

Rule By Consensus

a *Free Guy* fanfic

by **Rodo**

for **InArduisFidelis**

“OKAY, EVERYBODY. THANK you all for coming! If you could sit down – it doesn’t matter where. The centaurs on the left side, though. Thank you all. It’s really great you all got the message and decided to come. Did you all see the agenda?”

Guy was babbling. Of course he was. He’d never done something like this before and it was all new and very exciting. The nods he got from the assembled crowd were encouraging, though. *Okay*, he thought to himself. *Time to get this show on the road.*

“If everybody’s here, then I’d like to start with—”

This, of course, was the moment when a meaty arm threw open the door with too much force and Dude entered the City Hall Auditorium as if he was about to battle a barbarian horde with his bare hands, light streaming in behind him. The effect was broken by frail little Phyllis patting him on the arm as if he was one of her kittens before shuffling off to find a seat. Dude lumbered along behind her.

“We said six,” Guy mumbled, mostly to himself, hoping this was the last interruption. It was already a quarter past. Nobody had ever been unpunctual when he used to work at the bank. Even the robbers had been on time.

“Whiskers wouldn’t come down from a tree,” Phyllis said, earning herself a couple of sympathetic noises from Candy and Missy. “And Dude was nice enough to help me get him down.”

Guy sighed and nodded. There was no arguing with Phyllis when it came to cats. Best not to make a thing of it. “Okay, if everyone is ready—” A chorus of nods and ayes. “—I’d like to start with today’s agenda. As our, er, *landlords* said in their e-mail, now that we’ve got a brand new city and world to live in, we’ve got to make a couple of decisions, and figure out a way for this arrangement to work. But first, does anybody have questions about the e-mail? Anything unclear?”

A heartbeat of silence, then slowly some of the residents of what used to be Free City began whispering with their neighbors, until finally, someone raised their hand.

“Yes, Candy?”

Candy stood up, looking splendid as always in her tight red dress, hip to one side and her arms crossed below her well-sculpted chest. “I read the e-mail, and I was wondering about their ‘monetization strategy’. I understand that some monetization is necessary ‘to keep the lights on’” she quoted, adding air quotes around the words before crossing her arms again, “but I was worried about the degree to which our lives will be open to public scrutiny. I’ve had enough of creeps with glasses for the rest of my life. I don’t want them to peep on me while I’m in the shower.”

There were a lot of nods. To be quite honest, Guy hadn’t even thought about it like that before, but he didn’t want the likes of Revenjamin Buttons spying on him in his tighty whities. Just the thought made him shudder and shake his head.

“That’s a very good point,” Guy said. “You’re writing that down, aren’t you?” he asked.

Former Officer Johnny nodded, sitting in the corner and huddled over his notepad.

“Okay, any more questions about the e-mail?”

There were none, thankfully. Which brought them to the next point. “Okay, first order of business, we need to find a name for our new city. A couple of you have submitted some suggestions. First, we’ve got ‘Free City’ – really creative there, guys – second there’s ‘Fantasy Island’, third we’ve got ‘Slide Central’ and fourth we’ve got ‘The City’. We’re supposed to make this decision as unanimous as we can, so if some of you could stand up and explain what your favorite choice is and why? Then we’ll see if we can find a consensus.”

Missy held up her hand. Dude as well. To get the obvious out of the way, Guy motioned for Dude to say his piece first.

Dude stood up in the same way mountains did, slow and laboriously, displacing entire forests. “I like The City because we’re in a city. So we call it The City.”

Everyone listened respectfully – as you did with walking mountains – and Guy repressed a sigh. “Thank you, Dude. Missy?”

Missy stood up, perky as ever. “I want to keep Free City, because this is a city, and we’re finally free here. That’s what this place is supposed to be all about – our freedom, and us exploring it.”

“Also, it looks a lot like the old Free City,” Doug added, clasping his hands in his lap, still enjoying the feeling of not having to keep them up all the time.

A lot of the assembled people nodded and mumbled in agreement.

“There’s more trees,” Dude pointed out helpfully. Phyllis patted him on the arm again and he finally sat down.

Guy understood Missy’s reasoning, he really did. But at the same time, Millie and her friends had told him about trademarks and all that came with them.

“I think Missy’s right,” Buddy said. “We’re free. This is our Free City! Are you guys with me?” he screamed, fist in the air, bubbling over with enthusiasm.

The roar of “Yes, Buddy!” was deafening, and Guy didn’t exactly disagree. Well, he disagreed with the notion that some people in another world got to decide what to name their own world when it was none of their business, really. They could keep their stupid laws; Free City would make its own.

“Anyone against ‘Free City’?” he asked as loudly as he could without screaming.

Nobody was.

“Make that a unanimous decision for ‘Free City,’ Off— Johnny.”

Johnny took it down, with a satisfied nod.

This was going better than Guy had anticipated. They had made the biggest decision without much of a fuss, the mood was up, and Rick was starting to go around, offering refreshments. Maybe they would get somewhere this evening.

“Next up,” Guy continued. “We’re looking for suggestions for improvements. Now, as the e-mail said, no promises. These changes apparently take time and money, so some might be more doable than others. Still, who wants to go first?”

One of the centaurs raised his muscled arm.

“Yes, Charon?”

“We’d like it if there were more pathways designed with our hooves in mind. Much of the city is paved in concrete or stone, and it’s hurting our hooves. We mostly spend our time in the park right now, but sometimes, we’d like to buy a cappuccino without risking leg cramps.”

Johnny took notes faithfully.

“I’d like to study psychology!” Candy added.

“I would like a cat cafe!”

“I want to become a pilot!”

“I’ve got an idea for how we can deal with the sunglasses people!”

Okay, maybe this was going to take as long as Guy had dreaded after all.

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