Volume 8 The Perma Agents

MR. SKUNKY LUKE: NIGHTLIFE

The Key of Shadows

The storm arrived without warning.

Rain hammered the rooftops as Dragocat stood atop the old clocktower overlooking Whiskerville. Lightning flashed behind his massive wings while the silver key hanging around his neck glowed faintly beneath his white collar fur.

The compass had been restless all night.

Something was coming.

Then a voice echoed from the darkness.

"Give us the key, Guardian."

Skunky spun around.

A figure stepped from the shadows.

Black armor.

Glowing red visor.

The insignia of PERMA burned across his chest.

Another figure emerged beside him.

Then another.

And another.

Four agents.

All armed.

All staring at the silver key.

The lead agent pointed directly at Skunky's collar.

"We know what it unlocks."

Skunky's ears flattened.

Nobody was supposed to know.

"The gate beneath the city is opening again," the agent continued. "Hand over the key and this ends peacefully."

The Guardian Dragocat remained silent.

The key belonged to him.

And if PERMA wanted it...

They couldn't be trusted with it.

The lead agent sighed.

"Take him."

The attack came instantly.

Energy nets erupted through the air.

Skunky launched himself skyward, wings unfolding with a thunderous crack. Moonfire exploded around him as he swept across the rooftop.

Two agents were thrown backward.

A third crashed into the clocktower bell.

But the fourth smiled.

A strange device activated on his wrist.

The sky itself seemed to shatter.

A pulse of energy slammed into Skunky.

His wings vanished.

The moonfire died.

The key flickered.

And suddenly he fell.

Hard.

The rooftop cracked beneath him.

Before he could recover, glowing restraints wrapped around his paws and wings.

The lead agent approached.

"At last."

He reached for the silver key.

Suddenly a loud voice echoed across the rooftop.

"HEY!"

Everyone froze.

The PERMA agents turned.

Standing at the edge of the roof was a white fluffy cat wearing a determined expression.

Snowball.

Beside him stood Bandit.

The raccoon grinned.

"Oh, you guys messed up."

Snowball nodded.

"You touched our friend."

Bandit pulled a small object from his backpack.

The agents looked confused.

"What is that?"

Bandit smiled wider.

"A terrible idea."

The explosion of smoke that followed could probably be seen three blocks away.

The rooftop vanished beneath a cloud of sparks, smoke, and absolute chaos.

PERMA agents stumbled blindly through the fog.

One crashed into a chimney.

Another tripped over a cable.

A third somehow ended up hanging from the clocktower bell.

Bandit laughed so hard he nearly fell over.

Meanwhile Snowball sprinted straight toward Skunky.

Using his claws, he sliced through the restraints.

The chains shattered.

The moment Dragocat stood, the storm seemed to come alive.

His wings exploded outward.

Blue runes ignited beneath his fur.

The silver key blazed with ancient light.

The agents immediately knew they had made a mistake.

The Guardian was free.

Moonfire spiraled across the rooftop.

Shadow chains erupted from the darkness.

Within seconds the remaining agents found themselves suspended above the rooftop, wrapped in glowing restraints of their own.

The lead agent struggled.

"You don't understand what that key unlocks!"

Skunky stepped forward.

Lightning illuminated his glowing eyes.

The key pulsed brighter.

For a brief moment, everyone saw something reflected inside it.

A doorway.

A city.

A world beyond worlds.

Then it vanished.

The Guardian said nothing.

He simply spread his wings.

The message was clear.

Leave.

Now.

The agents retreated into the storm.

Within moments they were gone.

Only rain remained.

Snowball sat beside Skunky and looked at the glowing key.

"So..."

Bandit climbed onto a chimney.

"Anybody wanna explain why secret organizations keep trying to steal your jewelry?"

Skunky stared toward the distant skyline where the PERMA agents had disappeared.

The key grew warm against his chest.

Far below the city, something ancient had awakened.

And for the first time...

It had awakened because it was looking for him.

Dragocat: "Bandit... why is there another of you?"

Bandit: "I might've bought the wrong grenade." He continues to stand there like: "I specifically bought the non-dimensional grenade. But hey, we have backup!" He winks.

Dragocat shakes his head as they fly away.

To Be Continued... ⚪🪽🔑🐾