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This chapter will include:

- Small amounts of violence
- Small amounts of self-harm
- In one of the scenes, Mascot's inner monologue negatively talks about his use of a cane. This part isn't meant to be ableist to *anyone*, I am simply writing my struggles into a character (I also use a cane for the exact reason Mascot uses one + unfortunately share his exact struggles. Lol #CaneUsers❤️)

You have been informed.

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Date: May 17th, 2024

Time: 6:17 PM

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Li'l Sydney: NO!

The kitten screeched and fought against the orange paws holding her back. She trembled and her shoes slipped on the muddy ground. She *needed* to get to the edge, to see if Sydney had magically clawed onto an edge and was safe, she desperately needed to save her mother.

Li'l Sydney: Let me GO! STOP IT!

Tears rolled down her face as Peter held her back the best he could. He was terrified of Li'l Sydney falling too, he couldn't let her get hurt *right* when they found her.

Peter: I- I'm sorry, but you could get hurt, I- OW!

Li'l Sydney resorted to turning around and kicking him, trying to push him away with as much force she could. When that didn't work, she tried biting him as hard as she could or scratching him with her claws, but he *still* wouldn't let go. Just leave her ALONE!

Li'l Sydney: We have to HELP HER! We have to see if she held on somehow, if sh-she's still just in the water and- and trying to get out, if she's- if-

The kitten weakened herself out from punching and just started *crying*. Sobbing the hardest she'd ever had. She choked on her breaths, her vision had got all blurry, and snot ran down the front of her black nose.

She buried her head into Peter's shirt and sobbed the life out of herself. She tried apologizing for hurting him, but she couldn't even get coherent words out.

Peter's grip loosened and he rubbed her back. They were both wet and shivering cold from the rain, but this strange embrace brought warmth to the both of them.

Li'l Sydney quickly pulled away (while Peter still held onto her paw, just in case). She looked up at the sky and yelled as loud as she could.

Li'l Sydney: AUTO-ISM, we *NEED YOU!!*

Now all she had to do was wait. And soon enough, a few ***whooshing*** noises were heard from above and the square robot landed right in front of her.

Li'l Sydney: Get Mama, she fell down there- and *HURRY!*

They stood there for a moment and shook their head (well, the best that a headless robot could) as a way to say "no." Li'l Sydney glared at them with confusion.

Auto-ism's middle opened and revealed a screen that said: ***[Main objective: Keep Li'l Sydney Safe]***

Li'l Sydney: What!? But I am safe, I- just- *[stomping her feet on the ground]* WHY isn't anybody *LISTENING TO ME!?*

Without warning, Auto-ism grabbed the two felines and raced upwards. Peter yelped, while Li'l Sydney yelled and banged the robot's arms with her white paws.

Peter: H-hey, I asked you to warn me next time!

Auto gave a few machinery clinks in reply as an apology. They quickly landed right in front of Sydney's home. Auto-ism set the two down on the ground and raced back to where they previously were.

A nearby search party ran up to the two and crowded them. They asked if they were okay, where they found the kitten, what the whole robot thing was about, and- where's Sydney??

Peter: She- she fell off a cliff and- that robot is going to try and get her, someone call an ambulance- quickly!

Everyone stood around, not knowing what to do. No one pulled out their phones. They all expected someone else to do the task. Li'l Sydney growled and pointed to someone.

Li'l Sydney: YOU! *You* call 911!

The person frantically nodded and took out their phone to begin calling. The ambulance got there quite quickly since there were police on standby.

The medics rushed out of the van. Right when they stepped out, Auto-ism flew and landed just in time.

The thing the robot had in their arms was unintelligible. It looked humanoid, but its clothes were all tattered and scratched. The two cats caught sight of what looked to be what they assumed was a face, but it was barely recognizable. Its features were blocked, replaced by open wounds and dripping blood.

When both Li'l Sydney and Peter realized, the tabby quickly turned the kitten's face around.

Peter: Don't look, don't look,-

The kitten clung to his pant leg. She could hear the yelling of voices, but was too zoned out to know what they were fully saying.

"Oh my god, oh my god-"

"Don't just stand there, damnit, check the pulse- o-oh my christ."

"Th- there's no pulse, sir- I dont- I don't think we can even use de-defibrillation for her, sir-"

There were some clanking sounds (that sounded like Auto-ism- were they helping the medics?) and a sharp electric noise and smell. She heard the medics bustling around again.

"There- there's now a pulse, s-sir!"

"Get pressure on her wounds and get her in that damn ambulance!"

Li'l Sydney couldn't understand what was happening next, but they were probably going into the hospital truck. She felt Peter's paw rubbing the back of her head in an attempt to sooth her. It didn't work that well.

There was the sound of wheels driving away. They forgot to take the two with them. Li'l Sydney turned around and looked up to see Peter.

He looked horrified. She looked back at the cars and ambulance as they all drove away, their bright lights flashing in her eyes.



: Are you okay?

A bystander came up to the two. She was an old black and white tuxedo cat and wearing a pink jacket and dark brown pants. She held a small blue blanket in her arms.

: Here, do you need a blanket? You can have this one, I have dozens at my house and have no need for it,

Peter: Oh, th-thank you, but we're right in front of her house, so- so it's okay, we really don't need it

: Nonsense! You always need a blanket, no matter what

She smiled genuinely and handed Peter the blanket. The tabby took it appreciatively, smiling, and bent down. He carefully placed it around Li'l Sydney, making sure it didn't get on the dirty ground.

The crowd of people surrounding the area eventually all went away. A few remained, looking at the two cats huddling together.

Peter leaned down and looked at the kitten face to face.

Peter: *[gently]* Do you want to go inside?

Li'l Sydney: *[weakly]* They didn't take us with them. They just drove off.

Peter glanced to the side and sighed sorrowfully. He took a minute to regain his words.

Peter: I think we should go inside, and I can get you a cup of water. You can change your clothes, and we can then go to the hospital. Would that be okay?

Li'l Sydney thought about it for a moment and soon nodded. Peter stood back up, and Auto-ism went to follow them. Right when they were about to open the door to Sydney's home, they heard barking in the distance. Li'l Sydney turned around immediately to see Zuzu rushing up to them as fast as she could.

Li'l Sydney: ZUZU!

She ran into Zuzu's arms and clung to the back of her shirt with her claws. The dog-hybrid held Li'l Sydney protectively and growled at Peter, causing him to frantically stumble back in caution.

Li'l Sydney: *[stepping in front of her]* No, no, it's okay! He helped me, it's okay!

Zuzu calmed down and stopped baring her teeth. Li'l Sydney held onto one of Peter's pant legs while still trying to keep the blanket off the ground. Peter sighed in relief and gradually went to open the door to the house

The three stepped into the house and onto the red welcome-mat with Auto-ism behind them. Zuzu turned on one of the lights and Li'l Sydney looked up at the three.

Li'l Sydney: I'll go and change my clothes. Then we can go to the hospital, okay?

Peter nodded and took the blanket off of Li'l Sydney. She, Zuzu, and Auto-ism made their ways up the stairs as Peter carefully headed to the kitchen.

He anxiously walked up to the blue counter. He was allowed to get a cup, right? And use the sink? Gosh, he hated second guessing himself.

He told him that Li'l Sydney wanted it, so it was okay. Sydney couldn't get mad at him if Li'l Sydney wanted just a small cup of water. Peter opened one of the cupboards, hoping to find a cup. Thankfully, the first one he opened had some. The tabby took one of the plastic cups and put it under the water faucet.

Peter turned the water to cold and let it fill up the cup. He then waited until the three all came back downstairs.

He looked around the room. It was a good kitchen, and much bigger than his own. Which is, well, to be expected when comparing a small apartment to a giant building.

The counters and cupboards were a light teal/blue color, and the walls were a nice yellow. There was a window in front of the sink, which he had never noticed before.

A few thumps came from the stairs. Peter carefully walked towards the entrance- not wanting to spill the water- but Li'l Sydney rushed into the kitchen.

The kitten took the plastic cup from Peter and drank it all in one go. She set the cup down on the counter, grabbed Peter's sleeve, and ran to the front door.

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Time: 6:42 PM
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Auto-ism had flown the three of them to the hospital. They tried to warn Peter before they took off, but he wasn't able to understand in time. Oh well.

When they got there, the sheriff called Zuzu back to work, and they needed Auto-ism to help them. The dog kissed the top of Li'l Sydney's head, jumped into Auto's arms, and the two flew away.

Peter and Li'l Sydney were now sitting on the chairs in the waiting room. They weren't allowed to go into the room where Sydney was yet, and they were both *very* impatient and nervous.



Li'l Sydney: I should have brought my crayons.

Peter looked at the kitten with regret. He should have asked if there was anything she wanted to bring before they left, why hadn't he done that?? God, he was *rubbish* with kids.

Li'l Sydney: I'm- I'm sorry.

Peter confusingly looked back at the kitten.

Li'l Sydney: I'm sorry for leaving the front yard, and I'm sorry for- for hitting you and biting you and kicking you a-and- and not saying thank you for the water earlier and I'm s-I'm sorry f-for causing Mama t- to- to slip of-f of the edge and k- and killing- and hurting her- a-an- and- and I'm sorry for even bringing you and Gramma here and making you all fight and hurting your ear and I'm just- I- I'm not even s-sup- supposed to be like th-this- I'm-I'm a mistake because of th-the machine, I sh-should have been cloned to bbe older, and I'm the reason she-she's hurt now a- an- a-and-

Peter turned and hugged her tightly, and she clung onto his shoulders. Li'l Sydney sniffled into his shirt, getting tears and snot on the fabric. Peter didn't care one bit.

Peter: Shh, shh, it's okay, it's okay,

They comfortably stayed like that for the next few minutes. Peter combed the kitten's fur with his paws, gradually calming her down.

Li'l Sydney: *[pulling away from the hug and wiping her nose with her shirt]* I'm- I'm sorry,

Peter: You have absolutely *nothing* to be sorry about. Listen to me.

Peter: You did nothing wrong. It isn't your fault Sydney is hurt, it wasn't your fault we were fighting the other day, and it wasn't your fault my ear *[gesturing to his bandaged ear]* got scratched. Things will be better. They won't be perfect, but trust me when I say that they will be better

Li'l Sydney nodded weakly and held out her paw.

Li'l Sydney: Do- do you promise?

Peter: I absolutely promise

They did the well-known gesture of a pinky promise.

Peter's gaze wandered to a side table near Li'l Sydney. There was a notepad for the hospital and a pen sitting by a lamp. He carefully got up, grabbed the two, and sat back down in the blue seat.

Peter: Do.. do you wanna play tic-tac-toe?

Li'l Sydney tilted her head at the other in confusion.

Peter: Do you know what tic-tac-toe is?

Li'l Sydney: *[shaking her head]* What's that?

Peter: Well, here, lemme teach you

Peter drew a hashtag on the paper with the blue pen.

Peter: You start with 6 lines. You add a symbol, either an x or a circle, and then the next person plays their symbol.

He demonstrated by drawing an x on the top right corner and giving the pen to Li'l Sydney. She drew a circle right under his x and handed the pen back to him.

Peter: You gotta try and get 3 of your symbols in a row first, and block out the other person from getting 3

He placed an x in the top middle, and Li'l Sydney put a circle in the top left corner. They kept playing until Li'l Sydney won the match.

Li'l Sydney: That was surprisingly fun,

Peter: Do you wanna play again?

Li'l Sydney: Sure! *[smiling]*

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Time: 7:04 PM
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Mascot was hurriedly driving to the hospital. He was told about what happened because one of his friends- who worked at the hospital- casually told him out of nowhere. He dropped everything he was doing to leave his “welcome-back-from-jail” party (his brother and friends jokingly threw it) and rushed down there in his truck.

Mascot stared at the gray road while regret poured into his mind. If only he had stayed to help more. If he wasn't so tired all the time, he could actually *help* and maybe Sydney could be safe.

If he looked harder, maybe he could have found Li'l Sydney and prevented this all from happening. If he wasn't so *goddamn* tired all the time, *none* of this would have *happened*-

Mascot sighed and tried to calm down. He tried to soften his grip on the steering wheel and take deep breaths. It's no use worrying about it now. Sydney is at least *alive*, and her kid is okay. At least, one of them is. Things will work out.

Now Mascot kept wondering about what Sydney had to go through. God, thinking about it made him sick. No one should ever have to go through anything like that. An abusive childhood, a husband that left, a son that died.

She was the bravest cat he ever knew, and she was his closest friend. He wouldn't know what he would do without her.

Mascot pulled his truck into the hospital parking lot reserved for visitors. He parked and rested his head on the black steering wheel for a moment.

He breathed steadily, just like he taught the people he used to work with. In, out. In, out.

He was soon calm enough to open his door and take out his blue cane from the back seat.

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Mascot was told he couldn't see her right now. He was sent to the waiting room, where he immediately saw Li'l Sydney.

Mascot: Oh, Li'l Sydney, you're okay- thank goodness

He walked up to them, and the kitten jumped up to hug his leg.

Li'l Sydney: Hi Mascot! Mama said that you're not in jail anymore like her and I've been excited to see you!

Mascot smiled and looked up to see Peter sitting on one of the chairs, staring at the two. His eyes widened when he realized Mascot saw him and he quickly turned his head away.

Mascot: Here, can I sit down?

Li'l Sydney nodded and sat back down on the floor. Peter turned his head back, and soon realized that Mascot was asking *him*.

Peter: [awkwardly] Oh, uh, yeah, sorry- you can sit down,

He sat next to Peter and set his cane to the side, while Li'l Sydney sat on the floor in front of them. She had a coloring page and some old broken crayons.

Li'l Sydney: The nice doctor at the desk gave me these to color with,

Mascot: Oh, that was nice of them

Li'l Sydney nodded and picked up a crayon.

Li'l Sydney: Can I draw you? I like your shirt.

Mascot, who was wearing a funky-colored Hawaiian shirt, smiled like he just won the best award in the entire world.

Mascot: Of course! But don't forget to add how *handsome* and *perfect* my face is [joking]

Li'l Sydney laughed, and Peter let out a chuckle. He nervously went quiet when Mascot looked at him, awkwardly turning away to the side.

Peter was sure that Mascot didn't like him- and why should he? Sydney most likely told him all that happened, he probably *hates* his guts- just like her.

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Time: 8:30 PM
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It was starting to get darker, but Li'l Sydney refused to leave. She would only leave if she got to see Sydney, and know that she was okay. Part of Peter and Mascot wanted that too.

They spent their time waiting by doing whatever their minds could muster. Playing tic-tac-toe, making paper airplanes out of the paper Li'l Sydney was given. Mascot knew how to make some origami, which was *very* impressive.

Peter and Mascot actually had a few good conversations together. Peter hoped that this meant they weren't on bad terms, he *really* didn't want to make anyone mad or hate him.

The topic seemed to be about Sydney now, with the kitten chirping in to add some things.

Peter: If- if you don't mind me asking, how do you know Sydney again? Just curious

Mascot: Oh, we shared the same jail cell in that cat prison from yesterday. It was *not* a good place- and it didn't help that Sydney *frequently* escaped- leaving me all alone! [small laugh]

Peter: J-jail!? I never knew Sydney went to jail.. goodness, what did she do to get put in *jail*!?

Mascot: Oh, um. She used to be one of those, like, mad scientists, yknow?

Peter looked at him confusingly.

Mascot: She built and illegally sold murderous robots?

Peter kept staring at him, nothing ringing a bell.

Mascot: “Sydney, the world’s most evilest cat”?

The tabby kept staring at him while Mascot waited expectedly.

Mascot: [raising his arms up exasperatingly] Cmon, it was all over the news!

Peter looked to the side with a guilty expression and rubbed the back of his head.

Peter: I don't- don't watch the news,

Mascot gave an exaggerated sigh and playfully rolled his eyes.

Mascot: Well, that's basically it. She also broke a *lot* of public property, but within the past few months she has been trying to be good. She was pardoned from jail just a few days ago, actually!

Li'l Sydney: Because of ME!

Li'l Sydney smiled widely. She was lying on her back and looking up at the two.

Li'l Sydney: She wanted an evil clone but the clone was little and not evil. That clone was *me* by the way, I was referring to me!

Li'l Sydney: She really really really really *really* didn't like me at first and tried to make me evil but then *I* made *her* not evil and now she loves me *[grins widely]*

Peter: Oh, I didn't know you were a clone

Well, that at least explains a bit of what she had been saying earlier during her meltdown.

Li'l Sydney: It's alright, *nobody* knows I'm a clone until I tell them. I was created back in, uh.. *[counts fingers]* December 8th!

Peter: Really? I would have guessed you were at *least* 8 years old, hm

Li'l Sydney: Yeah, it's weird *[rolling over onto her stomach and looking up at the two normally]* Mama doesn't know why that is, but her guess is that my aging should slow down now. *Or* at least until I look like an adult.

Li'l Sydney: *Also*, do you know why she was pardoned from jail?

Peter: No, I don't think you told m-

Li'l Sydney *[cutting him off excitedly]* She saved some people from a fire! She didn't even need me or Auto-ism to convince her, she just did it all by herself!

Mascot: Oh, nice! I think she told me that already, I'm very proud of her

Li'l Sydney: *[nodding happily]* She also saved my friends before that but I had to convince her to. She made a giant robot that she made to look like herself and she said it was just for building practice and she'd destroy it for parts later. I don't know what the *heck* "practice" she needed, she's already brilliant at it all!

Peter: Did she finally go to college for it? She really wanted to, I always hoped she'd get there one day

Mascot: *[turning towards Peter]* She once told me she actually had been saving up to go, but with her bad history she decided to put it aside for Li'l Sydney

Li'l Sydney: *[cocking her head to the side]* For me?

Mascot: *[turning towards her and smiling]* Yeah! She told me that a few weeks ago I'm pretty sure

Li'l Sydney glanced at the paper in front of her and smiled. She picked up an orange crayon and started coloring the best drawing she could ever make.

A few gentle footsteps interrupted the three. They all looked to see the guy who was at the waiting-desk walking towards them. He had big brown ears, a long skinny tail, a white face mask, and a light blue hospital shirt on.

: I'm really sorry, but you guys have to leave now- it's too late, you really should be heading home

Li'l Sydney: What!? We *can't* leave until we know she's okay!

: It's alright, she's okay- she's just in a coma. We can keep the paper and crayons out if you would like to come back tomorrow

Peter sighed and reached for his jacket.

Peter: *[gently]* Cmon, we have to clean this stuff up now- can you say thank you for letting you use the crayons?

Li'l Sydney: *[turning towards the guy]* Thank you for letting me use your crayons,

: *[smiling]* You're welcome! I always make sure to save some for any of the kids that come by here

Li'l Sydney gathered the art utensils together and handed them to the nurse/doctor. He smiled and turned back towards the desk.

She put all of her drawings in a neat pile and stood up. Mascot got up from his seat with his cane and stretched his arms up.

The three awkwardly stood there for a moment until Mascot spoke up.

Mascot: Well, I should get going now, *[bending down to face Li'l Sydney]* Bye, I'll see you later!

Li'l Sydney waved her own goodbye.

Mascot: And, uh, bye Peter, it was nice getting to know you,

Peter: Oh, uh, it- it was nice getting to know you, too,

Peter was *incredibly* relieved that Mascot didn't hate him. He'd been worried about that all evening!

Mascot turned away towards the exit with his cane while Li'l Sydney pulled on Peter's pant leg.

Li'l Sydney: Peter, how are we gonna get home?

Peter's eyes widened and he slapped himself in the face with his paw.

Peter: Oh god, we're gonna have to take the bus. It's-it's horrible at this hour, and I don't even know where you live! I had to run around the last time I got to your house, and even then I got lucky,

Mascot turned around and took a few steps towards the two.

Mascot: Well, uh, I can drive you guys in my truck,

Li'l Sydney: Hurrah! I can tell you the directions to Zuzu's.

Peter: Oh, Mascot- are- are you sure?

Mascot: Of course!

Peter: Well- thank you, thank you very much

He smiled at the maine coon and followed him and Li'l Sydney out the door. Mascot parked close to the building, so it didn't take long for them to get to his red truck.

Li'l Sydney hopped into the backseat and Mascot set his cane on the floor. He shut the door and got into the front seat. Peter sat on the passenger side in the front.

Li'l Sydney set her drawings on the seat next to her. Her eyes drifted to the cane next to her. She admired the metallic blue color and bits of stickers pasted onto it.

Li'l Sydney: Why do you need a cane?

Peter tensed, worried that the kitten was accidentally being rude said the wrong thing. Mascot smiled and started the truck.

Mascot: Well, I just have a *lot* of pain in my body, mainly my muscles and joints. The cane really helps me keep some weight off my feet and make sure my balance is good

Li'l Sydney: Oh. Do you know why?

Mascot: Well, I don't have an official diagnosis for anything, the doctor's took a bunch of tests and they thankfully- or unfortunately- all came back completely normal. They just give me some medicine to help and I go to a physical therapy appointment once every other week- well, in the jail that would happen. Now I'm going to try and go every week, the "every other week" thing was *not* working out *[lightly chuckles]*

Li'l Sydney: Oh. That's interesting and also I really like your cane with all the stickers, I think I have some stickers at Mama's that I can give to you.

Mascot: Oh, cool! And thank you *[smiles]*

He drove and played music on the radio while Li'l Sydney shouted all sorts of directions at him. Eventually they came close to where the dog's house was and the truck was parked in a nearby parking lot. Li'l Sydney jumped down and skipped towards the house, her drawings in her paws.

Zuzu must have heard them, because she was then standing outside the house when they arrived. She and Li'l Sydney ran up to each other and rushed into a hug.

Li'l Sydney: *[turning around and walking up to Peter and Mascot]* Thank you for driving me, I'll see you guys soon!

Mascot: Bye!

Mascot and Peter both smiled and waved. The kitten made her way inside the house and the front door closed.

Mascot: So, uh, to your house next!

Peter: Oh, um, I actually live in an apartment complex- I can still give you the directions, though, *[awkwardly laughs]*

They walked back to the truck and started driving off. Peter gave directions as best as he could remember, and they thankfully made it to his apartment.

Mascot parked the truck in one of the parking lanes and turned his attention over to Peter.

Mascot: Well, uh, see you later!

**Peter: Yeah, and thank you, a lot, for driving me- it really helps a lot, the buses are
*horrible***

Mascot: Again, no problem!

Peter unbuckled his seat belt and opened the door.

Mascot: Oh, wait, here-

Peter waited and Mascot opened up the passenger seat glove box. He grabbed a pen and a white napkin and began writing something.

Mascot: *[handing Peter the napkin]* Here's my number for emergencies!

Peter: Oh, uh, thank you-!

The tabby took the napkin and put it in his jacket pocket. Mascot smiled at him, and he returned the expression with a wave. The truck door shut and Peter steadily made his way to the apartment doors. When he looked behind him he saw the red truck pulling out of the parking spot and driving away.

He walked up the stairs and finally made his way to his front door. Peter walked in, shut the door behind him, leaned against the door and sighed defeatedly.

Peter was *exhausted*. Spending all day walking, going to the hospital, all of the *stress*. It was all too much for him.

He slugged towards his room. When he passed the red calendar on the wall, he froze. He looked at the *May 15th* box. It was scratched out with a giant black marker.

Peter remembered when he did that earlier in the day. He had hung the calendar back up, and in his *grief*, he scribbled out the date.

He gripped the calendar and ripped it off the wall. He shouldn't have done that, it will be a pain to get it back on the hook.

If he didn't leave, Petey would be alive. If he wasn't so awkward and scared, Sydney would be okay. He's hurting the people he loves. Anyone close to him is surely bound to be doomed.

The tabby's paws trembled, the agony of his thoughts filling his body with too much pain. He didn't know what to do, he didn't know how to stop feeling like this.

He ripped the *May* section of the calendar in half, trying to get some sort of release. His paws wanted to claw and scratch, but his lack of claws tortured him.

He tore the previous months in half and then into little pieces. When that wasn't enough, he tried scratching his arm, soon starting to hit his limbs hard

Peter soon realized what he was doing and slowly came to a halt. He breathed heavily and looked down at his paws.

He was sitting on the ground now, the calendar in pieces beneath him. He looked at his arm and gently rubbed it.

Peter winced. That was *surely* going to hurt in the morning.

Why on *Earth* did he do that?? Sure, he was calm now, but he *hurt*- yet he wasn't sure if he hated it or not.

He looked down at the wooden floor and frowned. He should just go to bed.

Peter stood up and slowly sauntered into his bedroom. He gently landed on his bed and got under the covers. He took Mascot's napkin out of his pocket.

He looked at the number and wondered if there would be a time he would ever need to call him. Mascot was friends with Sydney, but maybe, if Sydney was okay with it, they could hang out. He was a really nice cat, and Peter needed someone to talk to.

Remembering what he thought just moments earlier about Petey and Sydney, the tabby sorrowfully sighed and placed the napkin on his bedside table. Peter shouldn't rely on others to make him feel better. In his mind, he told himself he was being selfish.

He tossed and turned on his mattress and eventually just looked up at the ceiling. He should just sleep everything off.

Peter closed his eyes, accepting where sleep would take him next.

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Date: May 26th, 2006
Time: 10:01 PM
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They spent the next few days following the same schedule. Auto-ism would drop Peter and Li'l Sydney off at the hospital. The two would wait to see if Sydney would wake up from her coma soon. Sometimes Mascot would wait with them, and they'd either drive home with him or fly off with Auto-ism. Peter *much* preferred being driven home.

They used to wait on the chairs outside, but now it was okay to go inside the room Sydney was in.

It was strange. Sydney was perfectly okay. Her face and body had seemed to heal instantly, and her wrists and paws were fine. Even her *clothes* were fixed- it was as if nothing had happened to her at all.

The only thing that remained as a reminder from the past week was the scar on her right paw. It was from the glass cut when she crushed the cup in her paws.

Peter and Li'l Sydney were now walking down the hospital hallway towards her room. Li'l Sydney had a backpack filled with paper and markers. She didn't like being bored, and it gave her something to give to her Mama when she woke up.

They accidentally walked past the room, and Li'l Sydney had to tell Peter. He apologized and they turned around.

When they walked in, they took their seats near the door across from the hospital bed. Li'l Sydney promptly unzipped her bag to get her supplies while Peter looked at the bed.

Sydney was laying there, unconscious. As much as Peter hated the eariness of her expression, she looked strangely peaceful. It was a face he'd seen a million times before. Times when he'd wake up before her for work, and times when he'd come back home from his night shifts to see her sleeping.

Peter felt a poke on the side of his arm. He turned to see Li'l Sydney staring up at him.

Li'l Sydney: I got you a paper so you could color with me.

She handed him a piece of paper on top of a clipboard she found.

Li'l Sydney: I always feel sad that you have nothing to do and you seem bored, so you can borrow my crayons.

Peter: Oh, thank you,

He took the white paper and Li'l Sydney started coloring on her own.

Peter wasn't good with art. He tried to draw when he was a kid, but he never liked how anything turned out, so he simply stopped.

He picked up an orange crayon and drew a circle. Maybe he could try to draw himself. He grabbed a dark green crayon and a brown crayon, coloring his shirt and his stripes.



Li'l Sydney: Did you know that the Earth gets most of its oxygen from the ocean instead of trees? It's because of the, um... because of stuff on the ocean surface.. I forgot what it is. But it's true, I read it from a book.

Peter: I didn't know, that's interesting

They sat on the chairs in a peaceful silence. The small fan and the **beeps** of the heart monitor filled the room. There was the occasional shuffling of feet outside the hallway.

The heart monitor started getting faster. The two fearfully looked up simultaneously. Peter quickly jumped up and frantically yelled out to the hallway, alerting one of the nurses, who ran to alert the doctors.

The heart monitor got faster and faster, it seemed like it was about to flatline- but it didn't. Its beats just rapidly quickened, never forming a straight line or noise.

Right before the doctors raced into the room, the calico on the bed sat straight up and gasped.

She was alive. She was completely and utterly *alive*.

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