

The sea churned and the lightning cracked across the sky. A wave swept across the deck of the ship and Wet Stones dug his bare claws further into the wood of the deck despite how he shook. The pirate flattened his ears and hissed as the water soaked the cuffs of his breeches and through his fur. Rarely did felines become seamen, but Wet did love the sea, salt and damp and all. Storms were too much damp and too much salt in his fur.

Lightning flashed again and he looked up the mast to the yardarm where another was silhouetted against the gray green sky.

Another feline. Ebony fur so dark they were still visible against the stormy night sky. A single long blade could be seen strapped to their back and they were clad in a robe only just paler than them. A void in the darkness with no clouds or stars. A shadow.

Wet's ears went all the way back and he hissed through the rain at the form. Drawing his pistol, he aimed, accounted for the roll of the ship on the choppy waves, and fired.

The gun jammed.

"Wet.... Wet...Wet!" Wet Stones blinked up through the harsh fluorescent light at his coworker. Sussanah was a meerkat who shared the corner office with him. It was Friday, and they were alone in the office as many had taken the long holiday weekend. A pity the storm had hit. Hopefully the internet wouldn't go out.

"When do you want to get lunch?" Wet glanced at his computer. His email was open on a draft. Twelve messages deep since he had come in that morning with a representative of a partner company.

Jet Waterschild

He motioned at it forlornly and Sussanah smiled.

"Well, have fun and play nice." she flicked her ears at him and turned away. Wet went back to his email.

*.... As well Mx. Waterschild, our company can not abide...*

Lightning illuminated the sharp grin of the shadow. Their eyes glowed with manic light and malice and their tail flicked agitatedly. Wet blinked and they vanished. He spun and hissed, trying to catch a glimpse of his quarry despite the rain and dark.

"Here!" Jet's voice came from behind, high and reedy and cutting over the din. Wet whirled, drawing his own curved blade to parry the blow. For an instant, the two stood perfectly still against the crashing of the sea and screaming of the wind. Their eyes locked and hearts pounding.

With a seethe, Wet leapt back, slashing as he went at the darkness that had once contained his foe. A chuckle was whipped into the wind and off the ship and Wet turned about, waiting for his next attack.

*... Worry if we can not come to an amicable agreement soon...*

Suddenly, the shadow dropped from above and Wet barely rolled in time to avoid the blow as Jet sunk their sword deep into the wood. With a hiss the sleek black cat wrenched the blade free and lunged for Wet and he raises his own again to parry and riposte.

Again and again they clashed, swords glinting in the cracks of lightning as the sea and ship rolled.

*... May constitute a need for external mediation...*

The florescent lights flickered, Wet's eye twitched, and lightning flashed.

Blades met, claws swiped, and fangs were bared as the two cats fought, soggy and miserable in the raging storm.

Wet paused as his stomach roared and glanced at the time. 6:47. He hit send.

*... I can agree to hiring mediation. Would your company like us to choose and hire a third party or shall you?...*

Wet stumbled as the ship lurched. In that instant, the ninja appeared from the spray of the sea, leaping through a crashing wave with claws bared and eyes wild. Sharp claws slashed along the pirate's face, catching in his matted fur before slicing free. The spray of the sea filled the wounds with salt and Wet screamed into the night as he fell to his knees, gripping his face.

He failed. *Lost*. His ship would go down to the depths *and his pride would go with it*.

The dark feline stood over him, illuminated intermittently by the flash of lightning, eyes glowing like the mood, wide and wild.

Again, for an instant they were still against the storm. Wet could suddenly see how Jet shook against the chill. Their sword long gone and their robe plastered against their fur.

"Parley," they hissed, stumbling and falling to their knees, "Please, parley." they gripped the edge of Wet's coat, black paws like voids against the green wool. Shaking and shivering together in the rain they yowled at the injustice of the storm.

*Mr. Stones*

*We would be more than happy to fund a mediator of your company's choosing.  
Pleased to work with you.  
Jet Waterschild*