





YEAH, WE'D BEEN WAITING A LONG TIME FOR SAME-SEX MARRIAGE TO BE LEGALIZED. WHEN WE HEARD THE NEWS, TYSON AND I EVEN RAISED A GLASS.

BUT UNTIL CHARR GETS BACK SAFE, WE'RE PUTTING ALL THAT ON HOLD.



THIS ISN'T THE SAME AS JUST COMING OUT.

TYSON AND I KNOW THAT.

THERE'LL BE PEOPLE WHO WON'T ACCEPT A RELATIONSHIP LIKE THIS. SOME OF OUR RELATIVES, TOO.



I WANTED TO TELL YOU GUYS ABOUT THIS SOONER.

BUT...

I DIDN'T HAVE THE GUTS TO.



TO BE HONEST...

WHAT WORRIED ME MOST WAS WHETHER YOU TWO WOULD ACCEPT US.

SO...

YOU IDIOT...



IN THIS FUCKED-UP
WORLD, FINDING
SOMEONE SPECIAL'S
DAMN NEAR A MIRACLE.

AND YOU GOT
LUCKY ENOUGH TO
FIND TWO.

SHOULD'VE
TOLD US
RIGHT AWAY.



STILL, LANDING
BOTH OF THOSE
GUYS AT ONCE...

MOST PEOPLE
WOULD HAVE THEIR
PAWS FULL WITH
JUST ONE.

HELL, THAT'S
SOMETHING YOU
OUGHTA BRAG
ABOUT.



BESIDES, WE'RE
ALREADY USED TO
YOU SURPRISING
US.

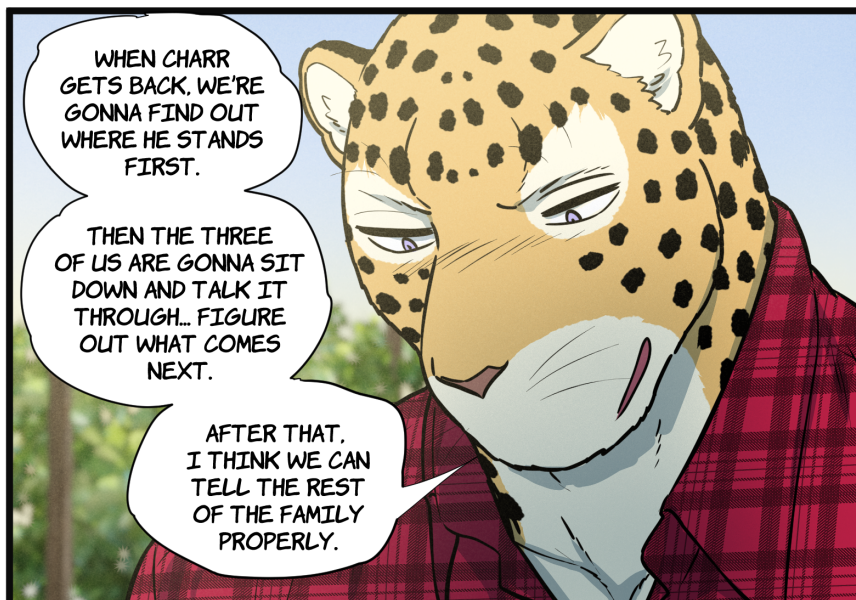
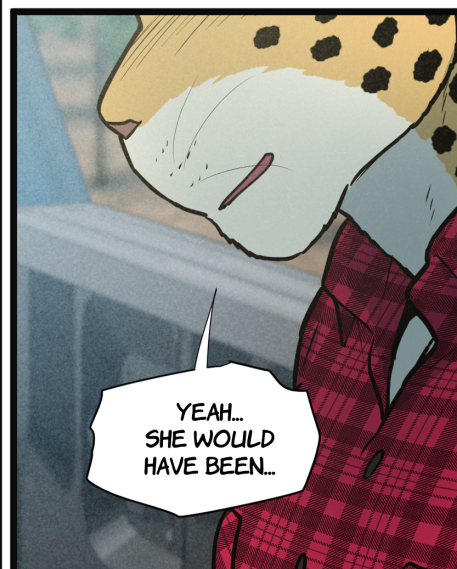
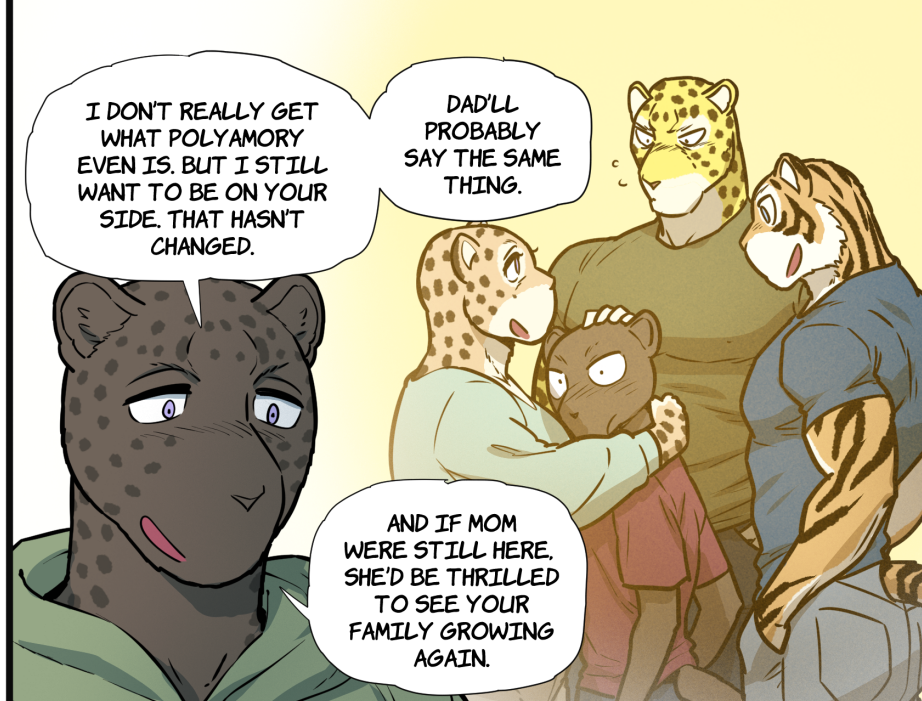
ONCE
CHARR'S BACK,
TELL THE REST
OF THE FAMILY.
WE'VE GOT
YOUR BACK.











ONE YEAR LATER—
AUTUMN, TWO YEARS
AFTER CHARR LEFT.

ANOTHER ONE...

WHAT
IS IT?

THE EMAIL
I SENT CHARR
BOUNCED AGAIN.

SAID IT
COULDN'T
CONNECT TO
THE SERVER.

EVEN THE LETTER
COAL AND ELIAS SENT
A FEW WEEKS AGO
CAME BACK MARKED
"UNDELIVERABLE."

I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT
TO TELL THEM, SO
I STILL HAVEN'T
SAID ANYTHING.

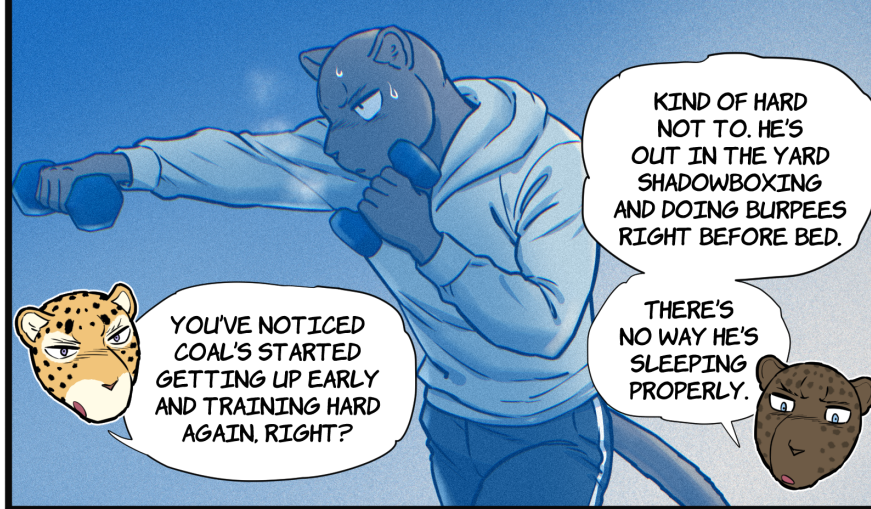
I CALLED THE FRG*
AND ASKED AROUND.
TOO...

BUT IT SOUNDS
LIKE NOBODY
KNOWS ANYTHING
YET.

IT'S BEEN TWO
MONTHS SINCE WE
LAST HEARD FROM
HIM... RIGHT?

AROUND WHEN
WE SENT HIM THOSE
CAMPING PHOTOS.

*FRG (FAMILY READINESS GROUP):
A SUPPORT NETWORK FOR MILITARY FAMILIES.



YOU'VE NOTICED COAL'S STARTED GETTING UP EARLY AND TRAINING HARD AGAIN, RIGHT?

KIND OF HARD NOT TO. HE'S OUT IN THE YARD SHADOWBOXING AND DOING BURPEES RIGHT BEFORE BED.

THERE'S NO WAY HE'S SLEEPING PROPERLY.



AND THAT'S BECAUSE OF HIM...

CHARR HAD HIM TRAINING LIKE A DAMN SOLDIER WHEN HE WAS STILL LITTLE.



HE WAS LIKE THAT RIGHT AFTER CHARR AND ALEX LEFT, TOO.

TOOK HIM A WHILE TO SETTLE DOWN ENOUGH TO EASE OFF.

HE'S SLIPPING RIGHT BACK.



WHAT WE TEACH THE KIDS IS HOW TO PROTECT THEMSELVES.

IT'S NOT JUST TECHNIQUE. IT'S ABOUT LEARNING TO STEADY YOURSELF AND GROW UP RIGHT.

WHAT CHARR TAUGHT COAL WAS BATTLEFIELD SHIT— HIT FIRST OR GET HIT.

THAT'S NOT SOMETHING YOU DRILL INTO A KID.



WELL...

IN HIS OWN WAY, HE WAS PROBABLY TRYING TO TEACH COAL HOW TO SURVIVE.

I KNOW. I KNOW, BUT...



YOU REMEMBER WHAT CHARR SAID, RIGHT? THAT HE JOINED UP TO CLEAR THE FAMILY NAME.

TO THROW AWAY YOUR BODY AND YOUR WHOLE LIFE FOR SOMETHING LIKE THAT... AND NOW WE DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE HE IS OR WHAT'S HAPPENED TO HIM...

HOW IS THIS SITUATION ANYTHING BUT INSANE?

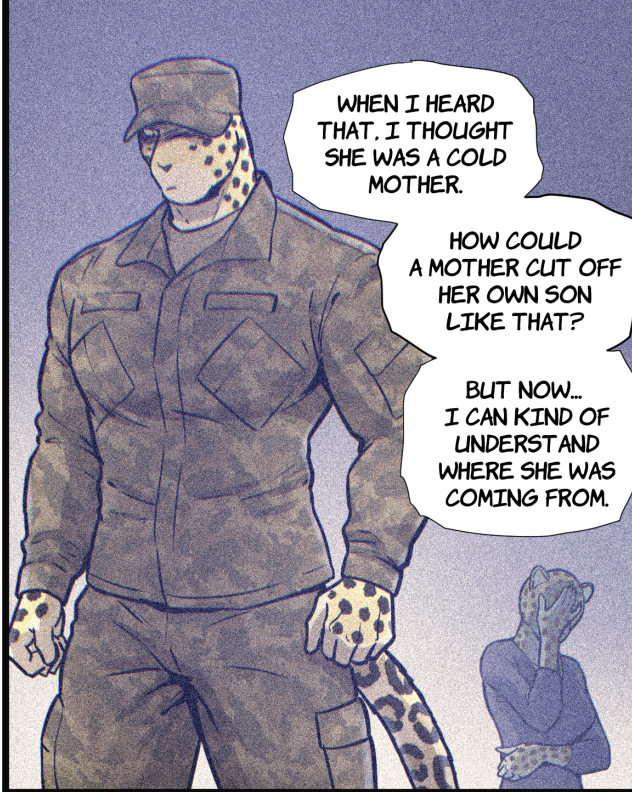


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YOU REMEMBER CHARR SAID HIS MOTHER CUT HIM OFF AFTER HE JOINED THE MILITARY.

SAID SHE COULDN'T BEAR SPENDING HER LIFE PRAYING HER SON WOULD MAKE IT BACK ALIVE.



WHEN I HEARD THAT, I THOUGHT SHE WAS A COLD MOTHER.

HOW COULD A MOTHER CUT OFF HER OWN SON LIKE THAT?

BUT NOW... I CAN KIND OF UNDERSTAND WHERE SHE WAS COMING FROM.

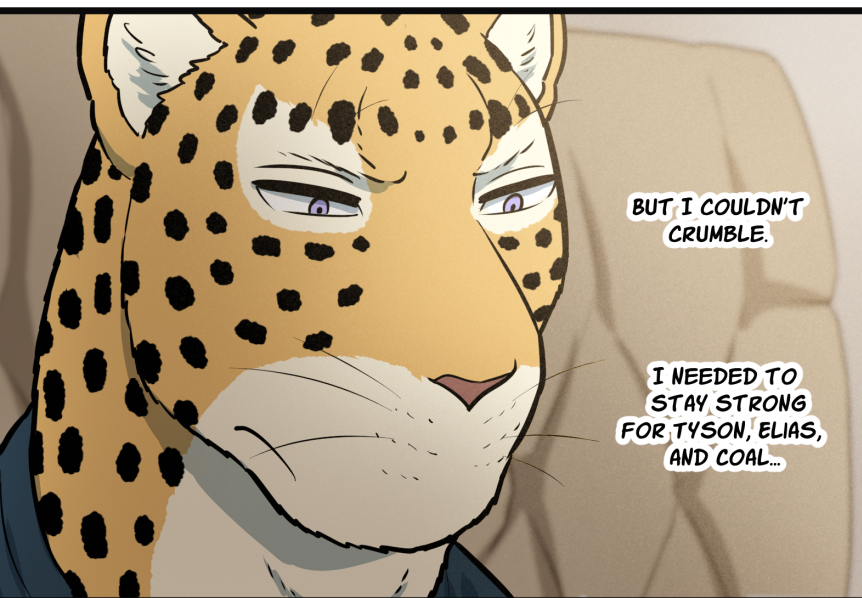


AND WHEN I THINK ABOUT COAL FOLLOWING IN HIS FATHER'S FOOTSTEPS... I...



I COULD FEEL HOW MUCH PAIN TYSON WAS IN.

I WAS SCARED, TOO.



BUT I COULDN'T CRUMBLE.

I NEEDED TO STAY STRONG FOR TYSON, ELIAS, AND COAL...



I COULDN'T FALL APART THE WAY I DID WHEN MY MOTHER DIED.