

Guard Dog

[This takes place after Eric admitted to Olly and himself that he wants to be a pet. Eric has been Olly's tiny for a while now]

"You know I don't like it."

"And you know we don't have a choice," Eric groaned. "When I shrank, it was unplanned, and so many threads have been left untied. There is a point where I really have to sort things out, let the government know where to find me... I'll be right back, you know that."

Olly's face contorted in displeasure. He was cupping his cheeks in his hands, elbows on his knees as he sat across from Eric, who was standing atop table so they could talk eye to eye.

"But you'll have to grow back," Olly protested.

"Yes, I will."

"... you'll be huuuge," Olly whined.

"Compared to you?" Eric chuckled. "Yes."

That garnered him a dark look from Olly. Eric immediately raised his hands in a gesture of appeasement after the height joke.

"How about that? I will make you a promise right now." The tiny man crouched low and put one fist to the ground—as low as he could get without fully prostrating himself. "I will be back. No matter what, I will be back here with you before nightfall. I swear it."

Eric's gaze was straight and serious the whole time—which was uncharacteristic for the little man. Usually, he would get embarrassed and flustered, but this was important for Olly. Eric remained completely unfazed for his giant's sake.

"Alright... Alright, I believe you," Olly sighed. "But if you try to run away, I will find you and—"

“You don’t need to threaten me. I’m yours.” Eric’s deadpan tone took Olly aback, and the giant was the one blushing in reaction.

“Okay, sorry, I trust you,” Olly said finally. He plucked Eric up by the back of his clothes and carried him carefully to the bright living room, where a large, white-haired man was daintily drinking tea.

“Oh, you’re ready? Sweet!” Everett exclaimed with a wide smile. “Leave Eric on the floor—yes, right here.” Using his size-shifting ability, Everett shrank onto the hardwood floor, grabbed Eric’s arm, and the two of them soared up in size in an instant. When all was said and done, Eric was a good head taller than Olly, who was visibly upset by that fact.

Eric took a second to absorb the sight of the apartment at his new size. He had only ever been there as a tiny person, but he called that place his home for so long... Seeing it with the eyes of a normal-sized human made the place feel small, although Eric usually thought of it as a vast landscape. Seeing it from so high up almost gave him vertigo.

“I think... I will be going, now...” Eric said awkwardly. Everett offered a warm “see you later, bud!” while Olly just grunted in response.

The fresh air outside hit him like a brick, reminding him of what life used to be before Olly decided to bring him home. Eric had been an indoor pet too long, he told himself as he hurried in the streets of the small mountain town.

He bummed a cigarette off a passerby and took long, greedy drags on the first poison stick he had in months. Olly didn’t allow him to smoke, so this was the real taste of freedom for him. He savored it but didn’t try to get a second one—he wouldn’t be disloyal to Olly beyond a single treat.

His first stop was the library, where he spent the first couple hours at his new size making extensive use of the phone to settle affairs and contact loved ones. He didn’t have a family, but he had a few friends, and all of them were delighted to hear he was well—although he told none of them the truth about his situation.

His second stop was his own place. Where he used to live before Olly welcomed him in his warm little den. It was in a neighboring village, a little trip by foot, but nature was beautiful

and Eric relished seeing the sky and feeling like a person for once.

His old home was exactly like he left it—even months of being abandoned couldn't make the place any worse than it was to begin with. It was a dingy ranch with chipped paint and a saggy outline. The back door had been left unlocked for months and nobody broke in; even prospective thieves thought the place was abandoned. Eric rifled through his stuff and kept only some photos, papers and some money he threw in a satchel before hurrying out. He wanted to get back to the warmth of Olly's home.

It was already dark out when Eric got on his way back home. He felt a hint of worry that Olly thought he broke his promise, so he rushed along the path leading back to town—until he caught sight of something that made his blood run cold.

On the quickly darkening backdrop on snow and trees, Olly's fiery red hair stuck out like a sore thumb—but he was not alone. Six full-grown men were surrounding Olly, and the air was saturated by the smell of alcohol. Six drunk dudes dressed in black accosting a short man on the side of an unlit backwater road? That was not good news. Eric kept his laid back attitude, arms hanging at his sides, but his heart was racing.

“Why are you here, Olly?” Eric addressed his friend directly. “You were supposed to wait for me at home.”

“The sun was setting and you weren't back. I got worried,” Olly said, which felt like a spike in Eric's heart. The redhead took a step towards Eric, but the group around him shifted slightly to get in the way. They didn't seem to want to let Olly walk away.

“Wait guys!” One of them said. “It's Eric! Hey Eric! It's been years! Huahuahua~”

Eric could recognize the one who talked. It was Keith—he was a few years older, but Eric and his band would hang out at his pad sometimes. Not exactly a friend, but Eric didn't want to hurt him. The rest of them, though, he couldn't give less of a fuck about.

“Let him go,” Eric said, somber.

“What? Eric, mate. You don't don't recognize this dude?!” Keith pointed a finger at Olly, who looked deeply uncomfortable. “It's Olympe, he's an asshole! You used to beat him up

with us, remember? Join us, for old times' sa-

Keith was interrupted by Eric's palm in his face—while Eric kicked Keith's leg from under him, sending him careening into a mound of snow. A large bearded man tried to get in Eric's way—he was big by human standards, but Eric had wrestled with feet several times his size. He held him by the collar and threw him to the ground, hurrying towards Olly.

Before he could reach him, a third man grabbed Olly's elbow, trying to tug him away. Eric lost his cool right there. It was his fist that smashed into the man's nose, and Eric had blood on his knuckles when the asshole was sprawled on the ground holding his face.

“You're pretty useful to have around,” Olly commented, and Eric immediately felt more at ease.. His master was standing right by his side. Eric knew that the redhead had been really worried, but he was now looking cocky, shoulders slouched as if he'd already won.

“Seriously, mate? You're siding with that chihuahua? He's a tiny shit stirrer who thinks he's the biggest fish in the pond!” Keith shouted while getting the snow off his clothes.

“Yeah, that's because he is.” Eric stated.

“Is NOT! Guys, get them!” Keith barked at his companions. The three remaining men formed a threatening wall, slowly closing in on the two friends.

To his own surprise, Eric didn't throw the first punch. One of the men, clearly wary of Eric but thinking nothing of Olly, attempted to lunge onto the boy. He was cut short when Olly's fist collided with his chin and the uppercut sent him sprawling. Eric smirked—unlike these idiots, he knew that Olly exercised harder than anyone and was not a pushover.

Not one to be shown up, Eric rushed to the offensive; he threw three punches in quick succession, striking one of his opponents twice in the sternum then socking him in the jaw. The man wouldn't get back up for a little while.

The last of the men looked much less brave without his gang, but he put up a facade. The man threw a punch, then another, trying to hit Eric's head, but the blonde barely needed to move inches out of the way to avoid all hits; the punches always seemed to barely graze him.

Human beings were so slow, Eric realized. After months spent as Olly's fidget toy, he had developed muscle mass, but also spatial awareness and swiftness. One could never know when he might have to dart out of the way because a giant Olly wasn't watching his steps. Normal humans did not have to climb furniture the size of buildings in their everyday routine, and they did not have to go through Olly's excessive pet workout regimen. He might be one of the fittest men alive, but it was the least he needed to be to satisfy Olly. Eric felt a swell of pride and appreciation for his master.

His foe's next clumsy punch, again easily dodged, was his last—Eric grabbed his wrist, pulled him closer and punched him. Once was enough; the man crumpled around his fist.

Eric allowed his body to relax after dealing with the last man when a hit from behind caught him by surprise. The large bearded man from earlier had gotten back up and slammed a hand to the side of Eric's head, ringing it like a bell.

Cutting through the fog of confusion in Eric's mind, Olly's voice rang out: "Dodge!" Months of being Olly's companion taught Eric to obey when hearing an order from his owner. He fell into a crouch and felt the air displaced by a punch that barely missed his face.

"Punch! Right hand!" Eric was quickly recovering from the previous hit, and his body obeyed again. His fist shot into the bigger man's stomach, sending him reeling.

"Bow!" Olly shouted from behind him. It was a humiliating little trick that the redhead taught his pets to honor him on their knees, head bent low. Eric's conscious mind wanted to scream that it was a dumb idea to bow down in the middle of a fight, but his body complied anyway out of pure instinct.

Kneeling in the snow, wondering what the hell Olly expected of him, Eric heard the rushed steps of his master, the familiar crunch of snow under his boots, until he felt the sole of a boot on his back, followed by the sound of fist meeting face. The bearded man fell backward with a whine and Olly—who'd just used Eric's prostrated body as a stepladder to reach the larger man's face—landed in front of Eric, proud as a lion.

"Need some help?" Olly extended his hand towards Eric, and when their eyes met, they smiled with renewed respect for one another. Olly pulled him to his feet, and the two of

them turned to leave the scene.

“You broke Butch’s nose! You fucking bastard!” Keith cried, startling Eric and Olly. Eric exhaled in irritation and kept walking off. He put his hand on Olly’s back, gently leading him away from the bloodied men strewn across the snow.

“You’re not beating up that one?” Olly asked, pointing at Keith, who was still wailing besides ‘Butch.’

“He’s not worth it,” Eric grunted, earning himself more screams from Keith.

“Why did you do that? You used to be cool, Eric! What the fuck?! You son of a bitch! I know where you live!”

“Just ignore him,” Eric told Olly, who complied without protest.

Keith continued, “You left us for that-that little RAT!” He didn’t have the chance to say another word; Eric was on him in a blink, practically leaping to grab him by the collar and slam him on the ground. Keith’s head bounced.

“You can insult me all you want, but you don’t say that shit about Olly,” Eric snarled. Keith’s attitude was quick to turn to submissive whimpering.

“I think I like you at this size too, after all. You’re like a bodyguard,” Olly said, looking very satisfied. “Or a pokémon.”

“We shouldn’t have started this fight to begin with.” Eric let Keith go and walked back towards Olly.

“It’s because you fit in my pocket.” Olly grinned at his own joke and put his arms behind his head, walking back towards the town alongside his pet.

E: “No need to explain the joke.”

O: “Pokémon means pocket monster. Pocket!”

E: "I got it the first time, it was just not funny."

O: "If you could be a pokémon, which one would you pick?"

E: ...

O:

E: "...Scrafty..."

O: "Do me!"

E: "Charmander."

O: "I'M AT LEAST A CHARIZARD!"

E: "Charizards are also short."

O: What.

E: Short dragons with stubby little legs.

O: ...

E: It fits well actually.

O: You're so gonna get punished.

E: Looking forward to it!

O: I know.