

Xavier winced in pain as the van he was driving took a sharp right. Why did he get himself, and his friends, Alexis, Theo, and Roji, into these situations?

Then he remembered. He'd been shot while running to the safety of the van when rescuing Theo from certain doom. He looked behind him to see Alexis crouched beside Theo, her face scrunched in worry. Unfortunately, their cocky, cat-eared friend didn't make it out of Cody's clutches without a memento. A very dangerous one.

Xavier felt his jaw clench, both out of rage, and extreme pain. "Aww, c'mon, Roji, careful," he growled, trying his best to keep his eyes glued to the road.

"What do you think I'm doing, smart guy? This is not exactly easy with your reckless driving," Roji replied as he spit on his patient's leg.

"My 'reckless driving' is keeping us alive, furball," he snapped. "More important, Theo. You should be thanking me."

Roji lifted his head indignantly, his green eyes sharp. "Careful, Xavier. I may be small, but I am still a DERP agent, and if it wasn't for me, you'd be in way more trouble, even without a car chase."

Xavier stared down at the small fox, a retort poised on his tongue, but before he could say a word, Alexis climbed nearer to the driver's seat, her blonde hair almost getting in his way. "Hate to break this up," Alexis shouted, her blue eyes fearful, "but they're gaining!"

"Perfect," he muttered. Even as the word left his mouth, Xavier could just make out the headlights of their pursuer. He poured on the speed, causing Alexis to topple a little bit. As long as they were safe, the damages took a backseat.

"Where are we headed exactly?" Alexis seemed a little less fearful, but she still checked the tiny rear window several times. "We should probably figure out a plan if we lose them—"

"*When*," Xavier corrected. "Those guys will get tired of chasing us, trust me. And I know where they won't look for us."

In the rearview mirror, Xavier saw Theo lift his head out of the bag he had been stuffed in to make it easier to hide him. His eyes were filled with tears as he whimpered, "I miss Val," and Xavier gripped the steering wheel harder to refrain from cursing Cody out loud rather than in his head.

"I know, man. We'll get you somewhere safe."

"Where are we GOING?!" Alexis yelled. "It's the middle of the night. We have no food, no money, and I'm starting to wonder if Roji should drive instead of you."

The entire van was silent except for the engine's rumble after Alexis' words. Roji smirked at Xavier. "See? At least she knows I deserve recognition for my talents."

"First of all," Xavier retorted, "Roji, you are not driving this van. Second, We're going to DERP."

Roji's face brightened. "To DERP!"

The van traveled for about thirty more minutes before it turned onto a road that you couldn't see in the dark unless you were really looking. The other van was miles behind them, and when it neared the brush where they were hiding, it passed without stopping. Xavier smirked to himself. Directors had always been dumb.

DERP headquarters was a fortress. Not flashy from the outside, but you could tell it was there. Xavier parked the van near the entrance and got out, careful to support Theo's weight with Alexis' help. Roji scanned the door and it opened slowly. But Xavier froze in confusion when he saw two DERP agents glaring at him. One was a giraffe, the other was aa koala. "What are you doing with one of our agents?" the first one growled. The second nodded in agreement.

Xavier suddenly remembered that he was wearing a Director's uniform, and quickly lifted his hat in surrender. "Woah! It's me, Xavier!" His expression turned grave. "Theo got injected with some truth serum that's making him a little, ah, drowsy." As if to prove his point, Theo slouched a little, and Xavier had to catch him before he face-planted.

"Emperor Penguin will want to see this," the giraffe stated, and he and his companion led the way inside. Xavier told himself that, one way or another, they would get Theo back to normal.