Chapter 6.5: Memories

The original script for Chapter 6.
Written by Rayo Guarneros, revised and illustrated by Silvia Torres.

A pink spiritual bird flies over the jungle during a quiet night and it lands over at the window of a concrete building. Behind the bars are Lifty and Shifty, resting on a pair of hammocks, where we see Shifty holding a locket. Inside Shifty's locket, there is a photograph of him and his brother being hugged by a female bear who's wearing his hat. Shifty seems restless, and Lifty notices that.

Lifty:
"Now I see" – You know you got me sick of your darned whining?"

Shifty: (turning around, trying to ignore Lifty)
"I could say the say about you"

Lifty:
"Dude, it's just that it's been like a year of seeing you with that face. Just get over it!"

Shifty gets mad and kicks his brother's hammock, which causes him to crash against a shelf, dropping a purple music box to the ground. This catches Shifty's attention.

Shifty: (getting down the hammock)
"Hey…is that?" – "Where did you get it?"

Lifty hurries to take the music box and try to hide it from his brother.

Lifty: (curling over the box)
"Do you think you are the only one who has a hard time?" – "I was the one who bothered to keep it safe when she left. While you did nothing but keep complaining!"

The raccoon brothers wait in silence for a moment, Lifty is angry, while Shifty doesn't know what to say. He takes his chance to grab the box and examine it for a few moments.

Shifty: (More to himself, than to Lifty)
"How long has it been?"

Lifty: (sighing)
"I can't even remember…"

Flashback begins

Tween Lifty and Shifty are running through the forest with a bunch of stolen meat. Their appearance is smaller, youthful and agile. Their hair looks messy and dirty.

Butcher: (only his voice, blue text to imply that this is Lumpy)
"Thieves! Get back here!"

*Note: Homage to the episode "Meat me for lunch"

The raccoons ignore him and keep on their way laughing, but while going down over a hill, they get their feet tangled with the sausage chains they are carrying and get sent flying off downhill.

Right away we cut to a female bear who is introduced as a sweet housewife doing her morning cleaning, when suddenly, a loud noise alerts her, and when she goes to investigate, finds a couple of unconscious raccoons, covered by pieces of her straw roof and pieces of meat scattered everywhere.

After a time skip, Shifty wakes up to the screams of pain of his brother.

Shifty: (startled, sitting on a bed)
"Lifty, what is…!?"

It is then when he notices someone with their back turned to him, who is apparently, making Lifty cry.

Shifty:
"Hey! Who do you think you are? The only one who's allowed to torture my brother is me!"

Bear: (turning a bit to reveal an injured Lifty)
"Shh, do not scream! You are going to startle him even more!"

Recognizing now the situation, Shifty calms down a bit and waits. The bear takes a step back and lets him see Lifty, who's sobbing quietly over an injured paw. Aside from adhesive pads, Shifty would have a gauze on head, while Lifty, a freshly bandaged paw.

Bear: (smiling)
"There. Now that wasn't so bad, was it?"

Shifty looks at the bear suspiciously.

Shifty: (looking around)
"Where are we?"

Bear:
"At my house. Both of you fell on my roof and made a huge hole in it – Care to tell what where you doing up there?"

Lifty:
"Well..."

Shifty: (moving fast to cover Lifty's mouth)
"Hey, you have no idea how sorry we are about it…but we're fugitives from justice and we gotta go"

Bear:
"Fugitives?"

Shifty: (getting up and taking his sore brother with him)
"Yeah, fugitives. And if you don't want any trouble, you won't stand in our way"

The raccoons are just about to cross the door, when the bear speaks again.

Bear:
"Are you not going to help me repair the hole?"

Shifty: (rolling his eyes, not taking the bear seriously)
"Oh, we would love to ma'am…but we have things to do"

Bear: (holding up a couple money bags that have an "L" and an "S" in them)
"I see. Then I suppose this should cover the repairs"

Lifty and Shifty: (alarmed)
"Hey, that's our money!"

The raccoons get back with the intention of ambushing the bear, but she is not intimidated, giving an expert and funny step back which results in a couple tweens crashing on the floor. Shifty lifts his head, looking furious from below.

Shifty: (wanting to sound evil)
"Give it back"

Bear: (cunning and calm)
"Repair my roof then"

Shifty: (standing up, looking the bear in the eye)
"And if we refuse?"

Moment of intense silence between the bear and the raccoons, and as is she had given them "the stare", we get a brief transition panel, and right away, we see Lifty and Shifty already working on repairing the roof.

Lifty:
"Well, you gotta admit the ma'am is persuasive…"

Shifty: (angry)
"Just who the heck does she think she is? Can't she see that we are thieves?"

At that moment, both of them notice the pleasant smell of food.

Lifty:
"Hey, you smell that?"

Shifty: (peeking through the hole)
"Yeah" – "The old lady is cooking"

Lifty: (peeking as well)
"You think she wants to share?"

Shifty: (nudging his brother)
"What do you mean 'share'? We're gonna steal it…and our money too!"

We get a cut towards the bear, who is cooking indeed…and she's listening to them as well.

Lifty: (voice only)
"But Shifty, isn't that kinda…not cool? I mean, she did help us and…"

Shifty: (voice only)
"Help us? Give me a break! Can't you see she's just using…!"

Another loud noise is heard, and while carrying a tray with food in her paws, the bear finds out the raccoons just made the hole even bigger, falling back into the hall, one on top of the other.

Bear: (not bothered)
"How sweet, I'm glad to see you having the energy to play. I just hope you are hungry too"

Lifty sits upright right away, forgetting about his pain to kneel and thank the food Japanese style, just before getting kicked by Shifty, who's not as easily to win over.

Shifty:
"Don't bother, ma'am. We're not hungry"

The twins's guts say otherwise, and the bear gives them a knowing smile. She leaves the tray between them, and not even Shifty can resist such good-looking food.

Shifty:
"Oh, all right! Whatever as long as we get this over with!"

Transition in which the raccoons finally get to eat, Lifty being more cheerful, while Shifty being all tsundere about it. The bear smiles to them in the meantime. By the sunset, the exhausted raccoons present her the results of their labor.

Bear:
"It's like there was never a hole in the first place! Excellent, boys. Good job"

Lifty blushes, glad to be told he's done something good for once…but Shifty…
Shifty:
"Yeah, yeah…our money. Now"

The bear glances an analytical glance at Shifty, before deciding and giving them back their blessed money. The raccoons laugh and hug their bags.

Shifty:
"Alright, it's been a pleasure to do business with you, ma'am…"

Bear:
"Mei"

Lifty and Shifty:
"Huh?"

Bear:
"My name is Mei – And if you ever feel hungry, or find nowhere to stay…you don't have to steal, nor sleep anywhere. You can come back here anytime you need, Lifty and Shifty"

Lifty and Shifty look at each other, overwhelmed by the cleverness of an apparently sweet housewife.

Shifty: (blushing)
"Eh…well, I mean…whatever. We are leaving!"

Shifty rushes away, and drags his brother back into the forest, while Mei waves them goodbye.

The next morning, Shifty wakes up in his abandoned van, finding out Lifty is nowhere to be found. He gets up to go search for him in Mei's house and finds him all happy with life, taking breakfast. Furious, Shifry kicks the door and Lifty turns with his mouth full.

Shifty:
"What the heck is this?!"

Lifty:
"Bacon"

Shifty:
"That's not what I mean!"

It is at that moment that Mei appears with another place of eggs and bacon, freshly made.

Mei:
"Good morning, Shifty. You're just in time"

Mei leaves the plate on the table and offers the raccoon a chair. Shifty isn't convinced.

Shifty:
"What kind of trick is this?"

Mei:
"Come on, you kids helped me repair the roof and the least I can do is give you a paw while you try to figure our what to do with your lives. You're still quite young – Go on, before it gets cold"

Shifty agrees reluctantly, while Lifty and Mei have a chat.



Mei:
"Since you were cubs you say?"

Lifty:
"Yeah, it's been pretty difficult to be honest, but Shifty and I know to manage…well, since mom kind of…"

Just by hearing the mention of their mom, Shifty tenses and gets up the chair.

Shifty: (Apathetic, grabbing Lifty by the tail)
"Ok, that's enough…thanks for the breakfast, or whatever"

Mei:
"Are you not going to help me do the dishes?"

Shifty: (sarcastic)
"Oh ma'am, we would love to…but I have a serious talk with…"

Lifty:
"Hey, where's your hat?"

Confused, Shifty inspects and notices that, indeed, from one panel to another, his hat is gone. Then he turns towards Mei and sees her trying his hat in front of a mirror. Shifty startles.

Shifty:
"Hey!"

Mei:
"This really is a nice hat, can I keep it?"

Shifty:
"No! What's wrong with you? That hat can't be worn by anyone but me!"

Mei: (carefree)
"Well, if you want to take it back, you'll have to help me clean"

Shifty:
"Oh…I knew it! I knew you were up to something!"

Mei:
"It is fair, kids"

Shifty:
"No! It's completely unfair, you have no reason to steal us now!"

Mei: (putting a little flower on the hat)
"Alright. If you can't do it, I understand"

Shifty:
"You manipulative hag…you won't get away with this!…I….I challenge you to a poker match!

All keep quiet for a moment, until Mei finally turns around with resolution.

Shifty:
"If I win, you'll give back my hat and won't bother us with any more of your chores. You'll give us food and a place to sleep for free, just like you said yesterday"

Mei:
"And if I win…you'll both be my official helpers. And I'll keep your hat. Deal?"

Shifty:
"Deal!"

Lifty: (whispering to Shifty)
"Shifty, are you sure what you are doing?"

Shifty: (whispering to Lifty)
"Oh, come on…you really think she could beat me? I'm an ace in poker"

We get a direct cut to the final result of the game, in which Mei keeps all the Aces, and after that, we get another cut to the raccoons doing the house chores, with, dusters, rags, bandanas, the whole thing. Meanwhile, Mei is sitting on the couch, embroidering.

Mei:
"Don't forget behind the furniture, Lifty dear"

Lifty: (sweeping, dissatisfied, but not annoyed)
"Yes, ma'am"

Shifty: (blowing up and throwing his bandana to the ground)
"All right, that's it!"

Shifty gets rid of the bandana, throws away the duster and storms towards the door.

Lifty:
"Where are you going?"

Shifty:
"Away from you two!"

Mei: (without turning)
"I wouldn't go out now if I were you, a storm is about to fall"

Shifty: (getting outside the house)
"Sure…with such a nice…"

Tired up joke of the sporadic storm in which Shifty ends up all soaked. Mei looks at him all clever, while Lifty just holds his laugh.

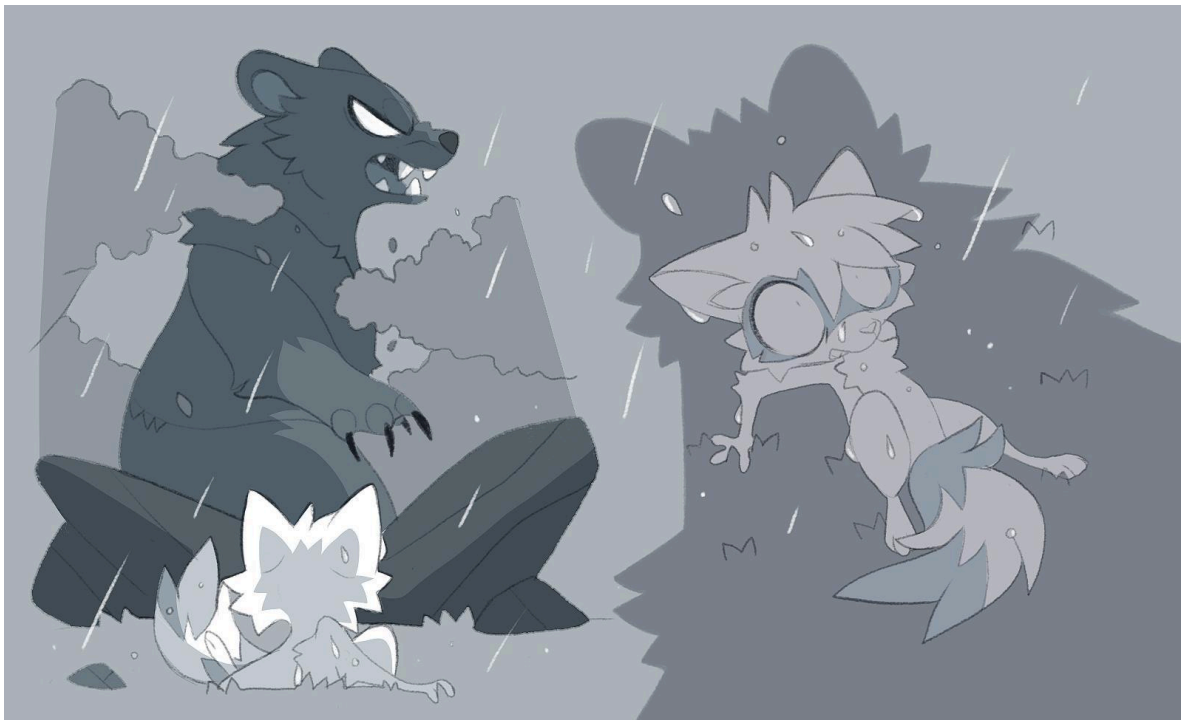
Shifty:
"Of course"



Shifty walks through the darkened forest, wandering aimlessly under the rain.

*S*hifty: (leaning against a big rock, sheltered from the rain)
"Damn the time I stole those sausages" – "If it wasn't for that…"

Suddenly, a deep growl reaches Shifty's ears. The "rock" behind him moves and the raccoon stands back, finding out with horror that it's actually a feral bear, which roars angrily to him.

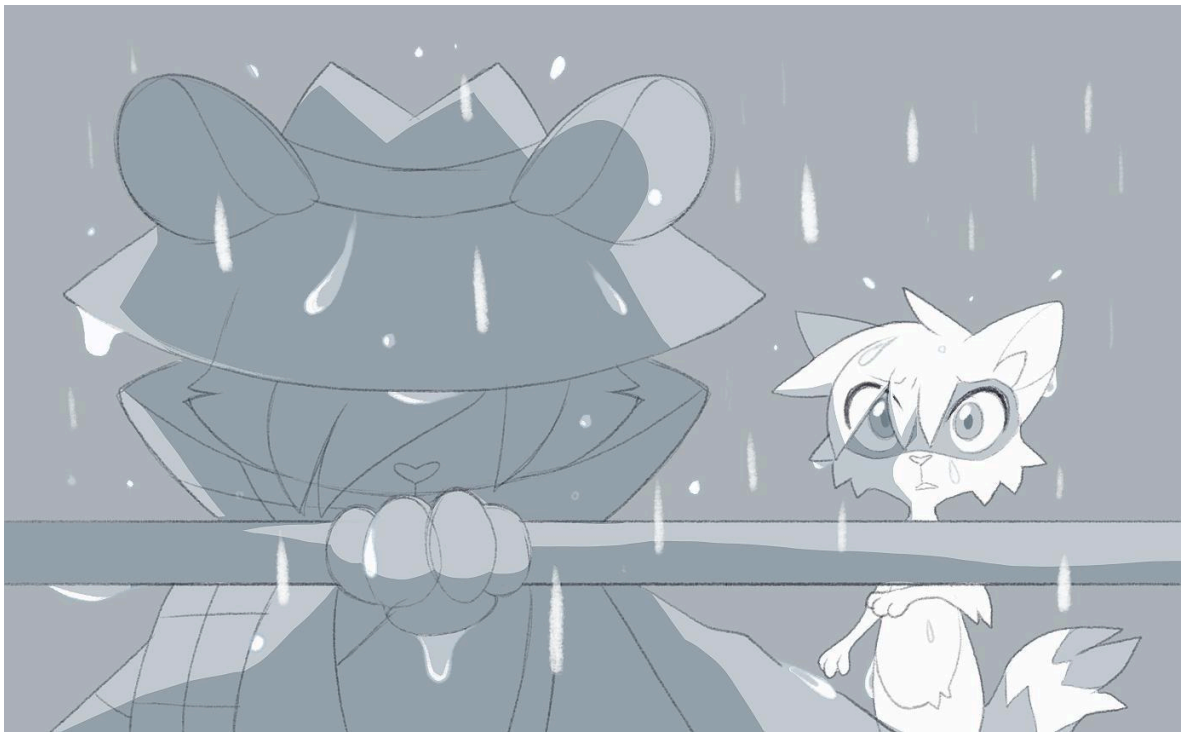


Shifty gets chased through the forest by an angry bear.

Shifty: (thinking, desperate)
"What's with all the damn bears in this place?!"

Then, a mysterious being who's holding a halberd appears from above and falls between Shifty and the bear. The animal stops, and then Shifty realized what's happening. The newcomer is wearing a coat, similar to Mole's and Rat's, but rosewood in color. They face the bear, which stands in two legs, but the stranger is not scared, and doing a quick display of assertiveness, they make the bear calm down, lower it's head and leave. The stranger keeps their back turned to Shifty, who stays paralyzed for some moments, before getting a better view of his rescuer and the strange weapon they are holding. He notices they are a familiar peach colored bear who's holding purple halberd with a butterfly motif.

Shifty:
"Mei…?"



Just second later, the rescuer flees. Shifty stays alone under the rain, surprised, but pretty sure of what he just witnessed.

Montage 1 starts:

Starting from here, the comic's format would have changed to a montage in which Lifty and Shifty would be narrating several images (all described in brackets here). To represent this, drawings would have been in black and white, to separate them from the flashback and the present.

Shifty:
"I was sure of what I saw"

Lifty:

"Yeah, though nobody would have believed such a crazy story"

(Shifty coming back to Mei's house, all covered in mud, while Lifty looks at him confused)

Lifty:
"No one had ever been so attentive with us"

Shifty:
"Though she never stopped being irritating"

(Mei bathing Shifty on a bathtub. Shifty would blushed and grumpy, while Lifty would be laughing behind Mei, with a fluffy towel ready)

Shifty:
"Remember that winter?"

(Shifty touching Lifty's forehead, who's burning in fever. The background would have been the cold interior of the van, and the snowy ambiance that can be seen through it's windows)

Lifty:
"How to forget? I almost died!"

(Shifty carrying Lifty on his back, walking through the snow towards Mei's house"

Shifty:
"I had no option but to bring you to her"

(Shifty and Mei taking care of Lifty, who would be in bed, surrounded by a warm ambiance. Mei would be feeding him soup, while Shifty would be waiting near with a bowl full of water and a rag)

Shifty exclusive flashback:

Mei:
"You know you put your brother at risk, right?" – "Shifty, why didn't you bring him before?"

Shifty: (avoiding her gaze)
"Because…I didn't want us to be a bother"

Mei:
"Bother? – Dear, you two are no bother at all"

Shifty: (avoiding her gaze)
"…to mom, we were"

Mei remains speechless and hugs Shifty, who starts crying in silence.

Montage 1 continues:

Shifty:
"Mei didn't want us to live on the van anymore, even after you healed"

(Lifty and Shifty being tucked by Mei over the living room couch, each on each extreme. Lifty would be asleep, while Shifty would be faking to be asleep, and from his expressions, we see that he's happy)

Montage 1ends

Time goes by, and one night, while Lifty and Shifty are sleeping by the chimney, the noise of the front door opening alerts them. Someone's silhouette appears before them, and the stranger also stops when they notice something's wrong. From the point of view of the newcomer, there are a couple of wild animals with glowing eyes from the dark…while to the twins, this is an intruder.



Newcomer:
"What the…? AH!"

Shifty:
"Don't move!"

Lifty:
"We're the only thieves of this area!"

Newcomer: (scared)
"What...thieves? Who are you…? Whrere's…Ma…MA! Where are you?"

Finally, Mei turns on the light, calm and wearing a sleeping gown.

Mei:
"Pop?"

Lifty and Shifty: (without releasing the intruder)
"Huh?"

Pop:
"Oh, Ma…you scared me! I just knew I had to buy that raccoon repel!"

Lifty and Shifty:
"We're not that kind of raccoons!"

Mei: (getting closer to help Pop get up)
"Children, children…it's all alright" – "Pop, these are Lifty and Shifty, they are my helpers. The poor things had nowhere to stay for the winter" – "Lifty, Shifty, this is Pop. He's my husband"

Lifty and Shifty:
"Husband?!"

Montage 2 starts:

Lifty:
"We didn't really like him at first…I mean, where the heck was he the whole time?"

Shifty:
"Who did he think he was, leaving Mei alone for months and then popping up like it was nothing?"

(Lifty and Shifty keeping an eye on Pop from the corner, sulking with a suspicious attitude. Pop makes a knowing look, with his back turned to the raccoons, while Mei smiles at him)

Lifty:
"He was such a weird guy…"

(During spring, Pop cuts a hole on a tree near the house, using a chisel, while the raccoons keep observing from their hiding spot, intrigued)

Shifty:
"You never knew with what idea he was going to come out next"

(Pop showing the raccoons the blueprints for something that actually interests them) – (Pop and the raccoons working together, cutting the wood while Mei brings them all something to drink)

Lifty:

"He was kinda like Mei"

(The bears and the raccoons seen from the back, contemplating the work done: a mini tree house for the twins)

Lifty:
"Life was good"

(Mei, Pop, Lifty and Shifty are all resting on the grass, with the raccoons surrounding the bears, who would be leaning against each other)



Shifty:
"Yeah, everything was fine…"

(Mei looking up with a resolute expression while she holds her belly)

Shifty:
"…until everything turned upside down"

Montage 2 ends

It's the end of the summer, and Mei and the raccoons are climbing up a mountain, until they reach a cliff full of sharp rocks.

Mei:
"Alright boys, here we are!"

Shifty: (exhausted)

"What…the heck are we doing here?"

Shifty: (exhausted and on the ground)
"I can't feel my paws…"

Mei gives a sigh and looks towards the horizon.

Mei:
"I know I've been a bit harsh with you in the last few months" (at this, the raccoons think "A bit?!") – "…but it's been months since the last time you've stolen, you are even learning to fend for yourselves. I'm very proud of you, so much that I believe you are finally ready"

Lifty and Shifty:
"Ready?"

Mei gives a step back, does a flip, and before the astonished eyes of the raccoons, she lands on top of one of the sharp rocks, firm and safe.

Mei: (opening her eyes)
"For your real training"



Lifty and Shifty: (shocked)
"HUUH?"

Shifty: (shaking his head)
"Now, now…wait a moment, WHAT?!"

Mei: (giggling playfully)
"Do you remember that night when the wild bear attacked you?"

It is at that moment that Shifty has a quick flashback that shows the bear and his mysterious rescuer.

Shifty: (pointing at Mei dramatically)
"I KNEW IT! I knew I didn't imagined it…it really was you! Although…how could you be in two places at once?!"

Lifty: (just as surprised)
"Why didn't you tell us before?"

Mei:
"A guardian of the forest doesn't reveal their identity, not their abilities to just anyone" – "I saw the qualities in you, and I knew that sooner or later I had to tell you the truth…but first, I had to help you get out of the place you were in. The road of the thief isn't usually the most honored"

Lifty and Shifty look at each other, speechless. They don't seem very ashamed, but not very proud either. Mei gets back to them with a jump.

Mei:
"Look, I'll show you" – "See that rock at the bottom?"
Somewhat insecure, the twins get closer to the border of the cliff, just to be pushed playfully by Mei. The raccoons fall down, but on the next panel, they appear safe and sound over a staggering rock, with Lifty on top of Shifty.

Lifty:
"Hey, what's wrong with you?!"

Shifty:
"You could have killed us!"

Mei:
"But you are not dead, are you?"

Lifty and Shifty look down and realize that, despite their funny poses, they are in perfect balance over the rock.



Mei:
"No matter how much you two fight, there will always be a synchrony between you"

Tired, the raccoons lose their balance and fall on top of a safe platform that isn't revealed until this point. Lifty and Shifty just stay there with spirals on their eyes, not knowing what to say.

Mei:
"You just have to learn to recognize it"

Lifty and Shifty give Mei and ugly look, although they also have no idea how to contradict her.

Montage 3 starts:

Shifty:
"I always knew she was crazy…but I never imagined just how crazy"

(Lifty, Shifty and Mei climbing a steep, Mei easily, while the raccoons seem half dead)

Lifty:
"She said we had to find the balance…"

(Lifty, Shifty and Mei practicing yoga, particularly poses that require standing on a single foot)

Shifty:
"But how were we supposed to do such thing?"

(Lifty and Shifty falling to the grass, not being able to hold the poses while Mei sighs)

Shifty:
"Since the training started, I was already noticing Mei seemed odd…I mean, more than usual"

(It's autumn and Mei is supervising the raccoons catching fish with their paws on a river)

Lifty:
"It almost seemed redundant…"

(Same scenario of the last panel, but in winter, alone and with a frozen river)

Mei:
"I'm going to have a cub!"

(Shifty spits his drink over Lifty, while Pop cries of happiness in a comical way.)



Lifty:
"…although it was still a big surprise"

Montage 3 ends

We see the same background from previous panels, but now in spring. We have a panel of Lifty and Shifty looking down with curiosity, and on the next, we finally reveal a newborn Cub being cradled by Mei, who is still in bed. Lifty gets close to smell him, Cub licks his nose, and Lifty gets paralyzed by cuteness. Meanwhile, Shifty stays a bit farther, interested but doubtful, not knowing what to think of the adorable bear cub.



Montage 4 starts:

Shifty:
"Everything changed so fast…"

(Lovely scenes with the three bears and the raccoons, in which Lifty seems more open to take care of Cub, while Shifty seems more distant. The situations could go from the more mundane, like feeding the baby, or the most unusual, like continuing the training with Mei, now with Cub wrapped safely on her back)

Shifty:
"…and I never knew what to think of it"



Montage 4 ends

One day, the twins are on the garden with Cub, while Pop and Mei are debating something inside the house. Intrigued, Shifty observes them from outside and noticing that, Lifty does the same.

Lifty:
"What could they be talking about?"

Shifty: (holding Cub, who crawls to him)
"I don't know" – "But it doesn't seem good"

Montage 5 starts:

Shifty:
"And I was right"

(We get scenes of Pop saying good bye to his family once again, including the raccoons)

Lifty:
"He said difficult times were approaching" – "That we had to be strong"

(A panel implies the pass of time, so we can continue to another scene, set several days later. During a rainy sunset, we see Mei sneaking into the woods, wearing her coat, with a resolute expression. At the same time, we can see Cub sleeping beside a closed note that says "To Lifty and Shifty")

Shifty:
"We were supposed to be the ones to protect them"

(Another jump to a moment later, in which Shifty reads the note with a horrified expression, while Lifty tries to take a peek behind him, holding Cub, who is crying)

Montage 5 ends

Shifty: (thinking, frantic)
"Mei…"

Without any explanation to his brother, Shifty runs out of the house, swiftly crossing the door, and leaving Lifty in charge of Cub.

Lifty: (not letting go of Cub, who keeps crying)
"What?...Hey, where are you going?" – "Shifty, wait!"

Shifty ignores him and Lifty, worried, can only stay observing his brother over the window. On the same panel, but on the foreground, we se the note is now on the floor, and inside it, we can only see the phrase *"Please, take care of Cub".*

While Shifty is running, he puts into practice the tracking abilities Mei taught him, trying to concentrate despite the stress.

Shifty: (thinking)
"Why do you always have to do this…?"

Mei: (memory)
"If you ever feel lost, follow your instincts. Let them guide you"

After remembering this, Shifty allows himself to calm down and listen, waiting, until finally, he manages to feel the road the instinct tells him will lead him to Mei: the noise of a waterfall, sparks of yellow magic and the smell of blood, which finally makes him open his eyes,

Shifty:
"Hold on, Mei!"

An atmospheric panel to separate the scenes. We see the waterfalls Shifty manages to detect, and in front of them, a battle scene in which we observe several dead animals, between them, ninjas and other guardians of the forest. At the center, would be Mei and Rat as the only survivors of the fight, but they would not be revealed right away, showing only details, such as their weapons, injuries, or any other detail that matches with the tragic atmosphere.

Mei: (tired, with minor injuries)
"How could you…"

Rat: (also with minor injuries)
"Sometimes one must make sacrifices, Mei…" (that, or…) *"The world Is changing, Mei"*

The last panel would be a zoom out showing both of their profiles, facing each other before the waterfalls with their weapons ready, surrounded by a tense and hostile air. Colors could be reddish, contrasting a sunset of dense black clouds, previous to rain.



Rat:
"Magic is way too unstable, it has no place in my General's future"

Mei:
"What are you talking about…?" – "Magic is part of all of us…"

Rat: (filling his whip with yellow magic)
"Don't make this more difficult…"

Mei: (preparing the halberd, no magic yet)
"What happened to you?" – "You are a Forest Guardian, just like me…"

Rat:
"Not anymore"

At this point, we get a cut to Shifty's point of view, who takes notice of the yellow and purple flashes of magic in the distance while he approaches, result of Mei and Rat's fight. The raccoon reacts and follows the signals.

Going back to the fight, Mei uses her magic to protect herself from the whipping, which by being charged with magic, are able to break a bit of her aura with each impact. Both fighters are about the same level, but Mei, still weakened by Cub's birth is in disadvantage and is noticeably more tired and clumsy. After a couple attacks, Mei can no longer form her aura, holding on to the halberd to take a breath.

Mei: (thinking)
"I have not recovered yet…at this rate, I won't be able to stop his attacks any longer"

Rat: (grinning)
"What's wrong, Mei? Tired?"

Mei doesn't respond, aside from a pained look towards the Rat.

Rat:
"Well, then…"

The Rat strikes one last lash to Mei, who can't do much more than try to defend herself with the halberd's handle. However, before receiving the impact, Shifty runs, sneaks over and manages to put himself between Mei and the whip, receiving the cut on his forearm.

Mei:
"Shifty!"

Startled by the magic strike, Shifty tumbles and falls backwards on Mei, who holds him.

Shifty: (thinking)
"What…kind of whip is that…?" – "I…can't move!"



Rat:
"And who's this kid?"

Mei: (holding Shifty defensively)
"Stay away, Rat" – "He has nothing to do with this"

Rat:
"I almost didn't see it coming…although, being a raccoon, I shouldn't be surprised"

Shifty:
"Stay…away from her"

Rat: (indifferent and sadistic)
"Hm, he seems to have guts"- "We'll see just how much"

The Rat strikes a new lash towards Shifty, though this time, it's Mei who defends him, stopping the attack with the halberd by making the whip tangle around it. Like an electric current, both Mei and the Rat get caught in the attack, paralyzing them both for a moment. None of the three can do anything, and while Shifty can only observe, suddenly, he notices a shadow getting close to Mei from behind, being witness of how it materializes with Char Sui's dark silhouette. Shifty never manages to really distinguish, as it's being cloaked and with his back turned to him.

Shifty: (scared, trying uselessly to warn Mei"
"M…Mei!"

Silent and precise, the pig positions firmly behind Mei, who catches his presence only at the last moment, but it is too late, and with just one last look, Char Sui stabs Mei's torso with his sword.

After a few instants, the effect of the whip starts to fade away. Char Sui observes the scene indifferently, without contempt, or sadism. Meanwhile, Rat focuses in recovering from the last attack.

Shifty: (scared, crawling towards Mei)
"No…no…"

Shifty reaches Mei and holds her in his arms, crying without tears, with actions more mechanical than deliberate. Meanwhile, the Rat and Char Sui observe the raccoon.

Rat: (slightly annoyed, maybe a bit offended by how Shifty "puts himself down")
"Oh son, don't be confused. Raccoons, such as rats are adaptable beings…and in this case, choosing wisely means to survive" – "Accept things as they are and live another day"

The scene ends with a general view, in which we see Shifty, who is so affected he reached a point of incapability, without being able to do anything but hold Mei, who has a fatal wound piercing her chest. Char Sui disappears in shadows, while the Rat simply leaves.

The rain starts, and after one cut, Lifty finally arrives with Cub, finding Shifty alone in the middle of the bloody scene, with a dying Mei between his arms. The sun has already set and the sky changes from red, to a dark blue gray, creating a dense and melancholic atmosphere.

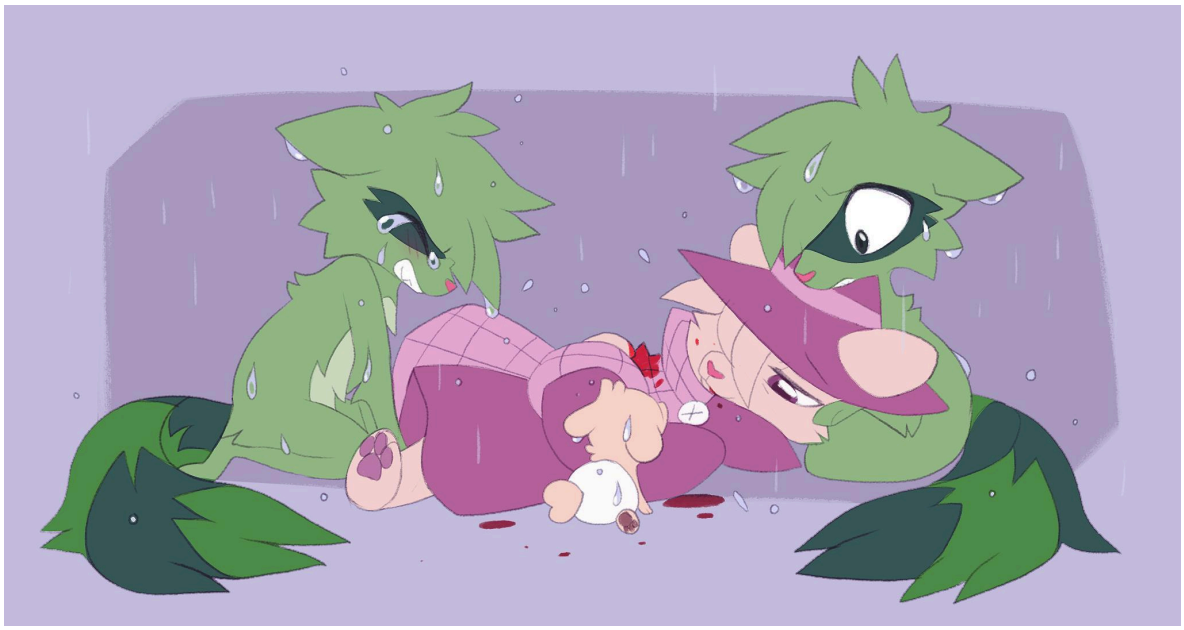
Lifty: (panting)
"Shifty…!"

Lifty runs towards Shifty and Mei, who is still alive, but barely.

Shifty: (frantic)
"Mei, please resist!...we're gonna get help…" – "There must be something that…!"

Mei: (with weak voice, half opening her eyes)
"Shifty"

Shifty watched Mei with anxiety, divided between doing what he feels must be done, or disobey Mei once again. Lifty kneels beside them and Cub crawls towards his mom, who finally takes notice of their presence. She opens her eyes and brings a paw towards her baby, who cuddles against her, while Lifty and Shifty simply observe with impotence.



Mei: (smiling painfully, but calmed)
"It's fine…I accept it"

Shifty:
"No…no, you're gonna be fine…I swear it"

Mei: (bringing her other paw over Shifty's)
"You were always such a stubborn child"

Focus change to the point in which the forest ends and the waterfalls begin, from which we see Mole, who has arrived too late. Although he can't see, he knows what's happening, and aware of the scene, stays behind while he collapses on his knees.

Mole: (thinking, defeated)
"It's too late"

Shifty holds Mei's paw between both of his, desperate to act and try something, but forces himself to be where he is, because deep down, he knows Mei won't make it. In his gestures, he shows confusion, sadness and fear, as if he was getting his soul ripped away. But he doesn't cry, different to Lifty, who brakes right away.

Mei:
"There's something…I had the intention to give you…when you were ready"

Mei let's go of Shifty, and with the strength she has left, brings a paw towards the inside of her coat, from which she extract the purple music box. Lifty and Shifty observe it, confused.

Mei:
"…but if you learn to listen what's inside it…I know you'll understand"

Mei coughs blood, having troubles to breathe before speaking again.

Mei: (speaking to all)

"Don't be sad for me…" – "…as long as you remember me"

Mei: (speaking to Cub)
"I'll be with you"

The scene ends, implying that all three (four, if we count Mole) were there until the moment Mei died.



Montage 6 starts:

A new scene opens the next day, with the day of Mei's burial, in which Pop and Mole would be present. It would be a private funeral, easy and with just five of them in a modest ceremony. Pop and Lifty would look sad, while Shifty would be dealing with some repressed anger.

Change to another scene, in which Shifty would be engrossed with the purple box in a dark background, listening to it's music like a loop of madness that does nothing but keep confusing him.

Shifty: (observing the script for "change")
"I couldn't understand it"

Shifty practically assaults Mei's room, retrieving his hat inside a closet, where she had it.

Shifty: (decided)

"…it felt as if everything had went back the way it was…" – "…nothing has changed"

*Note: This refers to Shifty comparing Mei's death to the abandonment of his mom.

In the following panel, we see how Shifty leaves the box behind. Lifty, who stays present during the whole montage as an insecure and quiet presence, picks it up, hidden from his brother. Lifty follows Shifty and both flee during that same night, leaving Pop and Cub alone.



Montage 6 ends

Flashback ends

Back to the present, the pink bird observes the raccoons, sitting around the music box.

Shifty:
"Lifty, what are we doing?"

Lifty:
"I don't know, I just followed you"

Shifty:
"But why? You didn't want to do this"

Lifty:
"Well…you know!...We're…"

Lifty: (blushing, too proud to say "brothers")
"…a team"

Shifty sighs, before smiling in a knowing way, discrete and slightly proud.

Concluding the scene with the raccoons, we get back outside with the pink bird, who has perched on a tree near the window. We see she's moved, happy that her raccoons will finally know to get along. After that, something on the horizon calls her attention.

The last page would have the tree where we see the bird in the foreground, then the jungle, and finally, the sea, where we can see Russell's ship getting close to land.

End of Chapter 6.5