

Cindy Lapin, Clarence Skunk, Debby Squirrel, Susan Feline, Rodney & Ellen Lapin, and Wanda Vixen are copyright by Chris Yost. Captain Squirrel is copyright to Evan Mayerle. James Shepard & Marvin Badger is copyright by James Bruner. Zig Zag is copyright by Max the Black Rabbit. Sabrina is copyright by Eric W. Schwartz. Styx, Owen Skunk, and Sharon Skunk are copyright by Styx (a.k.a. Greg Lasseigne).

This story is a fan fiction based on the web novel "Sabrina Online the Story" by Chris Yost, it is a work of speculation and must not be taken as canon.

Historical note: this story takes place during the events described in chapter 46 of Sabrina Online the Story by Chris Yost and starts three days after Sabrina has left Columbus.

Clarence & Cindy

Jumping to Conclusions

By Styx
Chapter One

The clock on the end table read 10:15am when the bedroom door opened. Cindy stepped into her room and closed the door again, having just gotten out of the shower. She was dressed only in a towel wrapped tightly at her chest. Her head fur and ears were covered by another towel. Sitting down at her vanity table, she removed the towel from her head and started grooming her head fur while going over the events of the last few days in her head. Sabrina's leaving still nearly brings tears to her eyes, she just can't seem to get used to the idea. She had always been able to talk to Sabrina about anything. She was always so close but now...she sighed. She'd like to talk to her now about Clarence but she knew Sabrina already had a lot on her mind, with getting used to a new area and new apartment, new roommate and to top it all off a new job. Cindy didn't feel comfortable about talking to Debby or Susan about what happened with Clarence. Not that she didn't feel as close to them as she did Sabrina, it's just, well, she felt that Susan would be prone to make it into a joke as she so often did with other subjects of this nature. She knew what Debby's view on sex before marriage was. *Although, she thought, Debby has been seeing that airplane engineer for few weeks, and, especially after what she told us about last weekend, she does seem much taken with him, maybe I should talk with her; maybe she'll understand, maybe she'll have some advice on how to face Clare.* Cindy winced as her mind finally hit upon what was really bothering her. *Oh how could I have been so stupid,* she thought as she went over what happened the last time she and Clarence were together. She remembered how safe she felt in his embrace and how much she loved him, how when he caressed her ears she... She shook herself out of her revelry, feeling the desire rise again. *It was so close so close to happening; I wanted it to happen...didn't I?* She decided that she did at the time, that it was only the heat of passion that caused her to offer herself to Clarence. She knew that she still wanted to be with him, wanted him to be not just the first but to be the only male she'd know in that way, but now was not the time. She wanted it to be on their wedding night. Cindy shook herself again; she knew that it was silly thinking about marriage this soon. *Anyway, I've probably scared him off for good,* she thought miserably. Even though her father had tried to convince her that he was sure Clarence still loved her after she had told her parents what

had happened the next morning, she just couldn't get that look of fright on his face out of her mind. Even when he had tried to run and she convinced him to stay he seemed preoccupied, even distant at times. She was worried. Had she caused Clarence to rethink their relationship? Looking at the clock, she realized she needed to get moving if she was going, if she didn't want to have to rush to get to work on time. It was about ten to eleven when her cell phone rang. Looking at the display the caller ID said **Clarence Skunk**. She allowed the phone to continue ringing, looking at it sadly. "Oh Clarence I'm sorry, but I just can't face hearing you say that you want to break up. I just can't." The phone stopped ringing.

Cindy entered the kitchen to find her mother sitting at the counter with a cup of coffee and the morning paper when the phone rang and her mother picked it up.

"Lapin residence" she answered. "Oh hi Clarence how have you been, Cindy?"

Cindy took on a look of panic, shaking her head furiously and waving her arms in front of her.

"N- No, I'm sorry dear, you just missed her, she left for work already...okay I'll tell her, bye"

Cindy slumped down in the seat next to her mother knowing she was now going to have to explain why she made her do what she did.

"Well?" her mother asked as she hung up the phone, "would you care to explain why I just had to lie to poor Clarence?"

"Mom, I just know he wants to break up with me," she looked ashamed, "and I can't face it, not yet."

"I thought your father convinced you," she started when Cindy interrupted.

"He did at first, but he didn't see Clarence's face," she again remembered the look on his face, "he was frightened. Scared to death, like something horrible was going to happen."

"Doesn't exactly speak well of you does it?" her mother said, grinning mischievously.

"MOM!" Cindy gasped, surprised that her mother would say something like that.

"I'm sorry sweetheart," she chuckled, "but don't you think you might be reading too much into it? I mean, he did stay after you asked him to, right? Don't you think that if it had upset him that much he would have left anyway?"

Cindy had to admit it did make sense, what her mother was saying. “But he seemed so distant, preoccupied, like he was thinking over something important....I just know I've lost him,” she repeated sadly.

“Did you and Clarence talk to each other about Sabrina leaving? How you both felt about it?” her mother asked, remembering the look on Clarence's face when he told her that Cindy had been upset at Sabrina's departure. She had guessed that he had been troubled too.

“Um, no not really. There was a short time when I just couldn't keep the tears away. She is like a sister after all. Clarence just held me until I could control myself.” She smiled as she remembered how wonderful it felt to be in his arms.

Seeing the expression on Cindy's face, her mother could guess what she was feeling. “You know, Clarence and I spoke briefly about it the other night while your father was putting you to bed, and he's upset that she is gone, too.” Noticing the change of expression, she continued, “What, does that really surprise you? Surely the first fur you had romantic feelings for still holds a place in your heart.” The last part was more statement than question, knowing Cindy still had fond memories of that raccoon she met at summer camp when she was fifteen. “Honey I think you misread what was on Clarence's mind. I don't think he wants to break up with you, but if you keep on avoiding him he just might get the idea that you want to break up with him.”

Cindy's eyes widened. “I never thought of that...OH! I got to call him back.” She reached into her purse and grabbed her cell and noticed the time on its LCD. “Oh, but if I call him now I'll be late for work and he's probably already left for work to. I better call him at the studio on my break.”

“And just how is it you have the phone number for an adult film studio?” her mother asked in mock accusation, already knowing the answer.

“MU-ther!” Cindy said sarcastically, “I've had the number ever since Sabrina started working there.”

“I know sweetheart, I know,” she chuckled, “I was just pulling your tail.”

Cindy gave an exasperated look, and then smiled and gave her mother a kiss on the cheek and said, “Bye Mom, see you tonight,” as she rushed out the door.

“Bye dear,” she called after Cindy.

Clarence hung up the phone, frustrated. He grabbed his keys and left to run some errands before going into work. *Three days*, he thought to himself, *she must really be mad at me; I never thought she'd be upset with me for not going to bed with her.* But the

more he thought about it he supposed it could be pretty insulting to a femme. *After all, she was offering you the most precious thing she had, something she could only give once...and you rejected it.* Clarence had just sat down behind the wheel when his mind finally hit upon what he'd done.

“Oh no,” he said mournfully, and slumped low in his seat as the severity of what he did sank in, “and all I said was that I didn't believe in sex before marriage, that was kind of a cold thing to say.” *Maybe I should have explained why I feel that way. Oh what am I going to do? Jake my friend, not that I don't appreciate your advice the other morning, but I wish you had waited a couple of days before calling.* Clarence thought about calling Jake for more advice. *I can't start running to Jake every time I have a problem, but I sure could use **some** advice on how to handle this.* Clarence was barely able to keep his mind on the road as he drove towards the mall.

“Thank you for calling technical support, this is Greg speaking how can I help you?” the panther answered cheerfully. “I see, you just opened your system today and found that the windows CD and product key is missing? Have you rechecked all the packaging? Ok can you give me the serial number on the back of the system please?” Greg, a.k.a. Styx to his friends, frowned as he entered the number the caller gave him into his workstation and watched the customer's record came up on his screen. “Is the name on this order Clara Scruggs? Ok I have your information here but it says you purchased this system in '97? You did, and you just opened it today? You got it and were going to wait till you moved to a bigger place to set it up and you just moved to your new place last week I see, hold one moment.” Styx put the customer on hold and proceeded to question his sanity for liking this job. Hitting the button again, he continued, “Ok, well I'm sorry to have to tell you this but there is only a 60 day period from the date you received the system when missing items can be claimed, also that the warranty on this system has expired more then a year ago. Yes I understand you just opened the system today but you bought it more then two years ago. No ma'am we are not ripping you off, we understand that mistakes in packaging can occur, that's why we allow the sixty day period to claim missing items, but we can't allow that for an indefinite time. There has to be a cutoff point. 60 days is industry standard. Ma'am please, profanity is not needed nor will it help your position If you continue I will terminate the call,” he said as he clicked the **record call** button. The end of Styx's tail was now twitching back and forth rapidly, and his ears were pinned flat against his head. “Ma'am please, I have already asked you to st- no, I know I'm not your father but buy the same token you are not my mother and my parents are the only one's I have ever allowed to talk to me in that manner. When you feel like discussing this in a calm mature manner I suggest you call the Customer Service department as there is nothing we can do to help you here in technical support. My supervisor's name? Chuck, Chuck Baxter, yes I'm sure I will. You have a nice day ma'am” He was barely able to finish the call in a civil tone of voice when he hung up the phone, clicked the **save recording** and logged off the phone system.

“Tough customer?”

Styx looked up from entering his call notes into the customer's history to a ring-tail lemur standing next to him. "Speak of the devil, hey Chuck, naw, not as bad as some others in the past just some femme ticked off that I wouldn't send a win95 CD that was missing from a system sold more then two years ago. I think she'll be complaining. I may have been a little short with her at the end. You want to listen to it I have it recorded?"

"Don't have to, I was monitoring the call," the lemur said, grinning.

"Oh, is that right?" Styx asked in surprise, "So tell me big brother, how'd I do?" he laughed.

"I'd say you handled it well, better then I would have that's for sure," Chuck stated.

"Well, that's because you're from New York. Too confrontational," Styx joked. "Me, I'm from California, where furs are a bit more laid back," he finished.

"Laid back?" the lemur asked. "Or do you mean stoned?" Chuck retorted.

Styx closed one eye and cocked his head. "Mmmm...A little from column A," he said, holding out one paw, "and a little from column B." He chuckled while holding out the other paw. He finished entering his notes and noticed the time was 11:30. "Quitting time, I'm so out of here"

"Lucky bastard, you sure you don't want to stay a little longer?" asked the lemur.

"Lucky my backside, you try dragging your tail in here at 4AM and no I am not staying longer. I need to get away from these bubble-headed callers."

"Oh, come on," Chuck responded, "They're not all that bad."

"No, they're not all bad," Styx agreed, "but some of them can be classified as medical proof that brain death **is** a survivable condition." He shut down his station and grabbed his stuff. "I'm off to my favorite pizza place over at the mall for some lunch, then a movie."

"Sounds like a plan, see you tomorrow then," Chuck said to the retreating panther.

"Yep, see ya then," Styx called back as he left for the parking lot.

At around 12:15, Clarence exited the clothing store carrying several bags full of his purchases and headed for the mall's exit. He still had an hour and a half before he had to be at the studio, so he planned to drop his bags off at the car before having lunch.

Styx was working on his second slice when he spotted a bag laden skunk headed for the exit. "HEY CLARENCE!" he called.

Clarence stopped short of the doors leading to the parking lot when he heard his name called. He looked around and saw a panther seated at a table just inside Anthony's Pizza, waving his paw for him to come over. He headed over. "H- Hello S- Styx what do you need?"

"Not a thing," Styx chuckled at the skunk's greeting, "except some company, have a seat," he indicated the chair opposite his, "have some pizza" he offered.

Clarence looked at the extra large pepperoni, sausage, olives, onions, and bell peppers pizza. They were all his favorites, so he took a slice. "Thank you I'm starving," he said, and proceeded to devour it in record time.

Styx watched his friend over the piece of pizza he held with a smile. "I guess so. Help yourself to more if you want."

Clarence eyed the pizza again and then looked at the panther. "A-Are you s- sure I don't," he started.

"Oh yeah go ahead," Styx said, waving his paw in a dismissive manner. "I always end up taking half of it home anyway. I only get the extra large because it's their best deal. Don't worry about it." He finished and took and refilled his glass from the pitcher on the table. "Want some root beer?" he offered. "Don't worry," he said when he saw the worried look on Clarence's face again, "you get free refills here." Seeing him nod, still chewing his last bite, he asked a passing waitress for a second glass and filled it up. He then passed it to the skunk. "So how's my favorite Amigaphile been, still insist those things will change the world?" he joked.

"I was n- never obsessed l- like some furs," Clarence said. "N- No really," he started when he saw the "yeah right" look on the panther's face, "I c- could introduce you to a f- femme who even hates the th- thought of touching a w- windows system."

"Let me guess, another skunk right?" Styx asked and took a drink.

Clarence looked at the panther with his mouth half open. "Yeah how'd you know?" he asked, surprised, wondering if he knew Sabrina.

"Just a hunch, I'm starting to think the Amiga craze is some kind of skunk thing," the feline stated.

"W- What makes y- you say that?" asked the skunk defensively.

“Well I was at this computer expo back in ‘96 and was checking things out by the Crox Net booth and a skunk femme was there to, she seemed to be having some problems getting signed up with her Amiga,” he stated, “so when she was finished I thought I’d be friendly and suggest she try using a windows system for net access. The way she looked at me you’d swear I had suggested that she strip down to her fur and run around the expo yelling free samples.” He finished and took another bite of pizza.

“D- Did you ever get her name?” Seeing the panther shake his head he thought to himself, *Could it have been her?* “I wonder,” he mused quietly.

“So,” Styx started cheerfully, “how are things going with you and that doe you’re seeing?” His mood changed quickly though, as he saw the expression on Clarence’s face turn to something resembling despair. “Uh oh, you’ve run into trouble I take it. Did you cross the line and go too far?” he asked.

“N- No, no that’s not it, not exactly.” Clarence wondered if he should confide in Styx. One thing he did know he could really use was some advice. He decided to take a chance and told Styx about the last time he was with Cindy and that now she wasn’t taking or returning his calls.

Styx gave a low whistle then a small chuckle. “Damn if you don’t get into the strangest dilemmas,” he said with a smile, and then saw the skunk’s crest fallen look. “Sorry. So advice. Well I don’t think it’s as hopeless as you think it is, and I can see how saying no might be insulting to a femme but I’m not sure this is the case given what you told me. I mean she asked you to stay right?”

“Y-Yeah, but why else would she n-not r return my calls?” Clarence asked.

“Hmmm... I don’t know, but that is the main thing you need to overcome. You can worry about why later, once you two are talking again.”

“B- But how d-do we accomplish t-that?”

“Well,” Styx said, rubbing the underside of his muzzle in thought, “do you know any of her friends well enough to talk to about this? I don’t mean giving any details, just that you think Cindy is angry with you and won’t return your calls and you need them to just talk to her, kinda open the door so you can get your foot in.” Styx added quickly when he saw the look of concern on the skunk’s face, “No need to give them the sordid details, now is there?”

Clarence nodded, relieved. “I, I guess I c- could talk to S- Susan,” he said, pulling out a cell phone. “I’ll leave her a m- message to c- call me back” he said as he dialed Susan’s home number and put the phone to his ear, waiting for Susan’s machine to pick up. Then, “OH! S- Susan, ah it’s C- Clarence, Clarence Skunk. Uh right, uh ok, I guess. I d-didn’t think I’d catch y- you at home at this t time. Oh I see. What? Oh r- right, um I, I was wondering if, well I need a f- favor if you can m meet with me. Huh? Uh, yes I can

make it there in ten minutes. Ok s-see you then, bye,” He switched off the phone and looked at the panther. “S-She had her home phone forwarded to her cell, s- she wants to meet me at the ice cream shop so we c can d- discuss what I need,” he finished.

“Well you better get going if you're going to make it in ten minutes,” Styx said. He saw Clarence pull out his wallet and stopped him from putting some money on the table. “Nope it's on me, you can pick up the check next time; good luck with Cindy,” he said as Clarence picked up his bags.

“T- Thank you Styx f for lunch, and the advice,” Clarence said before leaving.

When Susan pulled up and parked in front of the ice cream shop she saw that Clarence had beaten her there and was standing in front waiting for her. She gathered her purse and tossed her keys inside it and got out of her car and smiled at the skunk. Clarence opened the door for her and followed her in. At the counter, the lioness made her order and was reaching in her purse for some money when she saw Clarence paw the brown bear behind the counter a five-dollar bill, and they picked out table away from the other customers.

“Thank you, Clarence, for paying,” Susan said and started eating.

“Oh n- no p- problem Susan, thank you f- for seeing me on such short n notice,” Clarence stammered. “I I'm really sorry if I took you away f from something important.”

“Oh it's not a problem. I was just wasting time anyway. So, what is this favor you need?” Susan asked and saw the tense look on the skunk's face. His tail was twitching too. “Is something wrong Clarence?”

“What!?! No, I mean yes, uh that is I hope its n- not too bad,” Clarence said, his stammering getting worse. “I, I think C- Cindy is angry w- with me. S- she won't r- return my calls a-and I was h-hoping y- you would t- talk t- to her f- for me. T- try to get her to let me e- explain.”

Susan smiled. “Trouble in paradise huh? Ok, what's the problem?” she asked.

“Uh,” Clarence paused. “I w- would rather we d- didn't go into that. It's really r- rather p- personal, Susan.” He finished meekly.

“HmMMM, well it might be easier to convince her to talk to you if I knew what kind of problem you were having, so I can know what I should say to her on your behalf. If she's not returning your calls, my saying 'Clarence would like to talk to you' isn't going to change much. You don't have to tell me everything, just kind of give me the feel for why Cindy is mad.”

“Oh, uh, ok,” Clarence started, “Well we uh, we were at C- Cindy's place m- making lasagna.” Clarence continued to tell Susan the story of when he and Cindy were last together, his stuttering and stammering more pronounced. Susan was becoming more and more amused as she realized how embarrassing this was for the skunk. A smile formed on her face.

“A- Anyway,” Clarence said, “after she g- gave me the shirt we uh, k- kissed a- and held each other and I uh um well I that is things kind of g- got out of hand a and well went further th- then it should have.” Clarence, who was both embarrassed and ashamed of the situation, was babbling almost incoherently now.

At this point something clicked in Susan's mind. *What did he just say? Got out of hand? Went too far, and Cindy is angry with him won't return his calls. Not Clarence he wouldn't, but what else could it be? Cindy would never let things go to far. He must have, he must have forced her and he wants me to apologize to her for him. OH...MY...* “GOD,” Susan said in a low voice. This stopped Clarence's babbling and he looked at her unsure of what to make of what she had just said. “You...bastard,” she said just above a whisper. Clarence's face turned to a look of confusion. Susan suddenly stood a look of pure fury on her face. “You raped her?” It was more an accusation than a question.

Clarence stood quickly, saying, “N- NO SUSAN, YOU DON'T.”

“**BASTARD!**” Susan yelled as she brought her right paw over her head, claws fully expressed.

Everything slowed to a crawl in Clarence's mind. *Oh, how could I have messed this up so badly?* His mind raced as he watched the scene before him continue in slow motion. As her paw came down he was amazed at just how well he could focus on Susan's claws. How they were professionally manicured and exquisitely sharp. He felt a tremendous jolt as her paw made contact with his chest and thought he heard something snap. Her claws pierced into and tore through his flesh as she ran her paw down across his body. Clarence looked down and saw the bloody mess his chest had become and wondered at the fact that he could feel no pain. In fact, he felt nothing at all. It suddenly became very quiet. He couldn't hear anything except a very loud THUMP-thump, THUMP-thump, THUMP-thump, THUMP-thump, THUMP-thump. Something was wrong with his eyes, it was getting dark at the edges, and then...all was blackness.

Of course for the rest present in the shop, everything happened in the blink of an eye. Susan, after raking her claws across Clarence's chest brought her paw back and tore open his abdomen before the bear could jump over the counter; he grabbed her from behind pinning her arms at her side.

Susan screamed incoherently, and then yelled, “**LET ME GO!**”

“I don't think so, Miss, not until you calm down,” the bear said.

“I SAID LET ME GO,” Susan yelled again, **“HE RAPED HER...HE RAPED MY FRIEND.”** She screamed out again but this time it changed into an almost feral roar.

The bear realized that if he did let her go she'd most certainly kill the skunk. “Hey buddy you ok?” he asked as he looked over to where the skunk was standing only to see him on the floor, unconscious, a small pool of blood forming around his head and a sickeningly larger one at his mid section. “OH HELL, SOME FUR CALL 911,” he yelled out.

“I'm on it,” called out an otter holding a cell phone to his ear.

Sure enough, after a few moments sirens of the approaching emergency vehicle could be heard. The police furs arrived shortly after the ambulance and took Susan into custody, securing her in the back of a patrol car after placing her under arrest and reading her rights to her. While the police took the statements of the bear and other witnesses, the EMT's quickly worked on Clarence to stop the bleeding and get him stabilized. Once done they lifted him on to a gurney with practiced smoothness, lifted it up to let the legs fall into place and wheeled him out to the ambulance.

As the ambulance raced through the city on its way to the hospital, the fur behind the wheel weaving the vehicle through traffic, cursing the ever increasing number of self centered drivers who refused to pull to the right, all the while, a tabby short haired cat worked on Clarence while relaying his info to the hospital over the radio.

“Columbus Mercy, this is EV...2...5...9r...2, patient is a male skunk, late teens early twenties, severe lacerations of the chest and abdomen, two broken ribs and blunt trauma to the head.” The cat gave Clarence another quick glance, “patient is currently conscious but disoriented.”

Clarence was conscious and looking around, but he couldn't make sense of anything. He knew he was in some kind of vehicle and it was moving very fast but he did not know how he got there. He noticed the fur working on him and tried to ask him what happened but could only manage a small whisper.

“Don't try to talk,” the cat said, “you have some broken ribs and maybe a punctured lung. Just stay calm and try to relax.” He finished with Clarence and turned back to the radio and finished relaying information to the hospital.

Clarence then realized that he was in an ambulance, but why had the cat said he had broken ribs? He concentrated on his chest and sure enough there was a dull ache. He tried to move and was instantly sorry he did. Clarence then noticed another fur, a male skunk like himself with a very worried look pointed at him. Clarence didn't know who the strange skunk was but at the same time he was sure that he had known him at one time.

The older skunk finally saw Clarence staring right at him and sat upright. *Can it be?* He thought, *can he really see me?* “Clarence?” he called, watching the prone skunk for a reaction...*HIS EARS... HIS EARS TWITCHED!!* “Clarence listen to me,” he started, “I know you can't talk but if you can hear me blink your eyes three times.” Again he waited. Clarence blinked once...twice...three times. *Oh! Yes, he can hear and see me!* “Clarence, listen I know it's hard to believe but,” he started only to find that Clarence had slipped back into unconsciousness. *He can hear and see me I can finally talk to one of them. But what if it's too late, what if Clarence can see and hear me only because he was dying,* he thought in shocked revelation. *No, it can't be, not now. He's just found love.* The older skunk regarded the unconscious Clarence. “Hang on Clarence hang on, I want to talk to you but not that badly,” he said with a shaky voice. “You have to fight it, son. You have to fight,” he finished through the tears.

The ambulance screeched to a halt in front of the emergency room entrance where a couple of nurses and an orderly waited. The orderly opened the doors on the back of the vehicle and helped the EMT pull Clarence's gurney out and wheeled him inside.

“Take him to O.R.3. Dr. Fisk and his team are scrubbing up now!” shouted one of the nurses as they all rushed down the hallway at breakneck speed. They wheeled Clarence into the prep room where the rest his clothing was removed and personal items were collected and the areas around the wounds were shaved and sterilized. Afterwards he was wheeled into the main O.R.

Clarence's belongings were taken to admissions. The nurse behind the counter took his wallet and counted the cash, noted the amount and placed it in an envelope and placed it with the rest of the items. Going through the wallet she found Clarence's ID. No insurance card though, but she did find an emergency contact card. The name at the top of the card read: Sharon Skunk/ Mother, with her home, work, and cell numbers. She decided to try the work number first.

“Sharon Skunk,” Sharon answered when she hit speaker on the phone, hoping it was Charlie with that status report she asked for that morning.

“Mrs. Skunk?” asked the unfamiliar voice.

“Yes. Who is this?”

“Mrs. Skunk, this is nurse Cranston at Columbus Mercy General, I'm sorry to have to tell you this ma'am but your son was brought into our emergency room severely injured a few minutes ago,” the voice finished.

Sharon blinked at the phone. *God no, oh God please not again.* She quickly grabbed the receiver and in a panicked tone said, “WHAT'S HAPPENED TO MY SON?”

“Please Mrs. Skunk try to remain calm, I don't have the details of what happened to your son. I can only tell you that the ambulance brought him in with severe injuries and he is in surgery as we speak. Mrs. Skunk, we need you to come in so you can give us the rest of your son's information, there will be an officer here who can give you more details,” Nurse Cranston finished.

“Um, okay I'll be there as soon as I can,” Sharon said in a shaken voice. She dialed Charlie's extension. When she heard him pick up, she said, “Charlie, it's me Sharon.”

“Hey Sharon I was just going to call you with that report you asked for,” he started.

“Forget it Charlie, listen I just had an emergency come up. Can you take over the department head meeting today?”

“Of course Sharon,” he said, “What's happened?”

“My son, he's been injured. The hospital just called and told me he was brought into their emergency room and taken into surgery. They wouldn't even tell me if they thought if he would...”

“Okay, okay Sharon, forget the meeting, I'll take it, and I'll tell O'Connell you'll be out for a few days. I hope everything turns out ok.”

“Thanks Charlie, I really appreciate that,” she said before hanging up the phone. Sharon just sat as she did the best she could to pull her self together. *Please*, she thought, *please not again, I can't take this again.* After about five minutes she gathered her purse and coat and left.

Dr. Fisk and his team had been working on his patient for almost an hour trying to patch all the bleeders. The ferret had his doubts about the skunk's chances when he first came in but the young fur had managed to hang in there.

“Doctor his BP is falling again,” said the anesthetist.

“Start another unit of blood,” the doctor said, and then, “How's our supply?”

“Still good doctor,” answered a nurse.

“Good,” the doctor said, relieved. “That's this kid's third stop at the bar, it won't surprise me if we end giving him a complete oil change before we're done.”

After a few minutes, “BP is climbing to normal,” the anesthetist said with relief.

“Well good I think we're finally getting a handle on,” suddenly Dr. Fisk was surprised by a spray of blood that hit him in the chest and face. “DAMN IT!” he shouted “CLAMP!” he grabbed the clamp from the nurses paw. “SUCTION!” As the blood is drained he spots the bleeder and sets the clamp above it with long practiced skill and the bleeding stops. “Looks like the femoral artery was,” the doctor started, but was interrupted by the sudden change in sound the heart monitor made by going from a rhythmic beep, beep, beep to a long steady tone.

NO!

“FLAT LINE!” yelled the anesthetist.

“CPR!” Dr. Fisk took his paws and started pumping them down on Clarence's chest five times and stepped back while the anesthetist pushed air into his lungs with a respirator, and then repeated his actions. “Come on kid, don't do this,” the doctor said through clenched teeth. “DEFIBRILLATOR” he yelled out

COME ON!

The ferret continued performing CPR as the defibrillator was rolled up to the table and the nurses prepared the paddles and adjusted the voltage settings.

Come back Clarence, please.

The paddles were handed to Dr. Fisk, who rubbed them together to evenly spread the gel. “CLEAR,” he yelled. Everyone else stepped back and raised their paws as he applied the paddles to the skunk's chest. There was an audible electric buzz, and Clarence's body arched against the table, and then slumped back down. The heart monitor beeped a few times then settled back into a flat tone. “Again,” the doctor said, and waited for the machine to charge. Again he applied the paddles. **BZZZT.**

COME ON CLARENCE!

The light on the screen jumped three times then resumed a strait path. “RAISE THE VOLTAGE,” the ferret ordered and rubbed the paddles together again. “CLEAR!”

FIGHT IT SON, FIGHT!

BUZZZZZT

FIGHT!!!!

END OF CHAPTER ONE

