

THE ENLIGHTENMENT ADVENTURES * BOOK TWO

VINCENT AND THE DISSIDENTS



CHRISTOPHER LOCKE

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AND THE DISSIDENTS



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For my brilliant wife, Jaya Bhumitra.
Thank you for continuing to believe in this story and me.
Though I know your heart is with Team Rawly,
I will always be grateful that you were
the very first person to join Team Persimmon.

For all my family and friends who donated to my crowdfunding campaign.
This novel would not be possible without your generous support.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

PERSIMMON – A clever and compassionate female raccoon who has mostly brown fur with sprinkles of gray. After a failed attempt to rescue a group of calves who were trapped in a veal farm, Persimmon was inspired to form a team that goes on adventures rescuing any animal they find suffering at the hands of humans. The team was originally called The Uncaged Alliance, but when they split apart at the end of Book One, Persimmon named her new team The Enlighteners.

DERPOKE – Persimmon’s opossum best friend, who is her closest confidante in The Enlighteners. He’s analytical and cautious, and he would follow Persimmon anywhere.

SCRAPS – Persimmon’s younger brother who is unusually tiny because he was the runt. At the end of Book One, he left Persimmon’s team to join Rawly’s team.

RAWLY – A male raccoon who means well but often gets on Persimmon’s nerves because of his arrogance. At first, he was reluctant to join Persimmon’s team, but soon he became a dedicated activist. During the circus mission, his sweetheart, Claudette, and his friend, Fisher, were killed by humans, causing him to lose his temper and release tigers to attack the humans. This prompted Persimmon to suggest he leave the team, which he did, taking Scraps, Apricot and Drig with him. Persimmon said that he could keep the original name of the team, The Uncaged Alliance.

VINCENT – A cunning mink whose fur is mostly black with a hint of blue. He lived a hellish life on a fur farm before he finally escaped. He then vowed to himself that he would rescue the minks who were still trapped on the farm. A few months later, he was lucky enough to meet Persimmon and her team. They joined forces and successfully rescued most of the minks. Little did Persimmon know that after she and her team had moved on to their next mission, Vincent began gathering his own army of animals who would rescue other animals using more aggressive tactics against humans than her own.

BRUISER – A Doberman pinscher who looks intimidating on the outside but really has a gentle heart. His fur is mostly black with a few patches of caramel around his face and legs. Persimmon rescued Bruiser from a backyard where his humans had abandoned him to die. Bruiser is one of Persimmon’s most loyal friends, so when the team split, he stayed on Persimmon’s team.

CHLOE and TUCKER – A squirrel couple who lived near the veal farm. After seeing the calves suffer for so long they were inspired to join Persimmon’s team, although Chloe is more the activist of the two. Chloe has proved to possess great leadership qualities during the rescue missions. The couple also stayed with Persimmon to join The Enlighteners at the end of Book One.

DRIG – A strong, large raccoon who is Rawly’s best buddy. He switched to Rawly’s team at the end of Book One.

APRICOT – A sassy and sarcastic orange tabby cat. She led The Uncaged Alliance to the circus (mostly because she thought it would be entertaining to watch them attempt—and fail—to storm the building), but soon she was moved by the plight of the animals abused in the circus, so she ended up joining the team. At the end of Book One, she switched to Rawly’s team.

NIBBIN – A young male mink who has brown fur. Persimmon and her team rescued him from the fur farm and he asked to join The Uncaged Alliance. At the end of Book One, he rallied behind Persimmon and joined The Enlighteners. Since he’s an orphan, he sees Persimmon as a mother figure.

DUSTY and LINDER – Raccoon friends of Rawly. After Persimmon’s team conducted the rescue at the fur farm, the mink Vincent recruited Dusty and Linder to join his army.

SYNOPSIS OF
THE ENLIGHTENMENT ADVENTURES: BOOK ONE
PERSIMMON TAKES ON HUMANITY

At the beginning of Book One, Persimmon, her opossum best friend, Derpoke, and her younger brother, Scraps, were leading idle lives in the woods. That all changed one night when they were approached by the arrogant raccoon Rawly, who dared them to follow him deep into a dangerous part of the woods to see a mysterious creature. Persimmon and Scraps couldn't resist the lure of an adventure (Derpoke could, but he's not fond of leaving Persimmon's side), so the four of them trekked through the woods and came upon a large building.

They soon discovered that inside the building were animals called calves—the babies of cows and bulls—and to the friends' horror, these animals were suffering. Unbeknownst to Persimmon and her companions, they had stumbled across a veal farm and the calves were doomed to be killed so that humans could eat them.

Because of their deep compassion, Persimmon, Derpoke and Scraps planned a daring mission to rescue the calves (Rawly joined at the last minute), but to everyone's great disappointment, the humans discovered the team in the middle of the mission and recaptured all the calves. Persimmon's tail was even shot off during the scuffle.

Even worse, soon thereafter, the humans shipped the calves off to a slaughterhouse. Persimmon was the only one of the friends able to sneak onto the transport truck, and despite her best efforts, all the calves were tragically slaughtered right before her eyes.

On Persimmon's journey back home, she came upon a Doberman pinscher named Bruiser who had been left to die in a backyard by his humans when they moved to a new house. Persimmon freed Bruiser and they returned to the forest where they met with Derpoke, Scraps and a squirrel couple, Chloe and Tucker (these two lived by the veal farm and were also disturbed by the humans' mistreatment of the calves).

Persimmon told her friends that the tragic death of the calves had inspired her to form a team (The Uncaged Alliance) that would go on missions rescuing any animal that they saw suffering at the hands of humans. Her friends loved the idea and were excited about the adventures ahead. They were a little more reluctant about Persimmon's second idea, though, which was never to eat any other animals again. Once she explained that in order to be truly compassionate to all living beings they must not harm other animals for any reason, the team jumped on board. The only one who didn't join the team was Rawly, who refused to be anywhere near Bruiser (there's a long-standing tension between dogs and forest critters).

The friends headed off on their next rescue attempt at a fur farm where minks were imprisoned. There, they met a cunning mink named Vincent, who had escaped the farm the winter before. Vincent had led a hellish life in the fur farm, witnessing the deaths of many friends and family, including his dear brother Frestin, so now he was trying to find a way to rescue the other minks trapped inside.

Before the rescue began, Rawly joined The Uncaged Alliance, bringing with him a new crew of

raccoons (including his sweetheart, Claudette, and friends Drig, Linder and Dusty).

The rescue mission of the minks was a grand success. They were able to save all the surviving minks without being accosted by the humans that ran the fur farm. After that, a young mink, Nibbin, asked to join The Uncaged Alliance since he was in awe of these heroes who had saved his life (he was an orphan, so he wanted a new family).

Little did Persimmon know, though, that while she and the rest of the team were rescuing the minks, Vincent had sent another secret team of minks (led by his brother Trenton) to kill the owners of the fur farm, the Petersons.

After the rescue effort was over, Persimmon and her team went searching for their next mission, never discovering that the Petersons had been killed and that Vincent was now setting his sights on leading his team to rescue all the minks at other nearby fur farms.

On The Uncaged Alliance's next expedition they came across a sassy tabby cat, Apricot, who led them to another location where animals needed rescuing: the circus. There, the team met all the animals trapped and brutalized in the circus (elephants, tigers, camels, horses and more). The team also heard the heartbreaking story of two elephants, Nayana and Shey. Nayana and Shey were best friends, but after years of abuse Shey eventually died from tuberculosis. This left Nayana devastated. She was hopeless until Persimmon and her team came to rescue them.

Unfortunately, the mission went horribly awry. The animals in the circus were too big and conspicuous to rescue and a massive battle between Persimmon's team and the humans erupted. By the end, humans had killed Claudette, Fisher and all the elephants and tigers, and many humans had been killed as well. In a moment of vindication, Nayana was able to get her revenge on the human who had abused Shey and her their entire lives. Unfortunately, Nayana was shot and killed in the process.

Persimmon and the team were shocked by the violent outcome of their latest mission. Persimmon was also perturbed at Rawly, who had released tigers to murder the humans (to retaliate against the humans for killing Claudette and Fisher), so Persimmon suggested that Rawly leave the team.

Rawly snapped back by extending an offer to other team members to form a new team with him. Drig, Apricot and Scraps all joined Rawly.

Persimmon was devastated that the team had split apart (and especially that her brother had joined the other side). Before Rawly left, Persimmon told him that he could keep the name, The Uncaged Alliance. She was so upset when the team parted ways that she wanted to start fresh with a new name—one that truly represented her goals in starting the rescue missions in the first place.

She finally came up with the name The Enlighteners and exclaimed to the remaining team members that despite the recent setbacks, they would continue the brave missions to rescue any animals they found suffering at the hands of humans—no matter the cost. Teammates Derpoke, Bruiser, Chloe, Tucker and Nibbin were excited to resume their adventures, which brings us to Book Two...

1



PERSIMMON OPENS HER eyes. The room is pitch black. *Where am I?* The confused raccoon starts to sit up, but suddenly the room begins to spin. Dizziness overcomes her, and nausea hits her hard. She closes her eyes to collect herself. She takes a deep breath. *Breathe. Breathe.* With her eyes closed, her hearing becomes more acute. She can hear other animals in the room—weeping, moaning. She quickly pops her eyes back open. *They're in pain. I need to help them.*

Persimmon goes to hop up, but she realizes there's metal wire all around her. She's in a cage! She attempts to stand up to claw her way out but stumbles when she tries to stand on her right front leg. It's missing! Her right front leg has been hacked off. In its place is a white bandage stained with blood.

Panic sets in. *What happened to my leg?!* She falls against the mesh wire of her tiny cage and peers out over the dark room at all the other animals trapped in cages just like hers. The creatures whimper desperately. Whoever hurt her has hurt them, too.

Persimmon frantically scans the cages to see if any contain her friends. Part of her hopes to see the friendly face of Derpoke, Bruiser, Chloe, Tucker or Nibbin, but mostly she hopes that whoever captured her did not capture them as well. There are opossums, skunks, squirrels, a few birds and other raccoons—none of the cages has any of her friends, though. She's relieved yet saddened. *Where is everyone? Are they okay?* A sickening thought hits her. *Am I the only one left? Is everyone that I love in this world gone?*

Dizziness consumes Persimmon again. Even when she's sitting down she feels like her cage is spinning around her. Losing her leg pales in comparison with the thought of losing her friends. *Please let them be okay. Please.*

2



(two weeks ago)

PERSIMMON; HER OPOSSUM best friend, Derpoke; and her Doberman Pinscher pal, Bruiser, trek through the woods at a brisk pace with the squirrel couple, Chloe and Tucker, following in the trees above. The little brown mink Nibbin rides on Persimmon's back—not because he's tired but because it's fun.

As they walk, Persimmon proudly looks over her team: The Enlighteners. *What would I ever do without each of them by my side? We've been through so much together. When Gilby and the other calves were killed, I never thought I'd feel happiness again, but having this group come together to save other animals is what kept me going. Our whole team shared in the triumph of freeing so many minks—one of whom was sweet Nibbin—from the Peterson fur farm. And despite the overwhelming danger of trying to rescue those poor animals trapped in the circus, this courageous crew didn't hesitate to risk their lives. On top of that, these wonderful friends stuck with me instead of joining foolhardy Rawly's team.*

Immediately, thoughts of Apricot, Drig and Scraps flash through Persimmon's mind. She clenches her jaw in frustration. She's tried to make peace with that painful situation in the past few weeks, but it still stings—not because of some silly pride over feeling like those three deemed Rawly a better leader but because she misses them. Even though Apricot was as sassy a cat as Persimmon had ever met, the feline revealed her true bravery when she joined the team after witnessing the callous abuse of the animals in the circus. The brawny raccoon Drig was also a great help to the rescue missions with his strength and matter-of-fact nature. Then there's Scraps. *My little brother. For the first time since you were born, I have no idea where you are, and I can't be sure that you're safe. How am I supposed to come to terms with that?*

"Persimmon?" Derpoke wheezes as he struggles to keep up with his friends.

Persimmon snaps out of her daydream to find Derpoke panting as he walks alongside her.

"Are we almost there? I..." Derpoke sucks in a deep breath. "I think... I'm going to... collapse."

Persimmon slows to a stop. "My poor Derpoke. I'm so sorry. I was lost in thought, and I'm excited about getting to our next rescue mission, so I didn't even notice how fast we were going."

“You can ride on my back, if ya want, Derpoke,” Bruiser offers.

“I’m fine. Thank you.” Derpoke drops to the forest floor with a thud. “I just need... to catch...” He doesn’t finish his sentence; he’s too wiped out.

Persimmon calls up to Chloe and Tucker in the tree. “We’re taking a quick break.”

Chloe and Tucker cease their hopping between branches. Tucker calls down, “Again? I thought you said we were almost there.” Tucker sees his opossum companion sprawled out on the ground, gasping for air. “Oh.” Tucker turns to Chloe. “Aren’t you glad we don’t have stubby legs?”

“I can hear you,” Derpoke complains.

Tucker lets out an embarrassed chuckle. Chloe shakes her head and bats her partner’s tail. “Way to go, pupsy.”

Persimmon peers up at the night sky. She can faintly see the stars fading away and the sunlight filling the sky. “Darn. I was really hoping we’d finally get there tonight, but we may have to rest here.”

“Well, maybe we can—” Bruiser begins to reply, but at just that moment, the young and energetic Nibbin, who is still perched on Persimmon’s back, interrupts them by tickling Persimmon’s sides.

“Tickle, tickle!” Nibbin giggles.

To Nibbin’s surprise—and disappointment—Persimmon does not break into a fit of laughter.

“Boo, you’re not ticklish,” Nibbin says.

“Nope.” Persimmon grins. “But you know who *is*?”

The raccoon twists around and grabs Nibbin off her back. She kisses him and tickles his belly with all four paws, throwing him into hysterics. In fact, Nibbin is laughing so hard he can barely breathe, so Persimmon finally lets go, and the brown mink darts down the path as if he were a wind-up toy.

Bruiser watches Nibbin race through the woods. “Sure is a sprightly lil’ feller. Sad to think he mighta been stuck in a cage his whole life.”

Persimmon nods. “If those vicious humans had had their way, it wouldn’t have been a very long life either.” The raccoon pats Bruiser on the leg. “But then we came along and saved him. When he’s old enough, he’ll certainly be a great asset to The Enlighteners. My hope—”

“Persimmon!” From off in the distance an exuberant female voice calls.

The team braces themselves for trouble, but Persimmon instantly recognizes that voice.

“Aunty Adelaide!” Persimmon skips gleefully down the path in the direction of the voice.

The Enlighteners have arrived at their destination.

3



PERSIMMON RUSHES UP to her aunt and uncle. The three nuzzle and lick one another to say hello. Her aunt and uncle have white hairs sprinkled throughout their fur. They look much older than when Persimmon last saw them, but they haven't lost their chipper spirit. They smile warmly as Nibbin runs circles around them.

"My dear Persimmon, what a lovely surprise!" Aunty Adelaide is so overjoyed to see her beloved niece that she can't stop cuddling her. "I can't wait to tell you about all the latest gossip in our part of the woods. I have some outrageous stories!"

Uncle Bennett is all smiles, too, until he notices the stump where Persimmon's tail once was. "My goodness, Persimmon, what happened to your tail?!"

"Oh my. Oh my." Aunty Adelaide is immediately concerned.

"I'm fine," Persimmon replies. "It's a long story, but I promise to tell you later."

"You poor thing. What a fright that must have been," Aunty Adelaide says. "Goodness, where are our manners? You must be exhausted after your long journey from home. Oh, that reminds me, where is our favorite nephew, Scraps?"

Persimmon's smile fades away over being reminded of her absent brother. There's an uncomfortable silence. Persimmon doesn't want to say that they parted ways, because she's not ready to admit that they've really said goodbye forever.

Before Persimmon has a chance to gather her thoughts, her aunt and uncle spot Derpoke, Bruiser, Chloe and Tucker walking toward them. "Persimmon, there's a giant dog behind you, and he's holding Derpoke and two squirrels captive," Aunty Adelaide quickly warns.

"It's a dog! Run for your lives!" Uncle Bennett zips up the closest tree as fast as his old legs will take him.

Persimmon looks back to see her four smiling companions skipping happily toward them. "No, Aunty, that's Bruiser. He's my dear friend."

"I get it," Aunty Adelaide leans in and whispers. "He can hear us. Just give me the signal, and we'll run into the woods to safety."

"Aunty, he's a snuggle bug. You're going to adore him."

"A dog?! I highly doubt it."

“Get up in the tree, crazyheads! He’s going to eat you!” Uncle Bennett screams frantically from high in the tree.

Bruiser, Derpoke, Chloe and Tucker walk over to Persimmon and her aunt. Aunty Adelaide steps protectively in front of Persimmon to shield her from the “ferocious” Doberman. Bruiser frowns at the gesture. “Guess ya don’t think too kindly of dogs, eh?”

Aunty Adelaide looks to Persimmon for the signal to rush into the woods.

Persimmon, of course, does not give the signal. “She’s just kidding, Bruiser. That’s my aunty for you. Always joking.” Persimmon nudges her aunt to be polite.

As if someone flipped a switch, Aunty Adelaide smiles widely with a welcoming warmth. “Dearest Bruiser, I was just having a laugh. Any friend of my niece’s is, of course, a friend of mine. Speaking of which, it’s a great pleasure to see you again, darling Derpoke.” Aunty Adelaide caresses Derpoke’s cheek. “Such a handsome opossum.”

Derpoke blushes and giggles awkwardly.

Aunty Adelaide turns to look into the tree at her panic-stricken partner. “Dear, he’s Persimmon’s friend and he’s perfectly cordial.”

“But he’s a dog!” Uncle Bennett grips the tree tighter, staring at Aunty Adelaide and Persimmon as if they have lost their minds. For all the times that dogs have terrorized him and other raccoons, he can’t imagine ever trusting a canine, especially one who looks as intimidating as Bruiser.

“If he were such a ferocious dog, would he let me do this?” Persimmon lovingly hugs Bruiser’s front left leg, and Derpoke and Chloe follow suit by hugging Bruiser’s other legs. The Doberman plays along by affectionately licking Tucker. Tucker harrumphs, not expecting a glob of dog saliva on his head. Chloe motions for Tucker to act happy, so Tucker forces a smile.

“See, a real snuggle bug.” Persimmon beams at Uncle Bennett.

Uncle Bennett stares down at Aunty Adelaide, hoping for some support. He is so frightened his paws shake as he struggles to keep hold of the tree trunk.

“Okay, calm down, dear.” Aunty Adelaide crawls up the tree to Uncle Bennett and pats him on the belly. “You’ll upset your stomach if you keep up like this. I have an idea. Why don’t you get Persimmon and her friends some food?”

Aunty Adelaide whispers down to Persimmon. “It will calm him down if we distract him with a task.” Aunty Adelaide—oblivious to the fact that Uncle Bennett could clearly hear her—turns back to him and says, “Go see if you can catch some fresh fish for them.”

“No! No fish.” Persimmon immediately climbs up the tree, blocking her uncle from hopping down. “We don’t eat fish.”

Aunty Adelaide almost falls out of the tree, she’s so flabbergasted by this statement. “What respectable raccoon doesn’t like fish?”

“Actually, we *do* like fish,” Persimmon explains. “That’s why we don’t eat them.”

“You’re speaking in riddles, dear. I can’t understand you.”

“All of us have vowed to be compassionate toward other animals, which includes not eating them,” Persimmon says.

“But you’ll die of starvation if you don’t eat other animals,” Uncle Bennett says.

Persimmon points to her team. “None of us except Nibbin has eaten animals in a long time, and we’re clearly still alive and healthy. As for Nibbin, he only eats animals who are already dead, such as leftovers from a human’s trash can.”

“That’s foolish, Persimmon,” Uncle Bennett says. “You have to eat at least *some* animals to survive. Not even this dog can stop me from getting you some fish immediately.”

Persimmon grabs her uncle’s fur as he tries to pass her. “I said no.”

Uncle Bennett stops in his tracks, stunned by her forcefulness.

“My friends and I formed a team that saves any animal who is suffering,” Persimmon explains. “That’s actually why we came here, because I thought you two could help us.”

Aunty Adelaide’s eyes light up. “Wait a second, are *you* The Uncaged Alliance?”

The team’s jaws drop.

“You’ve heard of us?!” Chloe asks, smiling widely.

Nibbin hops up and down. “We’re The Enlighteners, not The Uncaged Alliance.”

“Yes, Nibbin.” Persimmon turns to her aunt. “We changed our name to The Enlighteners, which I’ll explain later, but how did you hear about The Uncaged Alliance?”

“You’re the talk of the forest. Everyone’s going on and on about this group of animals that rescues other animals from humans.”

“Really?!” Persimmon looks down at her crew and gives them a clenched-paw victory salute.

“Oh yes, you’re heroes,” Aunty Adelaide says. “We heard that you rescued minks who were going to be killed for their fur. I’m assuming Nibbin is one of the lucky survivors.”

Nibbin hops up and down in celebration of his rescue.

“We also heard that you tried to release the exotic animals trapped in a circus,” Aunty Adelaide continues. “We never even knew what a circus was—or an elephant, for that matter—until we heard the exciting story of your rescue attempt. Everyone in the forest was furious when we found out what those humans did to those innocent creatures. So heartbreaking.”

Aunty Adelaide looks sorrowful for a moment, thinking about the animals being shot and killed. She perks back up. “I’m so proud that you’re the ones who bravely attempted to save them. We’d be honored to assist you, but what could *we* possibly do? We’re not exactly as sprightly as we used to be, as you may have noticed.”

“You two always seem to know what’s going on in the forest, so I thought maybe you’d be able to direct us to any animals who might need some help.”

Aunty Adelaide and Uncle Bennett ponder this for a moment. The team waits eagerly to hear what its next rescue mission might be.

“You know, we do know of these animals at the other edge of the forest,” Uncle Bennett finally says. “Maybe—”

“No, dear, it’s too dangerous,” Aunty Adelaide interjects.

“But they’re in such pain,” Uncle Bennett says. “I hear those animals crying out every time I go near there.”

“I thought we agreed it was too dangerous to go there. Those humans will snatch you up and hurt you, too.”

Persimmon cuts into their bickering. “Our team is very capable at this point. We’d at least like to scope out this location to see if we can help. To which type of animal are you referring?”

“Have you ever heard of chickens?” Uncle Bennett asks.

4



“ARE YOU SURE Persimmon isn’t going to come looking for you, Scraps?” Rawly asks. He, Scraps, Drig and Apricot are climbing through the thick brush deep in the dark forest, miles away from Persimmon and her team.

“I already told you, she understands why I left her team. Why do you keep asking? Are you afraid she’s going to come thrash you?” Scraps razzes him.

“No,” Rawly snaps back, clearly annoyed. “I just don’t feel like listening to another one of her condescending lectures.”

“I like Persimmon and all,” Drig chimes in. “But I will not miss those lectures of hers.” Drig and Rawly guffaw and nod.

“Hey, that’s my sister,” Scraps retorts. “Watch it.”

Apricot perks up. “Oh good, are you three going to fight? Finally, something interesting will happen on this journey.”

“We’re not going to fight,” Rawly says. “Scraps, I admire your sister, but unlike on *her* team, we’re not going to be so judgmental on mine.”

“Boring,” Apricot declares. “Scraps, why don’t you run around and I’ll chase after you.”

Apricot bats Scraps on the head to get the game going. Scraps just looks at her, surprised.

“What?” Apricot asks. “Isn’t that what you and Bruiser used to do?”

“Yes, but I wasn’t afraid Bruiser would actually bite me if he caught me.”

“Afraid of a cat, are we?” Apricot’s eyes widen with predatory glee. “Ooh, that makes things all the *more* interesting.”

Just then, the team hears gunshots off in the distance. They abruptly stop walking. Then they hear a small animal screaming in fear.

The team immediately rushes toward the sounds of the gun shots, crashing through brush over fallen trees as fast as they can to rescue this creature.

Rawly stops the team as they step into a pathway. There, in the distance, they see two minks rushing feverishly toward them. Close behind is a man wielding a shotgun.

Just as Rawly is about to direct the team toward the petrified minks, a voice calls out impatiently from behind a tree on the other side of the path. “Get out of the way!”

Rawly peers into the woods and sees a third mink, motioning for him to step off the path, clearly agitated. Another voice forcefully calls from behind him. “Get off the path NOW!”

Rawly, Scraps, Drig and Apricot are thoroughly confused, but they hop behind one of the trees lining the pathway. Three minks are hiding there already.

“Shh.” One of the minks warns the team.

Rawly, Scraps, Drig and Apricot look around the forest and realize they’re surrounded by minks hiding everywhere—even some raccoons are scattered throughout the concealed crowd.

The two minks dart down the path past the spot where the team is hiding and jump over a pile of leaves and branches. The human aims his gun as he runs. “I’ll get you, little bastards!”

Just before the man shoots his weapon, he steps on the pile and, to his horror, crashes into a deep pit. His torso rams into the side as he digs his fists and elbows into the ground to avoid falling all the way in. You can hear his ribs crack. The gun goes off, shooting bullets into nearby tree trunks, narrowly missing a few minks.

To the great surprise of Rawly and his team, suddenly thousands of minks and a few dozen raccoons come running out from behind trees and pounce on the screaming human, knocking him all the way down the hole. His wailing can be heard as he’s torn to shreds.

Then everything goes quiet. The minks and raccoons cheer as they climb back out. Three minks push the man’s gun into the hole, and then all the minks quickly kick dirt into the hole, filling it up. Just as fast, raccoons scatter leaves on top of the dirt. Miraculously, in a matter of moments, no one would have any idea that a still-warm human body was underfoot.

Rawly, Scraps and Drig stare at the crowd of minks and raccoons, horrified. These animals killed that human with such speed and skill—it was eerie. The three team members feel ill over witnessing so much brutality at such close range, but Apricot doesn’t. She’s awestruck. The precision of the hunt was impressive. She’s going to like these minks and raccoons very much.

Out from the swarm of fearsome creatures, the mink Vincent appears—blood dripping from his nails and smeared on his black fur. He saunters over to Rawly and his team with a satisfied smirk. “Welcome back, Uncaged Alliance. We’ve been expecting you.”

Exciting, right?! To find out what happens next,
[get Vincent and The Dissidents now!](#)

If you haven't yet read Persimmon Takes On Humanity (Book One of The Enlightenment Adventures), [get your copy now!](#)

Thank you!