nothing short of prodigious. He knew that he had a knack for this life he'd found himself drawn into. And he knew... he knew deep down that Felicia was right. He liked it. Stealing for the sake of stealing. Even if that made him a bad person, he couldn't quite help it. All he could really do was try and channel his talents in a somewhat productive manner.

"You know that woman I told you about? Well... we're kind of a thing now. Even if I don't really know how to describe it in 'relationship terms'."

It definitely wasn't anything so serious as a proper relationship, Cameron didn't think. He and Felicia had fucked multiple times since that first time last week, and he'd managed to pull that B minus up to an A just like she'd suggested, but other than that... he could tell she was keeping some sort of distance between them. That was fine by him, or so he told himself.

"We'll be going tomorrow night, Brandon. My first chance in six months to achieve something real. I'll be paying for this place myself in no time, so long as I don't mess it up."

Of course, he and Felicia wouldn't be stealing from some rich asshole who deserved it. They'd be stealing from a museum. However, Cameron had done

his research. All of the most valuable things that Felicia would no doubt want them to take from the museum were owned by private collections and loaned out.

Put simply... even now they *were* stealing from rich assholes, even if the insurance would probably be the ones paying for the thefts at the end of the day.

Leaning back in his chair, Cameron looks around the sterile hospital room.

“Maybe I’ll grab something nice for you, bro. Spruce the place up a bit.”

He chuckles weakly at his own dumb joke, since obviously he’s not about to leave something stolen from a museum anywhere that it can be found. And then, as the chuckle fades, Cameron’s face scrunches up as grief overwhelms him.

Because... deep down inside, he knows the chances of Brandon ever waking up are next to nothing. And even if he can scrounge up the funds to have some of those experimental procedures performed on his comatose brother, even if one of them works and Brandon does wake up... the likelihood of him getting better from there is... still close to zero.

Its not fair. They live in a world where the fucking God of Thunder, Thor, joins the Avengers and fights against big bad threats like fucking Thanos on a regular basis. They live in a world where immortality is a thing, where resurrection exists, where people get healed and live forever and come back to life all the damn time.

But they also live in a world where those things are incredibly rare and unbelievably scarce. A world where the insurance companies still have a stranglehold on the healthcare industry, at least in America. A world where the little guy, someone like Brandon, simply... falls through the cracks.

Cameron had never really fooled himself into thinking he or his brother were anything special. They were nobodies in a world ran by somebodies. But

Brandon was a somebody to Cameron. More than a somebody... he was Cameron's entire world.

Letting him rot... wasn't acceptable. And as much as Felicia might want Cameron to embrace the thieving lifestyle, to admit that he liked stealing for the sake of stealing... he didn't see why both things couldn't be true. He could enjoy the thrill of theft... while also using his talent to save his brother.

Leaning forward again, Cameron's voice is a whisper as he stares at his brother's drawn, pale face.

"I'm not giving up on you, Brandon. No matter what it takes, no matter what I have to do... I'll find a way to save you."

Magic existed. Technology so advanced it might as well be magic existed. All Cameron had to do... was find a way to steal it. Using the skills Felicia had taught him, Cameron could steal his way to Brandon's cure. He was sure of it.

But first...

"I've got to go. Preparations and all that. I'll be back soon though. I swear it."

He rises from the chair and spares Brandon one last glance before stepping out of the room. They had a heist to pull off.

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The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Otherwise known as 'The Met'. The fourth largest museum in the world, and the largest art museum in America. And now... the latest target of the Black Cat and her grasping claws. Not that this would be the first time Black Cat had robbed the Met, from what Cameron knew. It would just be the first time she'd robbed it with *him*.

"Ready, Mouse?"

Cameron sighs.

“Please don’t call me that.”

Felicia giggles as they both crouch on a rooftop looking out at the world-famous museum.

“What? I dropped the little, didn’t I? Especially after I found out it wasn’t accurate~”

Cameron rolls his eyes. He bites back the urge to demand that she take this seriously, knowing full well that Felicia will just laugh at him. The banter and flirting is no sign that she’s *not* taking this seriously, after all. It’s just her personality.

Still, the last thing Cameron wanted to do was be saddled with a name like ‘Mouse’ or any other variation. He’d spent the past week trying to think of something better and while he had a couple of ideas in the running, he hadn’t quite settled on anything yet.

Nor did he need to given that tonight was going to go *smoothly* and there would be no reason for a callsign for him to become public knowledge. With that in mind...

“Let’s get going, yeah?”

Felicia hums approvingly.

“So very eager... yes, let’s~”

Together, they make their way over to the Met. Getting on the museum’s roof unseen is only a little challenging, slipping through a handful of the museum’s outward security layers. However, Cameron knows this is just the easy part.

The hard part is inside of the building, where the museum’s security gets thicker and more powerful the deeper you go. Especially this late at night when they

don't have to worry about any visitors and can turn on all of the disparate measures they have to protect their priceless paintings and artifacts.

But... Cameron has been training for this. Specifically, he's been training for this heist in particular the last month or two, ever since Felicia first decided she wanted to rob the place. Sure, he also had to put a lot of his attention towards making sure he passed her final test to be able to come along in the first place, but splitting his focus had been simple enough.

Meanwhile, this past week had been all about planning for the heist... when Felicia wasn't riding him raw, anyways. Setting *that* aside however, Cameron felt prepared. He felt like he knew the Met better than he knew himself at this point.

Together, he and Felicia slip in through the roof access, making their way deeper into the massive museum. Felicia leads the way of course, having a specific prize in mind. Cameron follows after her, keeping his head on a swivel, looking out for any sign that they might have tripped a silent alarm or been made.

They dodge around security patrols, they slip past cameras, and they trick motion detectors into letting them get by without setting anything off. Until eventually, they're standing in front of the Metropolitan's Egyptian Exhibit... and a small statuette of a cat with bejeweled eyes.

"There she is... isn't she beautiful?"

Cameron snorts in amusement at Felicia's breathless tone. To be fair, everyone in the world knew that Black Cat had a thing for stealing cat-themed valuables above all else. Not that she often went out of her way for it like she was now, but if you had something vaguely cat-shaped that was worth a lot of money, it was a lot more likely to be snatched, that was for sure.

Honestly, it left him wondering what they were thinking, showing this statuette off in Felicia's backyard like this. It was like they were *asking* for it to be stolen. Hell, the moment Felicia had heard it was here for the next few months, she'd started planning this heist.

Stepping forward with a languid stride, Felicia hums as she moves around the pedestal that the statuette is on for a moment. The gem-encrusted carved cat is of course in a glass case... but that's no match for Felicia, who simply brings out her claws and places them against the glass before doing a quick twist with her wrist.

An almost flawless circle of cut glass pops out and drops into Felicia's waiting hand, allowing her to reach into the case and wrap her other hand around the statuette. With a wide grin of triumph on her face, she pulls the cat out and lifts it up to get a proper look at it.

"Such a gorgeous piece~"

Cameron is just about to tease her about it, while also reminding her that they should keep moving... when everything goes to shit.

A web suddenly wraps around the statuette and promptly rips it out of Felicia's hands, yanking it across the room in a flash. Both Felicia and Cameron whip around and look up at the corner of the large room, where the shadows seem a tad darker than they should. Until ultimately, they coalesce into a person as the one hiding in them leans forward into the light.

"Ghost-Spider."

Cameron is taken aback by the sheer vitriol in Felicia's voice as she calls out their assailant's moniker. And indeed, it is Ghost-Spider. Upper white, lower black, with pink stylings... he'd been hearing a lot more about Ghost-Spider in the news ever since Spider-Man had taken a step back and only really made appearances for the truly serious stuff.

Even still, he didn't fully understand why Felicia sounded so *angry*.

"Still trying to take things that don't belong to you, eh Black Cat?"

Ghost-Spider disengages from the wall and does a flip, landing smoothly on the ground below in a crouch before rising to her feet. She looks at the statuette now in *her* hand for a moment before looking back to Felicia and tilting her head to the side.

“Aren’t you getting a little *old* for this?”

Oh wow. She just went there. That was impressively catty for an arachnid. Of course, Felicia bristles angrily, a low hiss leaving her lips. At the same time though, Ghost-Spider turns her head towards him... and snorts derisively.

“I guess you are if you need a helper these days. What’s he here for? In case you fall and can’t get up or something?”

“I’m fucking thirty you little brat!”

“Ok boomer.”

Holy shit, the animosity was off the charts. Cameron could feel Felicia’s anger wafting off of her, could sense how derisively dismissive Ghost-Spider was of his mentor. They didn’t have anything close to the relationship that Black Cat and Spider-Man were purported to have.

Ghost-Spider shows her continued lack of reverence and respect for Felicia by continuing to focus on Cameron too.

“Who are you even supposed to be, exactly? Smitten Kitten? Puss in Cahoots?”

Oh she had jokes. This little bitch... though also, Cameron realizes in that moment that he’s suddenly stuck between a rock and a hard place. No, not the fact that they’re being stared down by an honest to god superhero with superpowers. That was one thing.

No, it was the fact that he was suddenly about to be named in front of said superhero, who would inevitably spread the name to everyone else. If he let Felicia call him Mouse, that would be it... rebranding from there would be hell.

But damn it, he wasn't ready! He would just have to pick something at this point and stick with it!

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A/N: Remember to Vote, leave a Like, and let me know what you think!