

Mercury had spent a total of 3 days in the hospital until he was fully stabilized with his blood and wounds. However, the ordeal has left him feeling lost, shaken, vulnerable and alone. Despite Larz being his legal guardian and father figure. Mercury still couldn't find himself opening up to the large wolf. The hospital ordered mandatory therapy sessions in order to help Mercury bring himself back to the way he was, still...he knew that his life would never be whole again since the mercenary team that Omnia sent to capture him killed his parents and nearly took him away with them. Dr. Nia Johnston, the physician that looked after Mercury's injuries, stepped into the room with Chief Rojas getting ready for his discharge with Larz waiting outside for the mouse. "Mercury...I know you don't want to see the people responsible for your parents death. But we need you to testify in court so we can put them away. Will you help us bring your parents murderers to justice?" Mercury gave a weak nod as the chief helped the nurse bring him into a wheelchair as per any hospital rule. Being rolled and looking at the glass windows of each room as he tried to keep to himself. But all he could think about was the one thing he wanted more than his knowledge...he wanted his parents' love, knowing that they were gone just made him feel cold.

Once the nurse and chief helped wheel him out to the giant wolf, Larz squatted down to pick up Mercury to sit him gently on his belly along with gifts from his little bit of friends. "Sensei, please take care of this boy. Ever since he got to the hospital the nurses have told me he hasn't slept or eaten, so they had to use an IV. Think you can use your fatherly knowledge to get him back to being happy?" Larz patted his own big drum of a belly with a smile. "Don't you worry about him, my old protege, I'll have him smiling before the new year, isn't that right Mercury?" The small mouse boy didn't say a word and just wrapped himself up to a ball with his head between his own legs. Despite opening up a few nights ago, he closed himself back down to a point where he just stayed silent. "Take care Chandler." Chief Rojas got into his police car, "You too, Sensei." Larz settled his belly so he wouldn't wobble so much with Mercury on top of him. It took a two hour walk with the awkward silence, Larz didn't know what to say with Mercury and the boy wasn't saying anything as he was way too closed off to say anything. Pretty soon they reached a pathway that led to a bridge, leading off to a coastal island that had a big modern Japanese Okia style of a building. "Welcome home, Mercury. I hope you'll find that this dojo will be to your liking." The big wolf started to walk across the long bridge towards his sumo island. It looked like a paradise compared to living in the suburbs.

The small mouse didn't say a word, his eyes just looked glazed as they came inside the okia. Inside were a whole bunch of different students, different sizes and ages far and wide. Larz climbed a few steps to the first floor of the okia where his room was only a door away from Mercury's new room. It had a small dresser with a mirror on top of it towards the side to the room near his own bathroom. At the front of the room laid an entertainment center that had a radio and satellite television with a 50 inch HDTV, near the back was a full sized bed, but in reality all he really needed was a twin size. Mercury slowly slid down Larz's stomach to the bed and just sat in silence, with his sensei kneeling down to place his hands on his shoulders. "Everything's going to be alright, I won't leave your side...ever." The mouse continued to stay silent until he pulled a photo frame of himself and his parents at a Six Flags Amusement Park.

"Thank you, Mr. Fangerson." The big sumo wolf stood up heading for the door. "Dinner's gonna be ready at 6 o'clock. Doctor says you need to eat since you are looking emaciated. That ain't gonna happen while you are here. I'm gonna make sure you get your food. And...your folks...their service is tomorrow...." Mercury's teeth gritted hard with shaky breathing as his hands trembled around the photo. "I'll be t-there..." Larz saw that he hit a wound on Mercury by mentioning his parents and slowly closed the door to go get dinner started. The picture frame started to get wet as tears dropped onto the glass from the mouse's eyes as he blamed himself for the tragedy that befell his parents. He thought to himself that if he wasn't the child prodigy he was, his parents would still be here. At this point he was willing to do anything to bring them back but he knew that life was pretty linear and that death was a one-way trip. To avoid any conversation with the others during dinner time, he grabbed his dinner plate and headed up to his room to eat in solitude. All he can think about was his parents and how his intelligence led to their deaths, staring at his family photo thinking that he could reanimate their bodies but it wouldn't be the same since it was both illegal and morally wrong, turning them into monsters.

He just left his plate half full and started to head downstairs towards the kitchen avoiding anyone in the dojo and tried to head back up to his room where Larz waited for him to come past his own room door. "Mercury, may I speak with you?" Mercury slowly stepped into the large sumo master's room as the big wolf shut the door behind him, heading back to his chair and pats his belly for Mercury to climb up. "Whatever you are feeling you can always let it out with me, I'm not here just to simply feed you and give you a roof over your head, I want to help you and get to know you better since I think of you as one of my own kids." The small mouse started to shed tears again while staring at that big belly of Larz's, trying to make sense of what his whole ordeal was since he didn't think he'd go through the same tragedy like he saw when reading his Batman comics and playing the games. Trying not to choke on his own tears as he was in incredible amounts of pain he spoke to the sumo wolf. "Mr. Fangerson...I don't understand...why didn't they just let me go and give me to the think tank? If I had done what Omnia wanted me to do, they'd still be here...wouldn't they?" Larz's ears folded and placed his hands around Mercury's hips. "They didn't give you up because Omnia was no good and only wanted you for their ridiculous schemes, they did not give you up because they loved you with all of their heart and soul and nothing would change their mind about having you with them. If they were here right now, they'd say they love you too. Even now, I feel as if their souls are trying to hug you and say that everything will be alright." Mercury lifts his head from Larz's belly and for a brief but needed moment he saw his parents in a mirror surrounding the mouse in a hug which Mercury could somehow feel, this made him feel like he wasn't alone but it was still sad as he came back to the sumo wolf's waiting arms and hugs him hard. "I just want them back...I'll give up being smart, but I want them back..." Larz just held onto the boy and pats over his back until he went to sleep. "I know son. I know."

The next day had come and everyone had dressed in the proper funeral attire, Mercury was taking one last look at his photo of his parents with him at Six Flags park. He finally came out once he was all dressed up, getting carried by his sumo dad now as they went to Divinity Church in the rain where a whole bunch of former co-workers of his mother and old mafia

members had loyalties to his father before he had settled down. Each one of them paid their respects and checked in on Mercury periodically throughout the funeral. Mercury nodded and once the service proceeded to the Cherrywood Cemetery where the burial had begun. Larz spoke with the mafia members as they promised on their lives that they would not seek any vengeance on Mercury's behalf and leave him alone like his father wanted. Larz was then pulled aside by his mother's attorney which showed him that their parents had left the boy over \$10 million but was in a trust fund and Larz was the trustee. Mercury put a rose on each of their caskets as they were lowered into the ground right next to each other and he just went home as everyone tried to wish him well but he just started to walk back home to the dojo alone. Larz came to everyone and sighs. "I'm sorry everyone, I'm not sure what I'll be able to do with him now. He feels like he's lost everything, but I'll show him that he still has family." The rain finally broke as a ray of the sun shined on both Mercury and his new father, it was fate's way of saying there is still hope and will be on the way. Maybe not now, maybe not soon but it will be on its way.

Once he got back home he noticed that everyone was still at the wake but Mercury wanted nothing to do with it, he wasn't hungry and he just wanted to be left alone. Larz came knocking on his door, slowly opening it. "That must have been hard for you, Mercury and I'm sorry." Mercury rolls over to face the wolf on his bed and sits up. "It's the hardest thing I've ever had to do. Even my intellect didn't prepare for things I know are inevitable but still hurts all the same. I never did enjoy funerals but this one hit way close to home." Larz placed his left hand on Mercury's shoulder, "You know I'm here for you, I'll guide you for as long as you need me to. You're not alone anymore, Mercury. You have me and you have all your friends here in the dojo. Give us a chance and I promise you'll be part of our family and we will never ever let you down." Larz was shocked by what came next with the small mouse coming to hug his stomach and it wasn't tears of sadness, it was a reassurance to Mercury that found someone he could trust and it was a first step to recovery. "Thank you, Sensei..." Larz smiled brightly with a tear coming down his own cheek and wrapped his own arms around his adopted son. "You can call me, Dad."