

Dex And Miles: Wild Force!

Dexter descended the stairs putting on his army gray urban camo shirt that matched his cargo pants of the same color. His son would still be in the living room watching Power Rangers. In fact, he heard that all too familiar theme song from another episode starting. It always kept his young energetic cub preoccupied on the weekends, and quite the relief that he never trashed the house whenever he pretended to be one.

Peeking into the living room, he saw his son laying down on his stomach, still in his pajamas, and eyes focused on the tv. There were five animal people talking with cliché dialogue on the screen, making simple jokes that made Miles laugh out loud. He then saw the scene shift with a cheap-costumed villain wobbling through the streets attacking people with poor CGI lasers. Miles snarled whenever he was on screen, and raised his arms to cheer when he saw the heroes change their uniforms in a flash of light. That gave him an idea for tonight's celebrations.

"I'm heading out, Miles," Dexter announced, passing by.

"Sure dad!" he said without taking his eyes off the unrealistic fight scenes.

He chuckled, grabbing the keys from his pocket and asked his son the reminders, "What're the rules while dad's out? And look at me when you recite them, sonny."

Miles decreased the volume because he would talk to his father, and turned to him with a sincere smile. "Make sure all the outside doors are locked," he counted with his fingers, "don't open doors to strangers, look outside for five minutes after thirty minutes of watching tv, make sure all faucets and unused appliances are switched off, and always challenge the unknown."

That last one was from his military exercises, "And what's the challenge?"

"Aim with discipline, dad," his son winked.

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And he winked back with the response, “Fire with intent, son.” He opened the door, “I’ll be back in two hours. I’ll be back with lunch.”

“Stay safe dad,” Miles returned to his shows. The tv’s volume increased as he stepped out and locked the door behind him.

The worried father walked towards the side, in between his Halloween decorations consisting of plastic pumpkin lamps, a rubbery werewolf statue and a fake warning sign for such creatures. He peeked through the window as usual, ensuring that his son was still watching tv. His little tyke was laying down, and cheered because his favorite characters were probably winning in the show. They always won at the end of every episode, he thought while walking on his pavement.

But he couldn’t help wondering which color of Power Ranger his son would want. There were five colors, though other shows had a different set. It was difficult trying to keep up with all of it but who knows, maybe he’d find the right one for him and his boy. Dexter unlocked his car and stepped in, taking one last look at his home already decorated for tonight. Apart from the werewolf at the front of his right lawn, there was one peeking over from the left side, almost obscured by the bushes. His favorite, which was the most difficult to place, peeked over the rooftop. Lastly were the paper bones he scattered around the lawn and porch.

He drove off, taking the road towards the mall. The neighbor’s homes he passed had the typical Halloween aesthetic; haunted mansion with ghost sheets, cobweb, and even green slime. The unique ones were sci-fi, which had a dug-in crashed spaceship like in Superlion; another had fantasy like King Arthur and his Tigers of the Round table; one of them had an Egyptian theme, complete with a sandbox on their lawn and their walking path uniformed with hieroglyphic columns. Maybe he’d go for a Power Ranger theme next year, he wondered as he drove out of the neighborhood.

Even the highway had overhead pumpkin lamps, but nothing else. Otherwise it would be a road hazard. Traffic was non-existent, seeing only a few cars traveling to and from the same road.

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The town, on the other hand, embraced the Halloween spirit. Except the emergency services of course. If he recalled correctly the army recruiting office in the mall also partook in the festivities. Staff Sergeant Hicks scattered fake bugs around the office, put on some cobwebs on the bookshelves, and even wore a pumpkin head when he wasn't interviewing anyone.

Dexter drove past stores that had a lot of lit pumpkins. The restaurants had actual pumpkin lanterns, the authenticity added more depth than his plastic decors; the local farmer's market had a blood-stained scarecrow at the entrance; and the feral pet store even put costumes on their reluctant pets, one of them being a rabbit who looked like dracula.

The Happy Valley Mall had more complexities seeing that the front parking lots are restricted. He went around towards the side, noticing the signs directing trick-or-treaters later tonight. Maybe he should take Miles here? No, he'd rather be close to his home because Chase wasn't available. Plus the crowds later, in their colorful costumes, he worried about losing his son in them. That would be a possibility given that the parking lots on the side were nearly full already.

Dexter felt fortunate that he found a vacant spot within a minute. Afterwards he grabbed his wallet, keys from the ignition, and his phone. And then he stepped out, locking his car from the driver's side. Double checking it, he pulled on each handle with none of them budging. With a quick nod, he briskly walked to the mall's entrance.

Once inside, he noticed the preparation this place had undergone. The plastic trees that lined up in the middle of the mall were lacking their fake leaves. It was replaced with cobwebs and white sheets instead. A strong scent of pumpkin was in the air as he walked towards the supermarket. Restaurants and even a toy store had signs beside their entrance indicating they were for trick-or-treaters. He'd probably stop by the recruitment office later and check if they were in on it too.

The closer Dexter was to the supermarket, he started hearing the ambient noises of groans, rattling bones, and weeping ladies. These were trivial to him, but he admired the dedication. It gave him ideas too for next year, maybe if he could find some speakers to play a howling werewolf, or even do it himself. It wouldn't match the colorful spandex he'd be wearing tonight however.

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The supermarket was called the 'HappyMart', but no one bothered with decorating its red neon sign. He entered its premises and saw several discounted Halloween trinkets, costumes, and knickknacks being sold in the open area. There wasn't anything interesting as he passed by, but then the last one was useful and somewhat cute; a cloth bag decorated like a spooky ghost. He bought two and afterwards got himself a shopping cart before the actual entrance.

This place had all the essentials to keep him, and his son, well-fed and sustained with proper nutrition. Dexter began by checking his phone for the list. He needed rice, vegetables, fish, milk, butter, cheese, some fur spray, and candies of any kind. But he would get an extra bag of those bubblegum lollipops for his son, because he loves them so much.

And since he was close to the candy aisle, he started there. There were about a dozen people across the aisle that navigating through would be difficult. Most of them were customers adding only candy into their carts, and the few staff members who were restacking the shelves. He scooted in between, pardoning himself when it would be a close call impact. All candies, except the ones his son likes, looked the same and grabbed some at random. There were packs of wrapped chocolates, others these colorful mini-spheres, and even sour candy. That last one he might like because of nostalgia.

Dexter was able to leave the aisle just as several more people would squeeze themselves in. The next aisle, well it wasn't an aisle anymore, because the dairy, meats, and vegetables were in the rear section of the supermarket. He strolled there while reviewing the candies he got. A few bags of different chocolate candy brands, one that said 'jawbreakers', some bubblegum, two packs of his son's favorite lollipop bubblegum, a pack of large marshmallows, and sweet fruit hard candy. Those were enough for tonight.

As for the grocery items that do matter, he went with the usual. Some Japanese rice, a lot of greens, spices for flavor, low fat milk, creamy butter, cheddar and some milkfish wrapped in a bundle of used newspapers. After all, he went here for sweets, he should buy some of the niche stuff too. While he was there, he noticed some of the patrons were in military uniform but were from a different company. There wouldn't be enough time to chat so he went to the cashiers.

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Fifteen of them were all catering to long lineups of cart and baskets. Even the extra five at the end, reserved and prioritized the disabled and elderly, were full too. Some of the civilians here displayed irate expressions, boredom, or at least trying to fight it off with their mobile devices. Dexter himself was thankful knowing that he wouldn't get shot, nor did he have to shoot someone. Still, waiting was waiting.

Thirty minutes later, and it wasn't as bad as he thought. He was already two carts away from paying, and some of the frustrated customers felt relieved as well. Their impatient sentiments carried over to those at the end of the line. And before he knew it, he was already putting his grocery items on the automatic counter where the bluebird cashier scanned each item. There was a panda bag handler stacking candies and fur-care products into their own plastic bags bearing the HappyMart logo, while fresh vegetables and dairy were sorted into their own paper bags. The raw fish was wrapped in some unused newspaper before being put in them too.

The bluebird told his expense, which he paid with his credit card and included his military ID for a discount.

"Lieutenant Fennix?" his talons tapped the wolf's necessary card information into the cash register. "Do you know Captain Carmichael?"

Dexter nodded, "Yep, he's my superior." And there were only two people in mind, and this teenage fellow was not a fox like his father, "Are you his adopted son? Paul?"

The receipt was printed out of the register while Paul handed back his cards, "Yes sir. He told me stories about your tours in Iran. Welcome home." He gave the wolf an informal salute.

"Thanks, young one. You can call me Dexter," he answered in a quick salute too.

"Alright, Dexter, sir," he cleared his throat. After reviewing the receipt and making sure all the items were accounted for, he asked, "You're going to go trick or treating later?"

"Yep," he was offered the receipt, which he took and pocketed. "Gonna go as a power ranger, something that Miles likes." It made him wonder, "Say, Paul, do you know where the

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costume store is here?” as he glanced towards the rows of colorful stores outside the supermarket.

Paul raised his talons, pointing between said colorful stores, “Once you go past the gardening store, take a right and you’ll find the clothing area, and department store. There’s a costume store there, I think it’s called the ‘Booutique.’” He smiled afterwards.

“Alright, thanks Paul.” Dexter reached over and patted his shoulder, “Tell your pops I said hi.” And he grabbed his bags from the panda and went on his way. The paper bag pressed against his chest, with the firm plastic bag on his other hand which also had his trick-or-treat bags too.

“Happy Halloween Mr. Dexter,” the bluebird waved goodbye, and serviced the next customer.

That was a pleasant encounter, not expecting he’d meet Carmichael’s adopted son in the grocer of all places. Sweet guy, too soft to be a soldier, and his joy meant that his superior wasn’t too harsh on him. He wondered to himself if his son was the same, but he seemed quite ambitious to become just like him too. His fatherly instinct tried to guilt him, but came to a conclusion. No matter what his son would choose, he would be happy and respect it all the same.

After taking that turn Paul instructed earlier, he saw a scene familiar to the candy aisle. There were long lines from every clothing store, with Booutique having the longest. It had an orange sign bearing its name covered in cobwebs, and paper bat cutouts. People were lined up outside holding various shopping bags, as well as folded costumes wrapped in plastic.

He could tell the clothing store had anticipated such an event that the lines were organized in a maze of crowd barriers. Despite that, there were a few already past it, and he hastened to line up behind them too. Dexter was behind two sheep ladies who were talking loudly about their planned costumes. It struck a thought with him, what if there were no more Power Ranger costumes? Maybe he could substitute for a werewolf, or a soldier perhaps? He didn’t even need a costume for either after all.

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While the line moved slowly but not as slow as the cashier earlier, he noticed several of the Booutique sales people moving along the lines. His trained wolf ears picked up their questions to their customers about the costume and its size. Vampires were out of stock, knights weren't, soldiers were unavailable, and with good reason. Couldn't have impersonators running around stealing valor, and it would only be fair he didn't dress up as one. He may be a soldier but it didn't sit right that other people wouldn't be able to dress up as one. There were more costumes that went out of stock for their respective size, but nothing about power rangers, to his relief.

Eventually a saleswoman approached the two sheeps in front of him, and he couldn't help but notice their excitement that the salt and pepper shaker costumes were still available. If the Power Rangers weren't available, he and his son would probably be a bunned hotdog and ketchup, respectively. Afterwards the same saleswoman came to him.

She was a hare with perked up ears. Pulling her notepad flipped to the next page, she greeted, "Good morning sir, and welcome to Booutique." The way she said the store's name as if she were a ghost. "Due to our overwhelming number of customers, we would like to ask for your order now," she prepared to jot down notes while making eye contact, "what costume are you looking for?"

Dexter smiled with his ears perked up too, "Do you have 'Power Rangers' by any chance?"

"Yes we do," she answered gleefully. His tail wagged, then she followed up with another question, "From which series?"

And his excitement was replaced with confusion, "Series? What do you mean?"

"Power Rangers is an American series that has multiple spin-offs. Currently what we have in stock are: Dino Thunder, Wild Force, SPD, Jungle Fury, and Samurai."

That was more confusing than he thought, so he apologized, "I'm not following, sorry, but it's whatever my son is watching nowadays."

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“Oh, then that means you’re looking for Wild Force, and we still have them in stock too,” she jotted it down, “we have six available colors which are: Red, White, Black, Blue, Yellow, and Silver. I even have a catalogue with me.” She kept her notepad first and pulled out a rolled magazine from her back pocket.

This was good service, he thought, and at least the options were much simpler now. He humored her as she browsed, “Do you watch Power Rangers?”

“Nope,” she replied, “but my friend’s son watches with my niece a lot.” After flicking to a page towards the end of her catalogue, she pressed it with her finger, “Found it,” and presented the catalogue to him.

“Thank you,” he scanned the costumes being portrayed by a diverse cast of animals because of their tails. They all had a helmet, but at the bottom of the fine print it said ‘*Helmet not included’. It’s not like his head could fit those anyways. The costumes looked like they were made of spandex and have one overall color, same as the lady mentioned. There were commonalities though, like the white gloves with golden cuffs; a golden belt with buckle; a golden sash across their chest with different black lines indicating their rank he presumed; a helmet and a logo of their corresponding animal. There was a lion, a shark, and he glossed over the others when he noticed that the silver color was a wolf.

“Seems like you’ve found your pick,” she commented, noticing his widening eyes.

“Yeah, that silver one you mentioned. Do you have one for an adult, and for a kid?” he felt excited, with his tail thumping again. The people lined up behind him giggled but he paid no mind.

“Yes we do, sir,” she was about to put away the catalogue when the customer behind Dexter asked for it, which she gave to. And then she got her notepad out and jotted his order down, “I will get your order in just a moment, I’ll just see to the other customers. Thank you for shopping at Booutique!” she repeated the accent, and went on.

The line wasn’t as slow as the grocer’s earlier, in fact this system made it optimal. Having your order reserved already while lining up instead of going through aisle to aisle was a great idea. Hopefully he got to see what he was buying but spandex was an all-size fits

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all. Plus, he and his child eat well, except for the summer season, and Halloween. At least Miles eats the candy after.

A moment later, he was already inside the store. The maze of crowd blockers stretched inside with enough space from the aisle for salespeople to get the costumes. The choices were categorized per genre, and he was about to enter 'horror'. There were different kinds, like vampire costumes with fake fangs, witches, Frankenstein, and even werewolves. He thought about getting one but it was too small for him and too big for Miles. After turning the corner, it was fantasy with dragon costumes, plastic knight armor, and princess outfits with fake tiaras. Followed by sci-fi where he saw the different versions of the Power Rangers. While there were other choices, he only focused on them; the uniforms were identical. Some of the series had different colors; Jungle Fury had purple instead of black or silver unlike Wild Force even if, to him, they were the same thing.

The same rabbit lady earlier passed by, even waving at him while she picked up two silver costumes wrapped in plastic. The model, similar to what he saw on the catalogue, was on its cover.

She turned to him after, "I'll place these at the front for you, sir. Cash or credit?"

"Credit," he answered, while adjusting his grasp on both bags. "Does this store have veteran discounts?" And saying so attracted a few customers to turn around. Their faces expressed admiration for him.

"I'm sad to say sir that we don't have it available yet," her lips slightly curved downwards. "Thank you for your service to our country no less."

"That's alright, miss," he smiled back to lighten up the mood. She went towards the several lined up baskets besides the cashiers. There were differing amounts of costumes inside, and his was placed before a black and white pair costume; the salt and pepper pair of the ladies in front of him.

When it was his turn, the rabbit saleslady placed his order in a small paper bag. He reckoned it could fit in his plastic bag because of how compact it was. Dexter put it down while he fetched his wallet and dragged the car out with his thumb.

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“Thanks for your quick and accommodating assistance, miss,” he passed the credit card to the also-rabbit cashier.

“It’s no problem, sir,” she smiled back with both paws clasped in front of her waist, nodding in respect. “Come shop again with us, any time.”

And when the cashier handed back his card along with its receipt, he put them back in his wallet. Dexter gestured to the saleslady to put his order into the plastic bag he raised towards her. To which she did, which he appreciated much. He realized that he could’ve left the grocery in his car first. Nonetheless, he was pleased through and through. From meeting his superior’s polite son, to the excellent service of Booutique. Even his inner thoughts said it with a spooky tone. The wolf left the store with a much longer line than earlier, and without time to appreciate the ambiance.

With groceries in the trunk, and the wolf back on the driver’s seat, he drove out. That was almost two hours spent and he still had to get lunch. His fatherly instincts kicked in once again and urged him to get home fast by ordering in a drive-thru.

Dexter drove towards the town’s food district where he would order from the first restaurant that had it. There was a tall sign called ‘Sammy’ with ‘Drive-Thru’ written underneath. It was a beaver holding up a dish of roasted log. He didn’t understand what that conveyed, but food is food. Plenty of cars were parked in the block ahead which meant the place was decent. He turned the corner and saw a restaurant in the shape of a house, with a pointed roof, log walls, and a smoking chimney. The best part was the drive-thru attending to only one car, which was already receiving its order.

He turned into the intersection, then into the restaurant’s alley moments after. The menu was mostly breakfast and lunch items that were very Canadian. Dexter ordered poutine, tourtiere to share, and baked beans on toast.

The wolf paid for it at the cashier window, then waited in front of the receiving one. There was an insufferable five minute wait, intensified by his fatherly worries. Not even the pleasant scent upon receiving his order deterred it. He placed the plastic bag on the seat beside him, and finally went home.

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The drive home was much quicker along the highway. His worry waned the closer he got, and taken over by relief as he turned into his street. The house was still intact, all the decorations in place except for a stray frisbee on his lawn that one of the neighbor's went and retrieved. The young goat waved apologetically to him, and he smiled and waved back. He parked by the sidewalk, facing the opposite from earlier.

Dexter stepped out with take-out in hand, greeting the kids playing who waved at him back. He stepped up on his patio and knocked three times. The tv's volume went down, and he heard soft footsteps heading towards the door, stopping just before it.

"Aim with discipline," his son challenged.

To which Dexter responded, "Fire with intent."

Followed by swift unlocking, Miles stepped out and hugged his dad, "Welcome home, dad."

Dexter did in kind, with his free arm, "I'm glad you're safe son." After, he had a request, "I'll go get the groceries, can you bring our lunch to the kitchen, please?" He offered it to him, and the tyke heaved it in front with both paws.

"Sure dad," his son turned around, wobbling with slight difficulty yet his tail wagging.

He turned around towards his car and fetched the groceries. Then he stepped inside with his tail closing the door only to be greeted in awe. Miles had turned off the tv already because he was preparing the table, with their plates and utensils near each other. Dexter went into the kitchen and put his groceries on the counter, then stored the organic items into the fridge.

"Did you buy me those bubble pops, dad?" the young cub tugged on his shirt.

He patted his son's head, "Yes I did son." Miles cheered but he had more to say, "But not after lunch okay? And only one because you're getting a lot of candy later anyways."

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He pouted, but nodded, "Alright then." And got up on his seat, waiting for his dad to finish.

After putting the fish in the freezer, he began opening the takeout bag. There were three paper boxes, each with a strong savory scent. Only then did Dexter appreciate it with his grumbling stomach. Miles panted, his tail wagging eagerly.

They opened up their orders. The poutine was an all-too familiar classic to the Fennix family; crisp brown fries with cheese curds and gravy, and it was still hot and steamy. Next was the tourtiere, a circular meat pie with tomato and beef seeping out of its top crust. And last, but definitely not the least, were beans on toast topped with cheese and chives.

The Fennix wolves' tongues slobbered. They controlled themselves for a moment to say grace. Afterwards, they all got a piece of everything on their plates and started eating. The poutine was phenomenal, hot and savory because of its gravy and somewhat salty with its curds. The tourtiere was similar to the sweet and delicate flavors of beef, tomato, and some green herbs. While the beans on toast were very sweet, with its garnishes bringing it out.

After a mutual belch and both wolves tidying their mouths with the provided napkin, Miles hesitated on having candy then. Dexter looked forward to a dine-in at Sammy and trying their other dishes.

"How was it, son?" he cleaned his fangs with a toothpick.

Miles slouched giving him a thumbs up, "That was amazing. Where's.." he reads the logo on the packaging, "..Sammy at?"

"The intersection before the highway. Place looked like a log cabin. Large beaver sign, can't miss it." Dexter stood up and went for the plastic grocery bag.

"I'm already full dad, the candy can wait," he giggled, patting his stomach.

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“So you don’t want..” Dexter waves out both costumes in their packaging, “..this?”

Miles' eyes widened upon seeing the color scheme, and golden sash pressed against the plastic. He shrieked and ran to hug his father tightly, “Thank you thank you thank you, you’re awesome dad!” The young tyke kept bouncing as he did.

He giggled, stroking his head fur, “You’re very much welcome, son.” For all the times he kept the home safe, for being wholesome, and completing his life.

Miles was handed the smaller one and he bounced more.

But Dexter held down his shoulders, “Relax sonny, don’t want you getting sick now.”

The young wolf instead had a vibrating tail, with the biggest grin stretching his face, “You even got the Lunar Wolf from Episode fifteen!” And then he inspected the package, “Does it come with a helmet?”

“No, sadly,” he answered simply. Worried that his son wouldn’t be as pleased, hiding it well.

But Miles smiled and hugged his father again, “That’s alright, they always take off their helmets after they save the day.”

Dexter sighed in relief and hugged his son again, “We’ve saved the day son. From the evil forces.”

“Yes, after saving the day from the evil Orgs!” Miles raised his fist.

Dexter did too, half heartedly. More confused yet humored that these space rangers were fighting evil organizations.

“Can I put it on now?” his son tugged on his arm, “Please?”

“Sure son, but no jumping around, and don’t go to the backyard okay?” Because drying after the wash would take too long.

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Miles raised his head, to which his father crouched down, and kissed his cheek. He dashed for his room, laughing along the way.

Dexter chuckled and shook his head. Kids will be kids, he thought. Back to the groceries, he searched around for a large bowl to hold the candy. Since he would be out in the neighborhood with his boy, no one would be manning the house. Better to just let the kids take some at a time and hope no one steals the entire thing. He thought about the suburban layout, it wasn't large enough to not have his house in view. That assured him. He found a large enough bowl in the cupboards and gave it a quick wash and dry.

Before he could start putting the candy in, Miles ran down the stairs and into the foyer. The costume seemed to fit him, it was spandex after all. His tail wagged frantically behind him. The gloves, sash, and belt and buckle didn't have the same shine it did in the catalogue but that could've been for show. Looks good on him.

"What do you think?" Miles asked, posing with crossed arms and a smug grin.

Dexter chuckled, giving him a thumbs up, "It looks good on you son. Go fight those Orgs, but no roughhousing."

"Yes sir," he saluted, and ran around the place shouting catchphrases.

He then opened the pack of wrapped candy and poured it down in the bowl. First were the sour candies he got, because it's the one he'd most likely eat when there were left overs. After that was the bubblegum because Miles would most likely have them when they haven't gone through the chocolates, jawbreakers, and marshmallows. The latter three he put on top.

Dexter went upstairs, but not before giving way to his running son who said 'excuse me' as he went by. He got a large piece of paper, a marker, and some tape, and came back down stepping aside as his son excused himself as he dashed by again. The old wolf wrote on the paper 'Take two please! Save some for the other trick-or-treaters too.' and drew a shoddy Halloween pumpkin after. He taped it on the bowl.

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He checked the digital clock over the fridge, it read '1305'. Last year, trick or treating started around 1800, so he had a lot of spare time. Dexter took the costume and went upstairs again and back into his bedroom. The wolf unpacked it on the bed and was surprised to see it come with instructions.

"Put the pants and shirt first, then lock it in with the belt," he read. "This is for adults, or people taller than 152 centimeters, and heavier than 70kg." Dexter fit the margin, and started changing. The fabric was very smooth and comfy, but it wasn't silk. It was loose as he put it on; but it clung onto him when the garter was at his hips, and his head was through the neck hole and his tail through its dedicated hole too. And as he expected, it was pleasant to wear but loose where the shirt and pants met. That was what the belt was for, and he clipped it around his waist. Now he felt the outfit hugging him.

"This oddly feels good," he twisted and turned in front of the mirror admiring the outfit emphasizing his abs and biceps. The spandex highlighted his caricature, the curves of his apex physique. He slipped into those boots and put on the gloves, making it feel nearly complete. Maybe he'd get a helmet for this thing after all, and one for Miles too.

"Here I come," he said to the reflection, striking a pose as if he were to attack. His left arm and leg forward, while he reeled in his other side. But it was too generic and the show was over the top. He stood in thought for a moment, wondering what would match such theatrics. He recalled a stance from an old kung-fu movie; Dexter squatted with his left leg raised and his right stretched out, and his right arm reached out as his left arm bent against his chest as both hands gesture like claws. Now he looked like an action hero. Even better: he felt like an action hero. Dexter then noticed the insignia on his chest, and on the buckle. Though the material was cheap, the artwork of the wolf's head insignia and buckle were top notch.

He went downstairs to check on his son who was sitting down in front of the television. The episode showed a wolf morphing into the same outfit he'd been wearing, but had the helmet of course. There was a device that they used to put on the uniform in a beam of light. It was as small as a mobile device.

Dexter sat beside his son who was caught surprised but immediately hugged his arm, "Hope you don't mind I join in, sonny."

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Miles leaned back to check on his dad, “You look better than the guy on tv, dad.”

That warmed his heart as he embraced his son, “You betcha, but we’re all in this together against the evil Orgs.” Still confused about the whole thing. Though he wanted to play along with his son who cheered with him.

A chilly wind blew through the streets, sending shivers to those without fur nor feather. The moon peeked over the forested horizon, to be welcomed by the starry skies. The Fennixes had donned their Lunar Wolf Ranger costumes, and now stand in front of their porch with Halloween cloth bags in hand. Miles especially, eager to receive tricks and treats from their creative neighbors.

They walked out onto the path, their backdrop a shadowed den rife with blood-eyed werewolves creeping about their corners. There even was a bowl that sat on top of a porch chair with severed hands clung onto its sides, but with a friendly message taped to it. Despite that, numerous distant howls played from behind the Fennix home, which the full moon had risen over too. Dexter, impressed, couldn’t help but capture the scene with his phone.

And then he turned to his son, “Alright kiddo, where do you want to go first?”

Miles glanced at every visible house, all of which had varying themes. “That one,” he pointed at the home that had a crashed stereotypical UFO in their front yard. It even had the crater, smoke, and sparks too. The house was across the street, and there was a crowd heading towards it.

“Alright, lead the way ranger,” Dexter encouraged. He followed after his son who crossed the road. There were no cars in sight, nor heard. The closer they got, the more details he noticed about this particular home; there were large silhouettes on the windows, with gurgling noise coming from inside, and fake green blood trailing towards their porch.

The crowd of youngsters, guardians, and Miles following close behind avoided the residue. Dexter even caught a whiff of it and the spaceship; it smelled like burnt meat. And

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there was a loud thud on the door, which opened afterwards. Smoke poured out onto the front yard and around their feet. A cold sensation followed that had caused all of them to raise their tails. Thumping was heard as the silhouette came to view, and out came a bipedal alien creature; very green, tall with one eye, and residue spilling out of its leg. Its arm snapped behind the door, and yanked out a bowl of candy.

“Trick or treat!” the children yelled in unison.

Dexter was amazed by the performance. It was intensified by the visuals and ambiance. That gave him an idea for later. The children and their guardians lined up, with Miles and Dexter following close behind, and even more following up behind them too.

He could hear the muffled greeting of ‘Happy Halloween’ as they got closer to the costumed xenomorph. When it was Miles’ turn, he noticed that the costume was given so much detail. The stretching skin, the subtle nerves, and even the pores were all present. This definitely wasn’t Superlion.

“Trick or treat,” Miles said, and Dexter repeated afterwards. They both presented their bags to the alien.

The muffled voice, turning out to be a guy, answered, “Happy Halloween you two,” and gave them an assortment of candy. They went back out onto the street and checked what they got.

“Wow, a Chocobar,” Miles said. Dexter peeked into his bag, the youngster referring to a bird-shaped chocolate treat.

The older wolf checked his own and had one as well. In fact, most of these candies he got were not in the grocery earlier or any he had seen at all. Besides the Chocobar, there were transparent jelly strips, several foreign chewy candies, and a roll of taffy according to its wrapper.

Speaking of candy, Dexter glanced over at their home and saw a small group of witches walking up to their porch. They were bundled together as they got closer, their werewolves waiting still, staring at their front yard. One of them had the courage to walk up

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their porch and grabbed a bunch. He let out a chuckle, but was impressed that the lone witch shared her candy with what he presumed were her sisters. They were all squirrels.

“Can we go there next, dad?” Miles asked. Dexter quickly turned to his son pointing at a two-story house. If memory serves him right, it didn’t have pointy roofs or a spire backdrop. Now that, to him, was dedication.

“Sure son,” Dexter went ahead with Miles following close by.

They were joined by another group, and other pairs like them. Some of them wore an improvised Transformer’s costume, others were vampires, and one of the taller kids went as a tree. The father-son wolf duo positioned themselves at the edge of the crowd. Suddenly the doors opened letting out fog that crept around their ankles too. An evil laugh boomed from behind this home, with the younger children whimpering.

Miles clung onto his dad’s suit and tail because of the costumed family stepping out. It was the nostalgic Addams Family, and the grandmother was a witch. They were all domestic felines.

Dexter kept an arm around his son, “It’s gonna be alright son, I won’t let her hurt you. We’re Power Rangers after all.” Hoping that it would reassure his son in the slightest, but Miles insisted on hiding, only peeking in between his armpits.

The young wolf whimpered, clinging onto his father, as the family walked down the steps. They snapped their fingers to the familiar piano tune. It went on for two minutes, with the adults, especially the mothers, rocking their head sideways to it.

Dexter was familiar with it, hearing it during late evenings in his younger years. He never understood the show’s premise and the titular family looked weird. After their presentation, which most of the kids have warmed up to already, they all gave them a standing ovation.

“Trick or Treat!” they said in unison, with Miles whispering it from behind his father. The Frankenstein Monster-looking guy went back in and returned with a big bag of

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goodies. He laid it out on the pavement, and the mother and daughter started distributing the candy.

He tried to move forward but Miles wouldn't budge. Fortunately it was the father, an orange tabby who had dyed his fur black and white, who approached them. As opposed to the witchy grandmother, he looked like a businessman wearing a fancy suit that had matched his monochrome fur.

"It's alright sonny," his tone was confident. The feline father reached forward with two bags, "Happy Halloween you two."

"Thank you," Dexter took both bags and put one in his own, and in Mile's. "My son doesn't like witches."

"Ah," he clasped his hands, and looked at son with a simple smile. "Don't worry young Power Ranger, she's a good witch."

"R-really? She's not gonna put me in an oven?" Miles whimpered.

The tabby laughed, shaking his head, "She's not going to put you in an oven." He leaned in, whispering, "She's a vegetarian."

"See? She won't eat you," he moved his arm so his son could regain his confidence.

"Happy Halloween then," he stepped out smiling.

"Happy Halloween, Power Ranger."

They left after. Dexter and Miles waved at the tabby waving back too. There were more houses to visit, some he would want to see for himself too. One in particular was a house a few blocks away that had a grandfather clock on their yard, stylized as Big Ben. Beside it was a lion couple in classic clothing; the husband wearing a gentleman's suit, while the wife wore a rather large dress. They sat down on a picnic blanket with a basket beside them, and it had the candy they gave away. Their home was normal, but even their smallest effort proved to be quite interesting.

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“Dad, look at our home,” Miles tugged on his arm again.

Dexter turned to their home again. This time it was a bunch of wolves that resembled werewolves walking up to their porch. They felt welcome, and didn't hesitate to take some candy for themselves. It was also good to note that they could pull off something like that next year. He asked Miles, “Wanna be werewolves next year, son?”

“Yeah,” he continued, “how about we exchange who gets to choose Halloween costumes each year?”

“Sounds like a plan,” he hugs his son tightly. “So you get this year, and I get next year, right?”

“Right,” then he pointed at the Egyptian house Dexter saw earlier. “Let's go there.”

“Sure son,” the father held his son's paw and they walked towards the desert-themed home.

Palm trees now stood beside the columns, and a pyramid was half-sunk into the sandbox. There was a crowd forming around the other side of their lawn, where an alligator and an eagle in thematic clothing accommodated them. Upon closer inspection, they huddled around an open sarcophagus emanating golden light. The couple who costumed as Egyptian Gods, Ra, and Sobek, were giving the trick-or-treaters a handful of sweets. And an extra to the kid who was wrapped in toilet paper. Their costumes were somewhat comical as they wore a flesh top that resembled humans.

Miles looked in, and Dexter peeked in too. The sarcophagus had nothing but golden-wrapper candies.

“Happy Halloween,” the crocodile spoke with a gruff voice. He posed with his ankh staff.

“Trick or treat!” Miles said to them as he presented his bag.

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“Power Rangers eh?” the eagle spoke with a burly tone. He used a scooper to fetch the candy and poured it into his son’s bag.

“Yep, son loves it,” Dexter said, presenting his bag after the eagle insisted with a scoopfull.

“My favorite was the SPD, but I don’t think they’ve aired it in Canada yet,” he scooped more candy and gave it to the other trick or treaters.

“There’s more?!” Miles exclaimed with his mouth wide open.

“Yep, kid. They make one every year, and with variety too. One was about dinosaurs, right Nicky?” he turned to the crocodile who was talking with a guy in a horse head.

“What?” he turned to them now realizing what he had asked, “Yeah. I never really watched it in full because I’m more of a book guy.”

“Where do you guys watch it?” the young wolf bounced with his tail wagging.

“We lived in the states for a while, down in Washington,” he answered. “It was on every weekend at 6 in the evening.”

“Woah, on what channel?”

“Cartoon Network, as far as I recall.” He scooped another and greeted a different trick or treaters.

“Really? I don’t see it at that time,” Miles frowned.

“Different countries, different broadcasts,” the eagle smiles at him, “but it takes place after Wild Force, so look forward to that.”

And his excitement returned, cheering with both hands raised, “Yes!”

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“Alright,” Dexter chuckled, “It was nice meeting you two. Name’s Dexter, and this is my son Miles,” he patted his son’s shoulder.

“Name’s Ethan,” the eagle greeted. Then he gestured his thumb to the alligator, “That’s my partner, Nicholas.”

“It was nice meeting you two,” Nicholas waved at them.

“We’ll see you around the neighborhood then,” Dexter and Miles waved as they left.

“Happy Halloween!” Miles shouted at them.

And so the Fennix’s went on exploring the neighborhood. There was a household that had been turned to a shipwreck, with a pirate theme that fired candy from their cannons. Another was a brick home that had a fantasy setting. They were a lizard family and one of them added wings to themselves to look like a dragon, and used a catapult to launch their candy to trick or treaters.

After several more households, each with their own unique theme, they finally returned home to see that their candy bowl had been emptied to Dexter’s relief. And to Miles’ excitement, they both had full bags.

“We got a lot of booty!” Miles cheered, swinging his bag around.

“Don’t swing it too much or it’ll go back into those murky waters, son,” Dexter chuckled. And he crouched down, holding his son’s shoulder, “And because you’ve behaved so well, this booty is also yours.” He passed his bag to his son hugging him tightly first.

“You’re the best dad ever,” he nuzzled his father’s cheek.

“And you’re the best son ever,” the older wolf rubbed the back of his son’s head.

They rested for a moment in their kitchen. Dexter and his son drank some water because trick or treating was a fun exercise on its own. Though for his son, it would be discredited by the amount of sugar he would ingest in the coming days. The clock read

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'0000'. On any other day, he and his son would've been fast asleep, but tonight was special. As wolves, their instincts had been ingrained by tradition. That of which they must howl to the full moon on Hallows Eve.

They stepped out into the backyard, wordless and without question. They were guided by instinct. Dexter's body tingled with it, strengthened by the distant first howls across the treeline and their neighbors. He turned to his boy who had been staring at the sky too. The same way he had when he was a young cub.

"It's about time you grow up son," he told him. Miles looked on as his father demonstrated the howl; his paws tapped the part where his chest met his throat, "It comes from here son, close to your heart." And afterwards patted his chin tilting upwards, "And you let out a howl with your natural voice. Inhale deeply first, then exhale as you do."

Miles nodded, half-squatting as he looked up.

"It will come to you naturally, don't force it." Dexter inhaled deeply, then exhaled. Inhaled once more, then looked to the heavens and let out a howl louder, and much more authentic than his recordings. It was long and passionate that the other wolves joined his lead.

Followed by a higher pitched howl that was from his son, deepening slightly as his boy went on. Though not the same as his father's, it was deep enough for his age. And they sang on to the night for several minutes more.

And when the howl's have died down, they smiled at each other as the moonlight washed over them. Dexter smiled and hugged his son tightly who hugged him back almost as tight.

"I'm proud of you son," Dexter said to him. "Not bad for your first howl."

"Thanks dad," he looked up to him. "You're right, it does come naturally."

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“Mhm,” he shed a tear. Dexter was proud of his boy. Though unsure if he would become a soldier, he had the makings of one. If his son truly wished to become like him, by God he would make it so.

“Happy Halloween, dad.”

“Happy Halloween, son.”
