My roommate had a habit of pestering me for details on some of my cases, either for evening entertainment or genuine curiosity.

For the most part, I could tell him about some of my private investigations on the condition I said nothing about clients’ real names. I could discuss a case involving marital infidelity and how I discovered the cheating spouses. I could discuss with him the insane, neurotic ways a client insisted what they believed to be true, or how much the world was conspiring against them and I just wasn’t ‘looking into evidence hard enough’. I could also talk about the really strange, really bizarre scenarios I stumbled into during my cases. Those last two really got the older Saint Bernard to laugh his tail off.

High-profile client or high-profile cases were out of the question, however.

“Just hear me out, alright?” He pleaded from the couch as I continued cooking my late dinner. “I’ve told you I’ll keep quiet, dude. I kept quiet when you told me about them Alnwick twins, didn’t I?”

“Barely!” I sighed with a frustrated swish of my tail. “A couple days after the case was closed, I distinctly remember you telling Melissa that it was one of the Alnwick twins who hired me that day.”

“And I shut her down of any questions about it and told her to get back to work.” He argued, “How were you or I supposed to know she was mutual friends of their mutual friends? I couldn’t just outright lie to her when she knew what Jackson—and Jasper—looked like.”

Luckily, from what I gathered either online or from the rumor mills, the surreal truth of the twins’ relationship never did come to light. Melissa had just been a curious barista in Daniel’s employment who heard about a mutual, mutual friend going through some drama.

“Anyway,” I steered back on topic, “the answer is still no.”

“Zack, c’mon!” He whined as I kept on stirring my macaroni with the boiling water. “The vixen who visited you this morning was clearly high-profile. If I were a betting dog, I’d bet she worked for either a millionaire, a wife of a millionaire, or maybe the

His deduction couldn’t stop me from smirking. He got the last one right. In fact, my client happened to be the assistant to the deputy-mayor of Crossroads City, who suspected an intern or two had been leaking sensitive information to the press. Information regarding a reelection campaign in the future. Though I never truly cared about local politics unless it interfered with my ability to do my job, I thought it wouldn’t hurt having a public figure give positive reviews. Positive reviews equaled a soaring reputation and therefore equaled more money from potential clients.

Not that Daniel needed to know the whole picture.

“Aren’t you the detective then?” I chuckled in amusement, turning to see the underwear-clad dog sip from one of his bottles of beer. The thought of a daquiri seemed divine to go with my meal. “The client was crystal-clear about no word getting out though. She demanded I sign a non-disclosure agreement if it meant being paid in full.”

The NDA I signed meant a positive review would likely never see the light of day, unfortunately. Still, the handsome deposit made me excited for the week ahead, especially after the hour spent researching everything on the list of suspects provided to me by the client’s representative.

Daniel groaned at my stubbornness. “Zack, can’t you—”

“No.” I said.

“How about a first name?” He asked.

“No.” I said again.

“A last name?” He asked again.

“I’m trying to protect us from getting sued.” I told the Saint Bernard.

“Even if it’s too common for me to figure out?” He ignored my plea.

“Absolutely not.” I shook my whiskers.

“Their species then?” He enquired.

I paused midway through stirring. Then, I pierced one of the noodles to taste it. Nodding my head and retrieving the pasta strainer, my paws gripped both it and the pot as I poured the macaroni into said strainer. I shook it slightly to remove the rest of the water, then returned it into the searing pot before retrieving the ingredients.

“Well?” Daniel spoke up. “What about species—”

“No!” I interrupted in a deadpan manner. “I’m serious, Daniel. Best case scenario, we lose the potential $3,000 bonus that’d come with the fee. Worst case scenario, I get a lawsuit placed unceremoniously into my lap, get blacklisted as an untrustworthy private eye, then you’d need to find another roommate once all my work dries up.”

“You’re such a pessimist, aren’t ya?” He scoffed before emptying the last of his bottle.

“No, I’m just a realist, and doing my job.” I countered between placing butter and some spices as well as the cheese powder into the macaroni. It may not have been an exquisite dinner, but the salt, pepper, paprika, and sliced leftover hot dogs mixed in made it better than bland. “If you keep pestering me about this, I’ll stop telling you about all of my future cases.”

“All of ‘em?” He sat up straighter from the sofa. “Even the infidelity cases?”

“Especially the infidelity cases.” I nodded before pouring it all into a big bowl for me to enjoy. “No more babbling about my clients to you, dude.”

Daniel groaned again, then yawned in boredom. After watching me sit down on the couch to enjoy my meal, the older canine started to smile. My fur crawled at the sign of something crossing his diabolical mind, knowing it by the glint in his eye too.

“Fine…no more bothering ya about the case then.” He relented like a car salesman, “But only if you promise me something.”

“What’s the catch?” I paused the enjoyment of my late dinner. It needed to cool down anyway.

“I wanna help out on a job at some point.” Daniel surprised me with his answer. To the point I nearly forgot to make a witty retort of some kind. “Y’know, be the Watson to Sherlock. I’ve always wanted to try it.”

My stomach growled, and I too relented. “…fine.”

Satisfied, the older dog proceeded to snatch the TV remote and go through a few channels until he settled on a rerun of an old sitcom from years ago. A part of me dreaded the idea of what a case involving my roommate would entail, but at least dinner tasted good.