Running Antivirus Response

It had been several days since the entire internet of the city had been shut down completely for several hours as they tried to determine the cause of a massive computer virus outbreak that had destroyed several virtual reality hubs including a central city hug. Even though teams of special investigative units had been brought down to the city to investigate no group was any closer to the truth than when the incident actually happened. They had initially managed to narrow down the primary infection to the central data hub that serviced a large area of the city, but when they went there to try and find others who could corroborate their evidence they either were too far away from the destruction to see what happened or they were extremely uncooperative. One snow leopard in particular seemed to have a string of bad luck as he had the twentieth straight door slammed in his face.

“I hate my job right now…” the feline said as he moved over to the next door. “Maybe this will be lucky number twenty-one.” As he was about to knock on the door it suddenly opened for him, and just as he was about to start his pitch he had to crane his head up and keep his jaw from dropping to the ground. The wolfess that stood in front of him was huge, at least head and shoulders taller than him and wore only what appeared to be a modified neoprene sensory suits.

“Can I help you?” she asked as she looked down at him.

“Yeah… uh, hi there,” the snow leopard stammered slightly before he finally found his words once again and cleared his throat. “My name is Special Agent Frost and I’m here to talk to you about the attack that happened on the node in this area. I was hoping that you may be able to help me with what happened at that time, Mrs…”

“You can just call me Stormy,” Stormy replied as she gave him a fanged grin. “Special Agent Frost huh? Didn’t realize they were bringing the big guns out on this one.”

“Well there was near catastrophic damage done to several nodes in the area besides the central city one,” Frost explained. “Strangely it seems that most people around here don’t want anything to do with us even though we’re trying to help, especially in your building. You’re the first person that’s allowed me to get more than four words out before they slammed the door in my face.”

“They probably thought that you’d go snooping around their personal business,” Stormy replied as her grin widened slightly. “Why don’t you come inside? I think I may have something that will help you out, I found it in my personal VR space and due to the restriction on node access I haven’t been able to submit a ticket for it yet.”

The snow leopard nodded and tried not to look relieved as the hulking canine allowed him access. He was so grateful to finally get a potential lead he failed to notice the almost predatory look on Stormy’s face as she closed the door behind him. As they walked inside Frost commented on how clean everything was, something that Stormy remarked that she made sure her home was something to be proud of. In reality several of the people that she had consumed while on her rampage had belonged to cleaning services who were more than willing to come to her dwelling to clean it for her.

Once they got to the living room Stormy asked Frost if he wanted anything to drink and he asked for some tea. While she made it the snow leopard pulled out his datapad in order to log the fact he had finally made contact with someone, but frowned as he failed to get any sort of connection. After several attempts he sighed and put it back, with no hub to communicate the standard lines used for more rudimentary communication were still likely flooded. Instead he got up and looked around a bit while he waited for the wolfess to get back, and as he passed by the bedroom something caught his eye that caused him to gasp slightly in surprise.

“You got the new XI-43 VR and AR processor?” he said just as Stormy came back with two mugs, the wolfess nodding while she handed it to her. “That’s unbelievable, how did you manage to get yourself one? I thought they were going for like twenty thousand credits and were completely sold out.”

“Well don’t tell anyone but I happen to have a contact at the factory that made them and he sold me one on the cheap,” she said as she sipped her own drink while she watched the snow leopard examine her new toy. The truth was somewhat close to that, though it was due to the contributions of her loyal followers as well as skimming a few accounts herself that allowed her to make such a grandiose purchase. “Now you said you were investigating the attack at the central city hub?”

Frost had to tear himself away from the technologically advanced piece of equipment in order to look back at the wolfess. ”We have quite a few teams out at the moment trying to figure out what is happening,” he explained to her. “The fact of the matter is that destruction of his scale in such a short amount of time is unprecedented, and if we don’t find the source of it and shut it down then the next time it happens they may not be able to reverse the damage. Now I know this is a bit of a long-shot but did you see anything strange going on in either your personal node or did you happen to be at the hub during the time of the attack?”

“Well,” Stormy began to say as she got up. “I was mostly just chilling in my own personal node when the network shutdown happened, but while I was wondering why my access to the main hub was shut down I did notice something strange that I managed to record. I left it in my note, you’re more than welcome to go in and give it a look if you want.”

Frost could hardly contain himself as he nodded. Not only was he going to try out the wolfess’ badass set-up but he may finally get a lead on this case. Stormy smiled at him and got up to go to her room, then poked her head out and told him that she was ready to patch him in when he was. The snow leopard almost hopped onto the chair offered him, stripping off his clothes to reveal the neoprene suit below it. Had he not closed his eyes to get ready to get hooked up to the system he would have seen the hungry, almost feral look that Stormy gave him before she hooked him up.

A few minutes later the snow leopard opened his eyes again and looked around the node that contained Stormy’s virtual world. While he wasn’t sure if the wolfess was watching on her viewscreen he reported to her what he saw, which wasn’t good. Most of the assets in the area had been smashed to some degree, though as he continued to move forward he suddenly realized that the single plot of land he was on was not the only land she owned. As he pushed forward his jaw dropped in awe at the city that had been created beyond this simple area, a string of nodes owned by her and maintained by a multitude of people. When he looked on the server list of those currently connected to the node he found hundreds of names, all of them with the same tag SotG.

“Stormy… I have to say this is unreal,” he said as he moved back to the original and oldest building, though there wasn’t much left of it. “When you told me you had a personal node I didn’t realize it was so expansive! No wonder you need such powerful hardware… if I had this much data running though my node I’d probably blow out my rig. And how in the world did you get so many people to help you on this, what do they get out of it?”

As Frost got closer to the destroyed building there was only silence on his comms, but when he reached the door he got his answer. “They get the chance to worship me,” Stormy’s reply came in, the word’s chilling Frost to the bone at the certainty of it. “Just like you will.”

Frost immediately tried a hard disconnect from the world but found himself unable too, and when he tried to reach the exit portal he found it blocked. When he tried to open a channel to the outside world he found his text screen flooded with the same two words over and over again… join us. The snow leoaprd’s virtual avatar began to shake as he began to run towards the city only to see a number of others walk towards him, some of them nearly double his height and with all of them with electric blue eyes that stared at him. As a last ditch effort he entered the house to try and find some sort of portal key, wiggling through the wreckage in the search of anything that he could use to try and make a desperate escape.

What he found instead was an old malware case, one that had been already opened and used quite a while ago. “My god…” he said as he picked it up. “The virus… it-“

He hardly got to finish his sentence before the roof of the small building was lifted up and tossed aside, the naked wolfess towering over him as she looked down at him with a malicious grin as her eyes glowed. Before he had a chance to run she leaned down and picked him up with two fingers, swiftly bringing him up to eye level. “Please!” he shouted as he hung so far above the ground that he could hardly make out those that had gathered below him. “Just let me go and you’ll never have to see me again, and I won’t tell anyone that you’re the virus!”

“You got one part of that right,” Stormy replied as she tipped back her head and opened her muzzle, the snow leopard squirming as he was raised even higher before she let go. He let out a loud scream that was music to the kaiju virus’s ears as he plummeted down towards her own maw, disappearing down inside it before she snapped her jaws shut. At the point the process of assimilating such a small avatar was near instantaneous, almost immediately the avatar reappeared and ran up to her feet. Once he got there he buried his entire body into her fur and proclaimed everything he was as her, the Servant of the Goddess tag appearing next to his name just like all the others.

When they returned to the real world once more Stormy snapped out of her trance before the snow leopard reconnected with his body. She had been getting better at not needed a rig in order to get into the virtual world, but that was mainly because of the powerful hardware that was also hers. At this point she knew that anything else would be far harder, though she hoped that she would be getting the proper access at this time. She got up and moved over to the snow leopard just as he opened his eyes, which now glowed blue in her vision as he immediately fell to the floor and began to nuzzle at her feet.

“I would have thought that you military types would have a little stronger resistance to my reprogramming than that,” she said with almost a sigh. “Was sort of hoping for a challenge… oh well. I guess I will just have to settle for all the information you have on the defensive measures they’re planning to try to find and destroy me.”

“Yes goddess,” Frost said as he returned to a sitting position. “While I’m not privy to all the information on the current operation I must tell you right now that you are in dire danger…”

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Meanwhile in the parking lot of an abandoned shopping mall a huge tent was set up, flanked by all sorts of vehicles including an eighteen-wheeler that was backed right up to it. On the inside of the tent a dozen armed guards sat and waited as the door slowly opened and revealed the only piece of cargo it held inside. “Well no one told me that there was going to be a party,” the shadowy creature said as his glowing green eyes peered out from the darkness. “If I had known I would have brought a cake or something.”

“Shut up technomancer,” a male tiger dressed all in black said as he walked up the ramp to the glass cube that contained the creature within. “You know why you’re here and you know what we need of you. We also know that just bringing you up to the surface is an extreme risk, which is why you’re not going to leave that box until you’re safely back in your cell. That box, by the way, is triggered by electrical signals to deliver a fatal shock of electricity to your body should you try and access any systems outside of the ones we specifically give you. Do you understand?”

“I understand that you guys are seriously paranoid,” the creature replied with a laugh before he looked to the guards that were positioned outside. “Don’t suppose I could get a few of you to push this box into a drive-thru? I’m not picky, even order off the dollar menu if that government budget of yours blew the load on the box and accommodations.”

The man shook his head and left the trailer to the sound of the creature’s laughter, meeting up with a serpentine scientist that had started to walk with him. “We made all the arrangements we could on such short notice General Hasker,” he explained as he handed the other man a chart. “The tent that we’re surrounded by is essentially a giant faraday cage and we’ve planted jammers as deep into the ground as we could go without losing signal integrity. Along with the portable living quarters he’s secured in you should have no trouble containing his power while he looks for the potential cause of this.”

“It’s the looking part that I’m worried about,” Hasker replied as he looked over the notes. “Last time this monster was on the loose we nearly lost an entire city to his twisted desires. I saw the damage, even when he had been removed those who had been brainwashed by him still kept this drone avatar that he made them install and wanted nothing more than to serve him. Now we got this rabid dog on a leash and are trying to use him to sniff out another rabid dog.”

“I can assure you sir that this leash is a little stronger than most,” the serpent replied. “The computer terminal that the technomancer will be using is completely black boxed and unable to access the internet itself. The only thing it can do is call in information, so while he can get the data he needs he has no way of sending any data out. All that will be handled by an intermediary that he won’t be allowed to touch, essentially continuing to cut him off from the virtual world.”

Hasker merely grunted in reply and waved the other man off, continuing to stare at the papers he had been given. Due to the potential for infection no one inside the tent was allowed to have any sort of electronic device on them. This meant that everything had to be done old school, even the use of old fashioned trolley lifts in order to get the mobile prison cell out of the semi and into the quarantined zone. Once they had finished the creature was finally brought out into the light, the draconic sabrewolf grinning at Hasker as he held out a hand.

“Well then,” the technomancer said. “Shall we begin?”

Once Stormy had been completely briefed by the turncoat she sent him on the way. Though the snow leopard was more than reluctant to leave her side he didn’t turn down her order at all, leaving the wolfess alone to ponder her next course of action. She shouldn’t have been surprised that they military would respond to her presence but the mention of this new cyberweapon of theirs had her slightly disconcerted. What made things worse was that the main operation was staying completely off the grid for some reason, which made tracking them down even harder.

Assimilating the snow leopard gave the giant canine a plan though, one that would require a bit of risk but great reward if she pulled it off. Up until that point she hadn’t left the building, remaining content to allow her acolytes to build a city that she would occasionally come in and have a smash at. While it was somewhat satisfying it wasn’t the same as taking over the raw data of another individual, something she just got the taste of once again when she ate that avatar. Now her hunger had arisen once again, something that needed to be satiated by the outside world. The thought of corrupting and destroying data and avatar alike caused her to lick her lips and press her hands against the neoprene that covered her breasts, though after only a short while she grew bored with the sensations and stopped.

She sighed as she looked out the window. Though she knew that the snow leopard would have had sex with her in a heartbeat it wasn’t something that she was interested in. Mating with such an inferior being was beneath her, just like all the buildings and avatars she had crushed in the real world. While she had hoped that maybe a specialist would have been more enticing it ended just like with the others, a disappointment.

Right now what she needed was information, and though she could just wait for Frost to try and find more for her she needed to be proactive. The next morning she awoke to start her investigation, gathering information from her drones in order to figure out where to go next. It didn’t take long for her to find an answer, several of them reporting that a large military operation had been set up in the area of the old mall. She used all the infected phones and electronics as a means to scan the area, but when she did she frowned when a large area of her map turned up as a black hole. The only thing that she could think of was that they were somehow jamming everything within a certain radius, which meant that it was going to need a personal touch as she grabbed her coat and walked outside.

For the first time in a while Stormy walked the city streets with only her coat and her neoprene interface suit, though it was the fact that she stood head and shoulders above the rest of the anthros that caused people to take looks. Even the naturally large horses and dragons that normally towered over others had to crane their heads up to look into her eyes. Occasionally as she walked she would see someone with glowing blue eyes given her a nod, her loyal minions continuing to live their lives as normal like she instructed. Eventually she got a small coffee shop that was just outside the area of the mall that she ducked inside.

Even this far away she could feel a sense of unease about the area from there, as though her existence would simply evaporate if she stepped too close to it. It also seemed to be interfering with the local wifi here as well, hearing the barista complain more than once that she couldn’t get a signal. People that were inside the coffee shop all had the same sad, forlorn look on their faces as they drank their coffees and stared off into the abyss, likely a result of withdrawal from the virtual world that they had been cut off from. Stormy knew the feeling all too well and lamented the fact she couldn’t help them out be eating or stomping on them in real life.

As time passed Stormy continued to try and figure out how she could learn more about the strange tent that they had set up and the contents therein, but anyone who was there had military credentials and without any sort of internet she couldn’t get close enough to determine whether they had any sort of RFID or anything like that. She needed one of them to go outside of the signal dead zone in order to get a better read on their situation, and when she saw outdoor patrols she had an idea that just might work.

While she sat in the booth of the coffee shop she closed her eyes and used the internet the coffee shop used in order to get her presence back out into the internet. Though it was nothing like the virtual world she found with enough practice she could manipulate electronics and machinery that she hadn’t infected yet into doing simple tasks for her. She could feel herself begin to sweat as she targeted once place in particular, the small atmospheric satellites that helped control the weather of the region. It took considerable effort and she could feel herself strain to connect as many of the nodes as possible before she gave them a simple command, nothing more than a flick of the switch before she returned to her body with a gasp.

Stormy didn’t have to wait long to see if it worked. The white, puffy clouds of the sky began to darken and thicken as it blotted out the sun. People in the streets looked up as rain that was not supposed to fall today started to come down in droves, causing people to scatter as they used whatever they could to protect themselves from the deluge. The wolfess grinned and took a drink, waiting for what she hoped would be the fruits of her labor to come into the door.

About ten minutes later she saw two military anthros suddenly come into the coffee shop, their bodies soaked to the bone as they cursed the sudden change of weather. “Now it says that there’s going to be a downpour today,” the fox said angrily as he looked up at the television that was playing in the coffee shop. “I wonder how long ago they chose to update that little piece of information.”

“It could have been this morning for all we know,” the lizardman said angrily as he tried unsuccessfully to shake the water off of his clothes. “I hate the fact we can’t have our phones on us at all while we’re on patrol, do they really think that we’re going to go crazy because we want to check on our profile updates in the vicinity of that thing?”

“Well I heard that those who were affected by it before acted like they were possessed,” the fox replied. “I don’t know about you but I’d rather not have that happen to me. Now hurry up, we only have like ten minutes to order and I don’t want to get yelled at today because I took too long to get a cup of coffee, they’ll think we’re just trying to wait it out until we get mall duty.”

Stormy’s frown deepened as she processed what was being said while the two military personnel went up to the counter. While they never mentioned exactly what it was the fact that it was so dangerous they couldn’t have electronics around it was disconcerting. It also provided another problem that since none of the military personnel had any sort of electronics on them it meant that they weren’t particularly vulnerable to her machinations either. That meant unless she snuck into the area blind and powerless she wasn’t going to get in at all. As she continued to watch the two she saw something that caused her to regain hope that all was not lost quite yet.

Despite their embargo on electronics she saw the lizardman pay for his coffee with a paypass, a small electronic device that securely keeps all your routing information and doesn’t work unless it’s close to your person. That meant it had a connection to the lizardman himself, which means that she could potentially corrupt it. Unfortunately the signal on that device is particularly week to avoid accidental charges and hackers, but she potentially had a way around it as she gulped down the rest of her coffee and moved towards the counter.

She had discovered during her down time that if an item was small enough and had an electronic signal she could cause the physical object to move, like a form of electronic telekinesis. Up until this point she had only moved a small square of plastic that contained a memory card, now she was about to try something much bigger. When she got close to the two she pretended to wait for the fox to give his order, which thankfully was a long one as the held her hand near the pocket where she had seen the lizardman put the paypass. The wolfess concentrated as hard as she could without looking too obvious, and saw the cloth begin to twitch when a sudden shout from the lizardman to hurry up caused her to jump and lose focus.

When the lizardman moved over to the other side of the counter to look at the deserts that were stored there Stormy tried not to growl as she pretended to do the same, once more holding her hand close to his pocket in order to pull it up. She could feel the energy that came off the device as she clasped a mental hand around the item. Just as she did the lizardman squatted down to read the description of the pie there, and Stormy’s eyes widened when the paypass continued to hover there where it had been in the male’s pocket a few seconds ago. Before anyone could see a floating device she snatched down and grabbed it, curling her fingers victoriously around it as her corruptive code began to seep inside.

It only took a few seconds before it was fully compromised, and though she could wait for it to happen all on her own it would go much faster if he paid for something to access the account. When the military fox finished up her order she took a few steps back and knelt down, then went over to the lizardman and tapped him on the shoulder. “Excuse me,” she said as she held out the device. “I think you dropped this?”

The lizardman’s eyes widened slightly as he went down to his pocket to find it empty, then looked back up at her. “Thank you kindly,” he said as he took it from her. “I would have been in big trouble if I had lost this.”

“Well luckily for you I was just coming up here for a refill,” Stormy said as she tried to flirt a little. “Had I not craved another drink someone less scrupulous might have come and picked it up without a word to anyone.”

“Well I guess you can count me lucky,” the lizardman said as the wolfess waited to hear the words she desperately wanted to hear. “How about I buy that refill for you? Least I could do for you saving me from having to cancel this and get a replacement.”

Stormy breathed a mental sigh of relief as she accepted his offer, watching with internal glee as he used his paypass once again to pay for her cheap refill. The two thanked each other once again and she went back to her booth, watching the lizardman and fox as they waited for their orders to come up. She didn’t have to wait long as the lizardman suddenly told the fox that he had to go the bathroom, then turned and walked towards the bathrooms while he began to shake his head. The fox looked confused for a second before he continued to wait, which was when Stormy got up to make her move.

The coffee shop bathroom was only one toilet and when she went to the men side she found it unlocked. When she opened it she found the lizardman on the floor, twitching and convulsing as his eyes began to show tendrils of glowing blue in them. “You know viruses are quite tricky,” Stormy said as she closed the door and locked it behind her. “Especially computer viruses… you think that your avatar is safe because the virtual world is down, only to be shocked when you become infected with one because your avatar is linked to your bank account, which in this case was also linked to that paypass.”

“G-goddess…” the lizardman hissed as the corruption continued to take hold.

“Good boy,” Stormy cooed as she rubbed a hand across the scales of his head. “Now in a few minutes you’re going to go back out there and rejoin with your fox friend. But before that you’re going to tell me everything you know about his military operation that you’re guarding…”

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Stormy walked into the mall with confidence as she made her way to the place where she had been told the access to the node was, which at this point was the only way to access the virtual world and was protected from outside interference by the signal jammers. All her mind could think about was how fun it was going to be to smash all the military personal inside, taking them over and making them her own. After that the hub would be hers, and with it all those in the city who would access it. Then once that was finished she would continue onwards with her army and truly spread out like the plague she was destined to be. While there would be other resistances to crush the thought only made her smile on the more as she moved further in.

Finally after a few minutes of walking she sensed what she was looking for, the access point set up in what used to be an antique store. Once she had confirmed that it was what she was looking for she found the closest place to hide, which turned out to be a broom closet that had long since been cleaned out, and sat there cross-legged so she could enter into the virtual world remotely. Of course being an over ten foot tall wolfess in such a small space was by no means comfortable but the thought of finally being able to go back out into the open overrode her discomfort as she entered the access point.

On the other side of the digital divide she saw the equivalent of a military base set up at the access point to the city, complete with huge guns that represented their destructive capabilities. She frowned as she looked at the firepower and realized that it would be too much of a loss to try and stomp her way through, especially if they were able to mobilize back-up. Though it caused her to frown she knew she would have to go in with stealth, thankfully she had picked up that skill earlier as she channeled her inner malware and used it to reconfigure her avatar. Her body began to shimmer with a bright blue light as her large canine frame shrunk down until it was just under six feet in height.

When she was finished and her transformation was complete the newly created shark morph strode out from the farthest reaches of the zone, brushing her hands over her reformed neoprene suit before she moved forward. Since it was the standard wear of most avatars that hadn’t customized their options she didn’t look as out of place as she maneuvered her way into the base. While she hoped that no one would assume she was the giant wolf that had been stopping around the place a week ago she went into some of the tents to gather additional supplies to compliment her ruse. Once she was done she looked as much the proper scientist as she was going to be, but even though it appeared that everyone was fooled by her ruse the big problem she knew was going to be trying to get through the portal that connected the access node to the city hub.

To her surprise when she scanned the access point she found that there were several security exploits that she could utilize to get herself in. They must have counted on her sheer size being the factor to limit her access, she thought as she quietly slipped by the virtual safeguards and began to creep towards the tunnel that connected the two. It made sense, when she attacked last time her data size was huge and she had trouble fitting through the primary gate between a major node and the hub world. With her compressed data footprint however she slid her aquatic form past the last gate and with a triumphant grin on her face pushed her way into the primary city hub.

When she rematerialized she found herself in the wide open world of the hub that she had tried to destroy not so long ago, breathing in the fresh air of a wide-open world. She could still see and feel some areas that they hadn’t been able to clean out the infected code and decided that was as good enough place to start. As she walked over there she wondered how she was going to make her triumphant return known… perhaps she would grow while inside a building and cause it to crash down, or maybe she would start on top of a building and let her weight cause it to crumble beneath her feet.

As she got to the area she wanted to go however she began to notice something that caused her shark muzzle to turn down into a frown. While the hub was designed to hold close to a million users she couldn’t sense a single one, not even any of the military that was supposedly operating in the area. The entire hub was completely empty… save for one signature that pinged suddenly that was close to her location. At first she thought it was some sort of glitch but as she got closer she realized it was anything but.

The signal came from a small café that Stormy had frequented back when she had wasn’t a powerful kaiju virus intent on destroying everything. At first she thought of just reverting back to her form and smashing the lot of it in order to corrupt the system to her will, but if she did it might trigger whatever trap the glitch was. Instead she made her way to the café while still in her compact form, though with every step it felt like she was going to explode with how much she had compressed in on herself. Still she continued forward and when she got to the café she was surprised to see a single avatar sitting there drinking coffee and reading the paper. It looked custom and had a lot of strange data, particularly in the glowing green stripes and eyes of the draconic sabrewolf.

“Are you coming over or not?” the avatar asked, which caught Stormy by surprise as he looked up at her. “Considering we’re the only two people here it would make little sense for us to just ignore each other, particularly since you’re the reason I’m here in the first place. Now why don’t you come here and have a chat, least we can do is speak like civilized folk.”

Despite Stormy’s trepidations she moved forward and sat down opposite of the sabrewolf, and when she did she suddenly found her favorite drink order in front of her. “I do believe that we have yet to be introduced,” the hybrid said as he put down his paper and sipped his drink. “My name is Serathin, though most people tend just to call me The Technomancer. I’m here in this world right now for the sole purpose of attempting to capture or kill you so that your reign of terror against the virtual world will end, though as you can see I’m in no real rush to do so.”

“You’re… very casual about the whole thing,” Stormy replied as she felt her rage begin to build once more. “You just basically told me to my face that you’re here to destroy me and yet you sit there talking like you just told me you were going to the movies. If this is your task why don’t you just do it already?”

“As I said, I’m in no rush,” Serathin replied with a smirk as he picked up a piece of cake that had suddenly appeared out of nowhere. “I’ve been locked in a basement of a basement for the better part of a year because I tried to do what you’re doing myself, only I hadn’t taken the time to develop my powers. I had no connection to the outside world, no way of getting back… I began to forget about how liberating this world is, especially when you can do anything you want in it…”

Stormy continued to remain on edge but the sabrewolf continued to just sit there and eat. Was this avatar really as dangerous as he claimed to be, or was it a trick that the military was trying to do? “I don’t believe you,” she finally said with a slight growl. “If you’re really that dangerous then they wouldn’t let you anywhere near a virtual world like this.”

To her surprise the sabrewolf started to laugh, setting the half-eaten cake down where it vanished. “Look around you my dear,” he said once he had finished. “There’s no one here, and thanks to the collapsed data-line there’s no escape either. They would rather crash the world down around us and put us into a coma then let either of us leave… which means that we will eventually have to fight. While I definitely do not prefer to go back to the cell it’s better than the alternative, and perhaps if you surrender now you can have the one next to me. The view is a joke but at least you get fed somewhat regularly, though you’re going to have to stop the giant wolfess stomping routine for good.”

The very thought of submission caused Stormy to stand up and flip the table over, letting her disguise fall and her avatar expand back to its monstrous size and form. The café was turned to rubble as she brought her growing foot down on the pesky sabrewolf with enough force to cause a crater in the sidewalk and surrounding street. As her perspective continued to grow over the city she let out a snort as her horns grew out, raising up her mutated foot paw to see if she had hit only to find the epicenter of the crater empty. “I take that as a no for the surrender?” A voice shouted from one of the nearby rooftops where the draconic sabrewolf sat perched with a grin on his face.

Stormy’s snarl grew on her muzzle as she took a piece of the demolished café and threw it at the sabrewolf, only to have him disappear before it landed. When she caught track of the sabrewolf once again he stood on another roof, and this time he had a rocket launcher aimed straight at her. “Fire in the hole!” he shouted as he shot the rocket straight at her.

The second the rocket exploded against her abdomen she felt something… strange about it. When the weaponized code hit her own it felt like something she had felt before, a familiar vibe about it as she brushed away the plume of smoke that it caused. Looking down at where it had hit she found that other than some singed fur that quickly repaired itself the sabrewolf’s attack was largely ineffective. As she looked back up to sneer at him she found that he was gone once more, only to get hit in the side of the head by another rocket fired from Serathin on another rooftop.

That was the last straw, Stormy let out a roar and charged the annoying hybrid. As she crashed into the building Serathin disappeared right before she hit, reappearing on the other side of the street. Not to be undone she swished her thick reptilian tail and brought it crashing down on the next building, then repeating the process as the avatar continued to bounce back and forth. When it was clear that rockets were not doing much he seemed to switch tactics, cars and other machinery disappearing from the street with each jump and reformed into rooftop missile batteries and gaat guns. The sounds of battle echoed throughout the virtual world as Stormy continued unabated through the hail of gun and missile fire, smashing each attachment that the sabrewolf built before moving forward to get the source.

When she finally reached downtown the barrage ceased after an impressive volley of rockets that forced her to hold up her arms to shield herself from the blows. She found herself coughing from the smoke as she quickly waved it away to see the draconic sabrewolf standing on one of the downtown intersections. “Run out of energy already?” Stormy snarled.

“Oh we haven’t begun to start this rumble yet,” Serathin shouted as his eyes glowed with a bright green and a shadow suddenly was cast over him and the surrounding areas. “I think it’s time to pick on someone… or something… your own size for once!”

Stormy could feel the vibrations in her feet on the street as something came down that was so large it caused the windows on either side of the skyscrapers to shatter. When it finally came into view Stormy had to take a step back, the kaiju faced with a construct almost as big as she was. It looked like it was cobbled together from any and every nearby asset that wasn’t a building but somehow the technomancer had made it look like a giant version of himself. When it reached the intersection and turned to face her Serathin disappeared from the street and reappeared on top of the creature’s head and became eye to eye with the gargantuan wolfess.

As the two squared off against one another The Technomancer’s code, which was now magnified many times do to the sheer amount used to create such a construct, continued to bother her. Why did it seem so familiar, she thought to herself as she cracked her knuckles. She made a mental note to attempt to figure it out after she had reduced the robot and its creator to a smear on the payment as she charged forward.

That seemed to be what Serathin was waiting for as his creation’s arm swung out, but not at her. Instead it crashed into the skyscraper next to her and nearly cut all the way through, causing the massive building to fall right on top of her. She had to jump back to avoid the tons of glass and steel that came at her and as the giant chunk of building fell past her the giant construct was on the other side with a punch ready for her. Even though she managed to get her defense up in time to block it the force of the blow was enough for her to stagger back and crash into another large building behind her.

As she sat there shaking her head from the huge hit the massive construct quickly began to run towards her once more, but that wasn’t what she was thinking about at the moment. Now that she had gotten the full force of the code she knew exactly where she had seen it before… it was a mutated version of the malware that had infected her in the first place! At first she didn’t know why the technomancer couldn’t sense it but then she remembered he had been off the grid for a year… which meant that his code wasn’t mutated, someone had changed the malicious programming to be more potent but less viral. What it created was a kaiju, the giant wolfess grinning as she rolled away just in time to avoid the huge machine’s next attack.

“Serathin, you have to listen to me!” Stormy shouted as she blocked another attack and got pushed back once again. “I think we can help each other out!”

“I was wondering when you were going to say that,” the giant sabertooth construct spoke in a booming voice. “This is the way is has to be, I can’t get out of the death box I’m trapped in and there’s no way you’d get close enough to be able to help me. It’s time to bring this to its inevitable conclusion.”

When the mecha-sabertooth came at her once again this time she was prepared for it and instead of blocking it sidestepped and grabbed the construct by the arm. Even with her strength and agility boosts in kaiju form she was almost caught off-guard by a quick half-step and punch from the sabrewolf, but by that she had already shifted her entire body and pulled the mech past her. Serathin stumbled forward and smashed into one of other skyscrapers, more glass and metal shattering to the ground as Stormy quickly took the advantage and ran up with her fist closed. With all her force she aimed right for the controller of the huge creature, but Serathin saw her coming in the half shattered glass and dodged just in time to avoid the blow.

As the skyscraper began to crumble to the ground from the severe structural damage Stormy still managed to get the giant sabrewolf machine pinned against the large building, the two snarling in each other’s faces. Serathin tried to push back but the wolfess had the upper hand and shifted both of them until the mecha-sabertooth crashed his back into another building, pinning the construct’s wrists as they glared at each other. Behind them the damaged skyscraper came down with a mighty crash that kicked up all manner of simulated debris and dust in the air. When it cleared the two were mere inches apart from one another, Stormy continuing to hold down the robotic creature as they stared into each other’s eyes.

It was Stormy who initiated the kiss first, though from the feel of the sabrewolf’s neck he hadn’t been far behind as they made out fiercely. Though the wolfess could tell she was making out with what was essentially a pile of junk she didn’t care, the manipulated code on the inside felt like the inside of a mouth and tongue as her hands moved down to his sides. Serathin pushed upwards and the two stood once more as they continued to make out. Stormy could feel a pair of rough hands against her breasts as for the first time since she essentially became a virus she found someone that would not only keep up with her but challenge her once in a while. And, at least from the scene around them as multiple pillars of smoke rose up from the ruined city, seemed to have the same general attitude about destruction she did.

Stormy growled once more, but this time it was playfully as she pushed the robotic creature away from you. “We’re not going to keep going like this,” she said as she gave him a feral smirk. “This is going to be you and me, not your robot and me.”

“Are you saying you’re going to shrink back down,” the mecha-sabertooth asked, which Stormy replied with a laugh and a shake of her head. “Well I hate to break it to you, and say this out loud, but I’m afraid I’m going to be a bit… on the small side.”

“I told you I had a fix for that,” Stormy continued to growl as she held out her hand, a droplet of blue liquid forming on her claw that represented pure, distilled source code from her own malicious programming. “You integrate this code into your avatar and it’ll upgrade all your powers, not just the ones in here. I’ve been affecting the outside world and you can too, the only downside is that you won’t be the alpha predator around these parts… I will be.”

A feral grin spread across Stormy’s face as her tongue licked across her fangs while the technomancer considered her offer. As much as the hunger wanted her to take his avatar and assimilate the boundless code in her body she was unsure of the side-effects, and plus she wasn’t just going to make another slave bound to her… she was going to make an equal, a mate… well, maybe slightly less than equal. Finally it seemed that Serathin made up his mind and his robot stomped forward and lowered its head right under the rather large droplet. “It certainly beats going back in the hole… or death,” he said as he reached up and absorbed the code into his own.

The effect was nearly instantaneous; the construct shuddered for a few seconds before it broke apart, a rain of corrupted assets raining down and the hybrid with it. She managed to catch him in her palm but he had to quickly put him down as he grew heavier by the second. As the sabrewolf groaned and thrashed his avatar quickly began to expand and the assets around him were assimilated into raw code that fueled his transformation. He managed to get onto his hands and knees as a row of spikes began to emerge from his back while he grew, his breath coming out in short, ragged gasps that were punctuated with snorts and grunts while the upgraded code merged with his own.

All Stormy could do was watch in fascination as his avatar became… almost as big as her as he let out a loud roar that shattered nearby windows. He had become a Kaiju, and from the look in his eyes he was thoroughly enjoying it as his entire body continued to thrash. When it was finished he took his thickly clawed hands and rammed them through the nearest skyscraper, tearing it apart with his bare hands as the thickened muscle of his new physique flexed during the building’s destruction. When he was done he panted heavily and turned around, looking straight at Stormy before once again they pounced on one another.

This time it was real fur against one another as their lips met, their bed one of the many buildings they had destroyed as Stormy pushed the draconic sabrewolf on his back and knelt with her legs against his sides. She could feel his cock throb against her inner thigh as she guided it up into her feminine sex, the ground rumbling as the sabrewolf duck furrows into the streets when the tip entered her wet folds. The two monsters continued to kiss one another passionately as the wolfess let gravity pull herself down on the throbbing shaft of the kaiju beneath her, feeling their corrupted code continue to mix and merge. The building beneath them continued to crumble to the foundation as the sabrewolf’s hips pushing up and down caused the nearby area to shake so violently that a nearby skyscraper collapsed from the vibrations.

This was what she was waiting for, Stormy though to herself as she rolled her own thighs and hips in order to ride that thick shaft that had spread her wide open, a creature just like her. It was like they were made for one another as she found herself getting turned over, crashing into a nearby bank as Serathin took the lead and Stormy wrapped her legs around his hips. Together the two licked and sucked on every inch of each other’s bodies as they continued to have sex, Stormy’s head tossing back and her lengthening horns impaling the ground as the sabrewolf’s lips wrapped around her nipples and tongue licked the sensitive breast while he pushed particularly deep inside her.

Eventually after what seemed like hours the two eventually ended up laying next to one another, completely spent and with a wide swath of the city around them completely reduced to rubble from their riotous lovemaking. “Who would have thought that you could have sex and destruction together,” Serathin said with a contented sigh. “Of course there is still the fact that though I’m a huge scary monster in this realm I’m still stuck in a box that will kill me if I try to access it.”

“Well that’s why I needed your powers,” Stormy replied with a grin. “My plan is already being set into motion, you’ll be out of there before you know it.”

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Hasker continued to stand there and stare at the box that contained the unconscious technomancer, watching him intently while he waited for the news that the problem had been dealt with in the city hub. He could only imagine the number of assets that had been corrupted or compromised in that virtual landscape which was why as soon as the problem was dealt with they were going to strip down the hub and perform a hard reset. “Sir…” the voice of one of the technicians said, the tiger looking over to see a worried look on their face as they stuck their head in the tent. “You need to see this immediately.”

The general frowned and pulled himself self away from the box in order to go over to the technician’s workstation. “Something going on with the technomancer?” he asked as he knelt down to look at the monitor. “He’s not trying to escape is he?”

“It’s not the technomancer sir,” the technician replied as he switched to the feed of a camera that was outside to reveal a mob of citizens heading their way. “It appears that there’s a protest of some sort heading our way. Looks like a hundred, maybe more with signs that are saying we’re the ones responsible for the lack of the virtual world in the area and they want their system back.”

Hasker sighed and rubbed his temples. “I don’t need this right now,” he muttered as he got on the radio that was set up outside the perimeter of the signal jammers. “Alright everyone, form a tight perimeter but do not engage. The last thing we need is a media firestorm on our hands… now sweep team one have you found any sign of what we’re looking for?”

When nothing came over the radio Hasker’s frown deepened. “Sweep team one respond, have you found the target in the mall yet?” Once again his request was answered with nothing but silence as he began to feel a mixture of worry and rage. “Sweep team two repond, sweep team two. Gateway crew respond, respond damnit!”

“Sir!” The technician reported. “Our signal jammers just went down!”

“What!?” Hasker shouted as he ran back to the workstation and looked at the screen to see the entire device network flashing red. “We made sure that system was black boxed and hardline into these terminals alone, how in the hell did it get shut down?!”

The tiger felt a chill in his spine as the technician slowly looked up at him with a creepy grin on his face. “I shut them down,” he said with a proud look on his face. “The goddess commanded me to do it so that he may spread.”

Just as Hasker was about to pull out his gun and demand for him to put it back on he heard several shouts come from the tent. He sprinted forward, hearing the shouts of the protestors at the gate as he did, and nearly ripped open the tent flap. There The Technomancer stood, an evil grin on his face as all the military personnel in the tent clutched their heads and groaned. Hasker looked in horror as their bodies began to transform before his eyes, growing saber teeth and horns as their irises began to glow the same green as the one in the box. The tiger snarled and pulled out the remote linked to the box, pushing the button to activate the kill command and destroy the creature inside… except as he pushed it nothing seemed to happen.

“Did you really think that something as simple as a remote couldn’t be stopped by us?” A second voice said as a very large shadow was cast over him, the tiger turning around to see the huge neoprene suited wolfess standing head and shoulders above him with a similar evil gleam in her eyes. “Your biggest mistake was bringing us together, now I’ve given him the means of escape as my minions brought in enough wifi hotspots and boosters to override your signal jammers and he’s given me the ability to corrupt others physically, not just mentally. Now it is your turn.”

Before the tiger could do anything Stormy grabbed him and pinned him to her chest, no match for her impressive strength as she turned him around. All he could do was watch as the draconic sabrewolf began to grunt and pushed against the glass, his own body beginning to grow as his eyes glowed even brighter. Stormy grinned as their corruptive code continued to mingle together and the sabrewolf grew from six feet to eight in less than a minute, the glass ceiling of the box cracking as his new muscles strained against it. Finally the top shattered and allowed the ten-foot tall male to climb out of it, where his newly minted sabredrones had already begun to gather around him with their heads bowed in reverence.

During this time Stormy had also taken the opportunity to change the General as well, the tiger’s fur fading as the viral neoprene that she wore began to assimilate his clothing. Since she was able to be out and about in her normal form she lamented that her shark form wouldn’t be out as much, but now she found the perfect use for it as the squirming tiger’s eyes began to glow blue. As the neoprene tendrils across his chest it began to expand outwards, forming into a pair of breasts as the groin area of his pants began to shrink. When the corrupted material reached down between the changing tiger’s legs it pressed against a smooth groin, the feline letting out a loud cry as his feline face warped into that of a shark.

By the time Stormy was finished a neoprene covered shark girl was let down onto the ground, her thick finned tail swishing around as the shark girl bowed down and praised her goddess for giving her such a wonderful form. “That’s a good look on her,” Serathin said with a chuckle before he looked at the wolfess for the first time. “You’re still taller than me.”

“Always,” Stormy replied with a grin as she held out her hand. “Shall we get out of here and cause some real destruction?”

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Meanwhile down in the military bunker of a secret facility a computer screen flickered to life, simple white text appearing on the other wise black screen:

CONTAINMENT PROTOCOL FAILURE, IMMINENT RELASE OF MASSIVE COMPUTER VIRUSES DETECTED.

CORRUPTION POTENTIAL: UNLIMITED

DESTRUCTION POTENTIAL: BIBLICAL

ADVISE USE OF PROTOTYLE AI IN ORDER TO CONTAIN SPREAD AND PROTECT SURROUNDING VIRTUAL WORLDS…

…

USE AUTHORIZED.

DEPLOYING IN 3… 2… 1…