

Carly Columbo bounced up and down in the passenger seat of the truck. She was taking down her first solo skip, and it was gonna be awesome! Her fox bobbed up and down excitedly.

Carly was a fox shifter, and it had been her lifelong dream to be a bounty hunter, *ever since she found out what a bounty hunter actually was, three months ago when one came after her*. At the time, it had been downright annoying, but he did turn out to be a devilishly handsome wolf shifter, who went on to become her mate.

Said bounty hunter was Jackson Carr.

Jackson had deliberately chosen an easy skip for her. It was to catch someone who had been charged with repeatedly conducting business without a vendor's license. Jackson told her the guy had strong ties to the community and was unlikely to cause any difficulties. *Given that he was a 67-year-old ice-cream man and all.*

Jackson didn't want Carly to be a bounty hunter, he said it was unnecessarily dangerous, but she had nagged and nagged until finally Jackson relented and allowed her to take on one bounty, and under supervision. The owner of the bounty hunter agency, Marcus Blau, could care less who actually brought in the bounties, as long as they did it quickly and didn't die in the process. *That caused too much paperwork.*

Jackson gave her the file for her skip, one Herbert Monk, the previous evening and she had studied it religiously. Well she'd read it all. Okay, so she'd skimmed it. *Fine!* She glanced at it while she was on the phone with her best friend Ling Ma; it wasn't her fault though! Ling had just had her heart broken and needed consoling, *what was Carly supposed to do?*

Besides, she figured the point of reading the file was so that you could actually find the person you're looking for, and she already had. Some would say it was dumb luck, but she would say it was dumb skill. It was a hot day; they just trawled the parks until they found him.

They were parked, and unobtrusively watching Herbert as he handed out fudge popsicles to a group of Japanese tourists.

Jackson leaned toward her. "What you have to remember is..."

She nodded her head rhythmically as he spoke to her earnestly, but in all honesty she wasn't listening, she was too excited.

Carly Columbo, Bounty Hunter Extraordinaire. Maybe she should get some business cards with that printed on; they could have a little picture of handcuffs in the corner. *Ooh, and maybe she should get a mug too, and pens. She could have that printed on pens, and give them out to every person she caught! No, maybe not, that would be stupid, right?*

"Okay? You ready?"

Huh? She noticed Jackson appeared to have stopped talking and was giving her one of his intense wolf shifter stares. *She found them absolutely mesmerizing.*

"Yes, of course," she answered dreamily as her fox almost purred, losing herself in his amber tinged eyes.

"Alright, I'll wait here. Good luck, foxy."

She blinked a few times, before she realized he now expected her to get out and catch her skip. *Wait, shouldn't he have given her a few more instructions before sending her off on her own?* Guiltily, she understood he must have been doing that for the last ten minutes, while her mind wandered to everything from business cards to nail polish, and where exactly she would like to go on honeymoon. *If he ever got round to proposing, that is!*

Alright, yeah! Now she was now fired up and angry! Time to take down that 67-year-old ice-cream vendor!

She put her game face on, which was really just a scowl that she'd been practicing in front of a mirror. *She was imitating Jackson's scowl.* She pushed open the door and was about to go get her man when...

Jackson tugged on her t-shirt. "Aren't you forgetting something?"

Carly frowned, before she realized. *Silly, needy wolf.*

"Oh, alright." She turned back to him and pulled him in for a toe-curling kiss; he moaned into her mouth as his wolf growled appreciatively. His desire skyrocketed, and his manhood hardened. She drew back and moved to get out. "I love you, wolfy."

Jackson licked his lips, savoring her exquisite taste. "Not that I didn't enjoy that, but I actually meant these."

He lifted his hand up, dangling a pair of handcuffs.

Carly reddened and reached for them. Jackson pulled them away and swooped in for another kiss, this time taking charge and running a hand up her curvy thigh. Her fox yipped in pleasure.

He rested his forehead against hers. "Maybe we could..."

"After I've caught my first skip," said Carly decisively. She grabbed the handcuffs and slithered out the door before Jackson could react. He scowled at her and pushed a palm against his swelling erection as she scurried away, giggling. He almost panted watching the sway of her generous hips; it was hypnotic. *Oh, he'd get her later.*

Carly walked purposefully toward the ice-cream truck, and tucked the cuffs into the back of her jeans.

She stopped ten feet away from the truck; a cold lick of fear suddenly coursed through her body. She knew she wasn't really in danger, it was doubtful that Herbert would try to hurt her, but she was usually only brave because Jackson was stood next to her. It was hard to

feel scared when a six foot two, heavily muscled wolf shifter was prepared to lay down his life for you. *Not that she ever wanted it to come to that.*

Now, however, she was all alone, and she had to do everything herself. Sure, Jackson was in the car, and he'd bound over to her in a heartbeat if she really was in trouble, but otherwise she was flying solo.

It was daunting but also, it gave her kind of a rush. This must be how Jackson felt before every skip he went after. *It was thrilling.*

Carly steeled herself. She could do this. She marched right over to the truck and got in line behind a pair of squabbling siblings.

Alright, maybe this wasn't the way Jackson would do it, but she wasn't Jackson. *It was a hot day; she didn't really want to deprive the kids of ice-cream.*

Her sexy wolf would probably push everyone out the way, and drag Herbert through the window of his truck. *Jackson was masterful and dominant... hmmm.* Carly gave herself a mental slap; this wasn't the time to start swooning.

She tapped her foot as the svelte girl at the front of the queue asked for the calorie content of the ice cream. *Was she freaking kidding?* If she has to ask, then there're too many calories in it! *Ugh, teenage stick insect.*

After waiting for what felt like forever, Carly was finally at the front of the line.

The kindly, old face of Herbert Monk leaned out of the truck window and beamed at her from behind half-moon spectacles. He asked her what she would like.

Every instinct she had told her to ask for an ice-cream sandwich, but she resisted. Instead, she cleared her throat. "Mr. Monk, I'm sorry but you missed your court date. I work for the Blau Bail Bond Agency, and I'm here because I need to take you to the cops."

The parents and children around her all gasped in surprise. Herbert's face dropped and tears pooled in his pale eyes. The gasps soon turned to 'aww's.

His voice quivered. "I'm an old man; I don't deserve to be in jail..."

Carly tried to protest. "I know but..."

"If you know, then why are you trying to take me to prison?"

"Yeah, why?" yelled one of the more aggressive looking moms.

Carly shifted from foot to foot as the rest of the crowd murmured in agreement. "Well, you broke the law..."

Herbert's bottom lip trembled. "All I ever wanted was to make people happy, people like ice-cream."

"I know but..."

“Do you not want these people to have ice-cream?” he asked innocently.

“She’s a fascist!” called out a dad the crowd.

“Yeah!” agreed another.

Her fox let out a warning yowl. *Things were going downhill fast.* “It’s not that; I swear! It’s just that you broke the law, and then failed to turn up to court...”

“Because I was busy, selling ice-cream. I’m an old man struggling to support my grandchildren.”

Carly was starting to think he was a lot wiler than he looked. *He didn’t even have kids!* She folded her arms, thoroughly annoyed now. “Look Herbert, all you have to do is come downtown with me, and I’ll see what I can do about getting you rebonded, okay? That’s the best I can do.”

“Boo!” The crowd started jeering at her.

Carly was outraged; she was just doing her job! “No, not boo me! Boo him! He’s the one that broke the law!”

“Loser!”

Carly squeaked as a kid threw an ice-cream cone at her. “Hey! Not cool!”

She dabbed at the squishy pink mess, *all over her favorite t-shirt thank you very much*, whilst staring daggers at the pig-tailed monster.

“You’re a mean lady!” yelled the monster.

“I am not!” denied Carly, hotly. Her fox was growling lowly at the crowd, eager to shift and... well, maybe bite a few ankles. *Yeah, see how they’d like that!*

“Yes you are!” cried another devil-child. *There must be something in the water round there.*

Seconds later, Carly found herself hit with a raspberry popsicle. “Why you little...”

That was when the rest of the crowd also thought it was a good idea to start throwing their frozen treats at her. Carly screeched as she was pelted with ice-cream and popsicles, and informed of just how wicked she was for wanting to take an old man to jail.

It was whilst she was under attack that she noticed Herbert was attempting to escape. He had retreated from the window and was starting the ancient engine of his truck.

“Oh no, you don’t!”

The truck started moving, and without any other option, Carly grabbed onto the edge of the truck window and hoisted herself up, managing to get her torso through. As the truck rumbled down the street, people stopped and stared as a pair of very curvy legs frantically waved at them from the window.

Carly struggled to hold onto the inside of the truck as Herbert drove like a madman, swaying all over the road, in the hope of dislodging his unwanted passenger.

“Stop this instant, Herbert! I’m warning you!”

Herbert huffed and pressed the accelerator. Carly squealed as her fox whined incessantly.

Holy crap!

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In frustration, Jackson had been watching the whole drama unfold. His wolf had been howling at him constantly to end this, but he held fast. If the plan was to work he couldn’t run to Carly’s rescue, even though he secretly would have loved to be her knight in shining armor.

It had been hell, both for him and his wolf, to watch as she was first of all verbally abused by those assholes in the park, and then it was downright torturous as they started throwing things at her. He wanted to run over to them and cram those damn popsicles down their throats; his wolf roared in agreement at that sentiment. *But he didn’t.*

He needed Carly to be so annoyed and disheartened that she never wanted to try bounty hunting again. He wasn’t doing this to be mean; he was doing it to keep her safe. He’d caught Herbert Monk three times before. The guy was a compulsive liar; he wasn’t violent, just crazy and very good at getting people to feel sorry for him. He figured Carly would be so exasperated by Herbert that she would eschew any further bounties, and instead, would stay safe, back at the office, where the only danger was getting a paper cut. He loved Carly, more than anything in the world, but she had a romanticized idea about hunting that just wasn’t accurate, and damnit he needed her to be safe.

However, as he watched the ice-cream truck careen down the road with his mate’s legs sticking out the side, he was starting to have a few doubts about his plan.

“Fuck! Fuckity-fuck, fuck, fuck!” Jackson pounded his fists on the steering wheel before setting off in hot pursuit, and avidly ignoring the irritated grumbling of his beast.

He raced after the ice-cream truck. Who the hell knew they could go so damn fast? He sucked in a breath as he noticed the luscious, wiggling legs of his mate completely disappear into the truck. The truck then started zigzagging all over the road; other drivers honked their horns as they skidded out of the way.

His wolf howled. *Oh shit! What had he done?*

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Carly held onto Herbert as he tried to shake her off. She was trying to pry his hands off the steering wheel and into her handcuffs.

“Stop this vehicle this instant!”

“Never!” he cried.

They struggled; pushing and pulling at one another. She persistently told him to stop, and he persistently invited her to shove it.

With a hard elbow to the stomach, Carly grunted and fell back, letting go of Herbert. He glanced at her, cackling in victory, and then plowed directly into a tree.

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Jackson and his wolf roared in unison, as he screeched to a stop. *Carly!*

Herbert stumbled out of the truck, blinking and looking around. He was a little stunned, and was trying to piece together what had happened. *Carly didn't give him much chance.*

With something akin to a war-cry, she leapt out of the truck onto Herbert's back. At being hit with Carly's less-than-petite frame, he fell to the ground with a resounding 'oof.'

Not wasting a second she pulled his arms round his back and slapped the cuffs on. *Yes, she had him!* Her fox let out a howl of triumph. *Success!*

She was about to start singing 'another one bites the dust' when her anxious mate ran over to her. "Foxy, sweetheart, are you alright? Are you hurt?"

Carly giggled and got up, jumping into his arms. "Oh my god! Did you see? Were you watching? Wasn't I amazing? That was so much fun, I felt like I was in an action movie!"

He couldn't believe it; *she actually thought that was fun!!!*

She locked her legs round his body and looked at him expectantly; happy excitement danced over her face.

"Yeah foxy, you were... I've never seen anything like it!" *That was the honest truth.*

She squealed gleefully and flourished kisses all over his face.

Jackson noticed Herbert trying to stand up so he could get away; Jackson quickly placed a boot on his back, pinning him to the ground. Carly was probably up for round two, but Jackson sure as hell wasn't, he doubted his heart could take it.

"I can't wait for my next one!"

Jackson paled. *Next one?!* How the hell was he supposed to cope with her running around doing this all the time?

Carly practically bounced up and down in his arms as her fox pranced around like a cub; she'd never been so thrilled, excited, *turned on...* She felt the fluttering of her arousal and blushed deeply as Jackson sniffed the air, and gave her a devastatingly wolfish grin. Feeling bold, she pushed her chest against his, smearing the remnants of ice-cream and popsicles into his tight t-shirt.

"Oh dear, looks like we're all dirty. Perhaps we should go home and take a shower together," she purred in his ear, before nipping the lobe playfully.

He chuckled as his wolf growled lustily, drinking in the strength of her desire for him. *Then again, he could see that there might be a few perks to Carly being a bounty hunter.*

The end