

THIS ABOVE ALL;
TO THINE OWN
SELF BE
ZOO.

March 19th, 2024 – December 21st, 2024,
the complete second volume.

To the fullest extent permissible, all stories and poems herein are released into the public domain.

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1;

SPRING EQUINOX 2024.

In this issue,
a room has zoo art all over it,
and a pair of guys who do vlogs and stuff chat about stuff.

*Featuring the stories: Woe Betide Him That Hath A
Narrow Heart, Gondola, Conversatin, Like, Talkin With
Each Other About Stuff, Apparently Existing, and Media
of Unknown Origin, as well as a few poems.*

WOE BETIDE HIM THAT HATH A NARROW HEART

The studio was an abandoned gas station in Nebraska, reseeded with new purposes, the weeds of its old purposes pulled out root and all. They had toppled over the big sign and taken apart all of the pumps, and hung canvases over the edges of the roof overhead of the pumping area to create a sort of canopy tent out of the sort of geological feature of industry. The shelves inside were carried one by one out into the parking lot to rust like misshapen cars. Sound paneling was put up all around the inside of the station proper, and deep- and rich-hued curtains hung along the walls and overhead across the ceiling, the old fluorescent lights foregone, and instead just some covered lamps with black lights inside, on some dressers or little tables that were scattered here and there.

In the break room, the door closed and the bolt locked, a green light bulb instead of a black light. On the walls, a painting hung of a dog's vulva, her heat glistening in the painting's sunlight, a notebook page taped up with sketch studies on equine anuses, a notebook page taped up with sketch studies on canine anuses, marker drawings straight on the walls of humans kissing dogs, dogs kissing cats, cats kissing birds of all different species and sizes, stamped prints of dog penises, developed photographs taped up of horse balls and dog mouths, a poster taped up of a dog in knights' armor humping an anime woman with big breasts and long hair, a poster taped up of a human middle finger entering into a mare's wanting sex, and many, many more works, a thorough collage of zoophilic passion and

lust. At the floor of the room, three big blankets strewn around, each of them torn here and there, the stuffing inside touchable, coarser stuff than the soft fabric without. Midas sat with his back against a wall, eyes closed, and playing a mellow, repetitive line on his black bass guitar, as Jon nuzzled into Midas's left armpit, rubbing their face into his armpit hair, taking in long, pondering inhales through their nose. When Midas didn't need use of his left hand, playing the bass's deepest register, he rested his hand on Jon's sweaty back, and massaged their back with pressing, petting movements of his thumb, groping, caressing movements with his other fingers. Jon, with their left hand, played on a keyboard that rested against Midas's stomach and lap, the keyboard rising and falling like a boat on a lake with Midas's breaths. The line for the keyboard slithered down Midas's legs, went through the space between his big toe and the next one, and then crossed the blankets on the floor to some synth equipment that was stacked in the corner.

Midas reached past Jon, and grabbed a microphone that rested on the ground. Jon moved a switch on their keyboard that keyed the microphone on.

Midas spoke, orating a tale off the dome of dogs manning a spaceship, cruising the galaxy for aliens to sex up. The dogs ended up on Earth after some other planets, found that monkeys were some fun but much too crazy, and so the dogs bred the monkeys generation after generation to be more docile, until they were humans. By this point the space ship had deteriorated, and would need to be repaired to fly again. But the dogs were having so much fun sexing up the humans, some of the dogs had even fallen in love with the humans, and so the dogs did not repair their space ship, but instead buried it in a desert, and built a great pyramid over the top of it that nobody would remove. The dogs and the humans kissed and rubbed and inserted and romped and howled and walked and wrestled and threw sticks and brought sticks back and feasted and enjoyed all, and Midas spoke the name of the album, Woe Betide Him That Hath A Narrow Heart, for there is love and knowledge found aside of the path, if one looks to their left or to their right. There are not men and women only, but a splatter painting of visions of sex and gender, and all of the beasts of the land, birds

of the sky, monsters of the waters. Joy betide him that seeth them; Joy betide him that hath a heart increasing; Joy betide him knowing of knots and rubbing at bellies; Joy betide the lover of animals.

Seth, who had been sucking Jon's dick, began a guitar solo.

GONDOLA

The city then was criss-crossed with canals like the wrinkles of skin on the back of a finger, and abundant in flooded plazas where canoes and swimmers paddled about. The air wavered under Helios's close company, his slow despondent sighing breaths falling onto the city day by day, stoking the heat of each new noontime that came in that summer. In one plaza, a statue of a tall bird on a plinth in the center: children clambered onto the plinth and jumped off in a variety of squealing daring ways, cannonballs, dives, spins. At one side of the plaza, a gondola idled around, in the shade in the hollows of the gondola a black dog with long fur panting where he laid, and steering was a human with a trim beard and a wide and flat hat to keep off the sun.

From a window that overlooked the plaza, four stories up, with a knotted rope thrown out of it long ago and resting neatly and lazily in one corner, a pair of bureaucrats from those offices stuck their heads out, and one called to the gondolier, "To the high streets?"

The gondolier, Waybringer, lifted a hand and tipped his wide hat towards the bureaucrats, and then lifted the hat off of his head and pointed it with a fully extended arm in the direction of the high streets: all by way of saying, Yes, I will take you, and I know where it is.

The dog, Inkspill, saw the shade change as Waybringer moved his hat about, and looked up to see the hat returned to Waybringer's head, and Waybringer taking them with his

paddle straight towards the plaza's edge, towards the buildings head on, rather than idling about. Inkspill stood up in the steady vessel, took a small number of steps, and lied down fully against Waybringer's ankles.

At the building, the two bureaucrats had climbed down the rope, one hanging on just above the water, the other hanging on just above the head of their colleague.

Waybringer brought the vessel right below them, or so; one viewing from even a short distance away would think the gondola was scraping against the building's gritty walls, though, from the gondolier's sight of it, there was room just enough for the boat to rock as the bureaucrats climbed the last of the way off of the rope and boarded, and still leave the vessel's edges without any new scratches.

Each bureaucrat shook hands with Waybringer, both of them slipping a petty coin into his hand as a token of good will that the final fare would be paid with no trouble. One bureaucrat leaned forward towards Waybringer, over Inkspill, and kissed Waybringer on the cheek, a gesture which Waybringer reciprocated on her cheek; for with the feminine gesture then, it was known, while all present in the boat had hair on their chins and upper lips, that the boat bore a gentleman passenger and a lady passenger.

The gondolier paddled them away from the wall, and began bringing them around the plaza, towards the canals that would lead them to the high streets. Sweat beaded on the gondolier's brow, and wetted his chest, underarms, forearms, buttocks; not much from the work of moving the vessel, but from the sheer heat of the day which he moved it through. The bureaucrats, also, were sweating, as they sat still in their seats, now and then conferring with one another, to the meter of, "Did you review the assistant speaker's manifest for today?" "I did. One item was amiss, I brought it to him, he had it corrected, the version that went out is accurate." "Good, good." "Did you see the reports from the new eastern district, the twenty third, I believe." "Yes, yes, I did, the twenty third. All seems as expected there, moving along proportional to the amount of the eleventh it was taken out of, so." "Yes, I reckon so much as well. Not a runaway

success, but, there was nothing spurring it to be so, so. All within parameters.” “Good, good, good.”

The gondola passed through the open gates of a lock, and Waybringer gently brought the vessel to a halt, not causing it to rock the least amount; the side of Inkspill’s head pressed neither more firmly nor more lightly against Waybringer’s heel as the vessel ceased its movement.

The lady bureaucrat stood, and offered out the amount of the fine to Waybringer. Inkspill quietly inched himself away from Waybringer’s ankles as the gondolier moved about. Waybringer bowed himself as he accepted the bureaucrat’s coins, and then he turned forward again, removed his hat, and waved it for the lock keeper to see in the booth above.

The lock began filling with water. The lady bureaucrat sat back down, as did Waybringer. With nothing to do for some time as they waited, the gondolier rested his long paddle across the gondola, and sat down before Inkspill with his legs bent and apart; The dog shuffled in against the gondolier, and the gondolier began delighting over the fur of the dog who was there in his legs, stroking, gently, firmly, to a consistent, relaxing pace.

After some long while, the lock was filled with water, bringing the four of them up to the canals of a district where the water levels were 15 feet higher than in most of the rest of the city. Waybringer gave Inkspill a firm kiss on the top of his head, a familiar feeling to feel the black fur hot in the summer day against his lips.

The gondolier stood, and picked up his paddle, and brought the vessel over to the booth to pay the lock keeper’s fine. With a polite salute from the lock keeper and wishes exchanged that all may find a cool spot at some time in this day, the gondolier began paddling them on.

The high canals were populated with gondolas of very impressive woodwork, figureheads of dragons and hawks, the vessels ornamented with silver at a minimum, many also glittering in the sunlight with elements of gemstones or gold. Waybringer, while proud of his vessel as something that was well maintained, an ease to operate, a comfort to ride in, was all the same, markedly, visibly, an intruder here.

Waybringer brought them around bends and through plazas, until eventually they arrived at a dockyard. Waybringer took them in to an area for smaller vessels, and with a line of narrow rope that Inkspill had been partially lying on top of, the gondolier moored his gondola to the dock.

With some stretching and little moans, all aboard climbed off. The gentleman bureaucrat thanked Waybringer for the passage, and offered out a pair of significant coins.

Waybringer was startled by the offer, and made no movement to accept the coins. Mustering words—a thing the gondolier struggled with—he did his best to explain the problem politely. “Sir, the fare is not that much, if you may have mistaken which coins you grabbed.”

The gentleman bureaucrat laughed heartily, stooped down to take the gondolier’s hand, and placed the coins into it himself. He patted the gondolier on the side of the arm, and said, “She and I discussed it: We have not a drop of water on us from the trip, not that you can tell it with all of the sweat, ha ha! You are a master, o steerer.”

The gondolier blushed, and bowed, and thanked both bureaucrats. The bureaucrats departed, up the dock, towards the high streets.

Waybringer placed the coins into the coin purse strapped to his side, and took a moment to make especially certain that it was secured closed.

Then, with a giggle and a smile, Waybringer allowed himself to fall to the dock, lowering himself and then rolling out backwards onto his back. Inkspill came over and trotted all around his face, stepping on the human’s chest as he passed back and forth over the human, wagging and wagging as the human reached up and ran petting hands across the dog’s hot coat, the oily black fur radiant in the day’s sunlight.

As the dog calmed some, Waybringer had a proposition for him. The gondolier did a little gasp, immediately fascinating the dog’s attention, gazes locked, the dog’s head tilted, ready to hear. The gondolier offered, “Let’s run.”

Inkspill instantly ran off up the dock.

Waybringer got up, and jogged after him.

The dog and the human ran and splashed and had a fun time all up and down the nice beach. Dashing through the shallows, swimming in the waters, skipping along the shore, they made a good time of being there. The working day was over, with the unexpected payment, and now with more time the best thing to do was inhabit that time with one another, the human and the dog, giving to the dog all the play and excitement and fun that the dog was deserving of. The two crossed back and forth over the beach in the high area time and time again, jumping and rolling and running.

Both panting, and about ready to call it a day, the two looked to one another, the human laughed and fell to the ground again, and the dog walked all over him, as the human held his arms up and petted all along the dog's coat.

The human gave a happy sigh, and then heaved himself up, and walked to a nearby vendor, who had a stand out there on the beach.

The human purchased some manner of meats skewered on a stick. Sauntering away a little from the booth to give the vendor their space, the human, piece by piece, took meat cuts off of the stick, and tossed them to the dog, who caught them expertly and wagged as he ate.

With the both of them seeming rather tired out, the human began back towards the docks, towards the area for smaller vessels. The dog followed along, sometimes trotting around ahead, sometimes investigating back around behind.

The human stepped back into the boat. The dog stepped in after, and quickly settled in among the rocking he had made.

The human untied the mooring, recoiled the rope, and set off.

The two proceeded back through the high canals. At a lock, the human paid the toll, and laid there fully in the gondola with the dog as the water lowered, fraction by fraction, until they were at the low canals again.

The gondolier meandered them around, canal by canal, until they had arrived at an out of the way alleyway, the entrance into the place where Waybringer and Inkspill resided. There was a straight and unremarkable passage of water, which, turning into, Inkspill recognized the turns and ways they had been through, and stood ready to offboard. Waybringer brought them

to the edge of the passage of water, up to the passage of brick pathway. The bricks continued a very short while, then turned around a corner, and then a few yards thereafter there was the door.

Inkspill hopped off onto the bricks.

Waybringer offboarded as well, and pulled the vessel up onto the ground, and around the corner, out of sight of prying eyes.

Inkspill laid down around the corner, against the wall opposite the gondola.

Waybringer took a key from his person and unlocked the door. He held the door open a moment, waiting for a shadow to come barging past him.

When, after a moment, none came, he turned around, and saw the shadow still lying there against the wall.

Waybringer asked, "Coming in?"

Inkspill stretched out his paws, nuzzled his head back against the wall behind him, and remained lying down.

Waybringer asked, "Can I lay down with you?"

The shadow's tail rose and fell.

The gondolier lowered himself down onto the ground, and brought himself face to face with the handsome shade. Each of them occupied their own spot along the wall, meeting head to head, gaze to gaze, face to face. The dog licked the human's mouth. The human returned a smooch to the dog's lips. The two played at touching their tongue against the other's tongue for a little moment, and then, Waybringer slid closer in with Inkspill, nuzzling his face into the dog's belly.

The human closed his eyes, and laid there, inhabiting the rising and falling hair before him as the dog breathed.

After witnessing a number of good breaths, the human opened his eyes, and looked to a part of the dog yet farther up that he hadn't given care to yet that day. The dog's sheath, with the dog being on his side, rested between the dog's legs, the bulk of it drooping towards the ground, lying limply over the grounded leg. Waybringer slid forward a little closer to it, and gave the sheath a lick along the bottom from tip to where it disappeared among the legs.

Inkspill gave a single wag, and then lifted his leg.

Waybringer's heart fluttered at the invitation. He slid forward more and pressed his face fully against the dog's sheath, and the dog lowered his leg, enveloping Waybringer. The weight of the dog's leg over him, wrapping him close, in this hot day, Waybringer planted kisses on the soft skin in front of him that radiated a heat even more. Waybringer smooched the entrance of the sheath, toyed at it with his tongue. He nuzzled against the flaccid penis inside through the sheath's soft veil.

They spent quite a good amount of cozy, playful time there together.

Waybringer then heard a voice above him remark, "Oh, um."

He slid himself out from between the dog's legs, and looked up into the sunlight to see his brother, Candlekeeper.

Waybringer's throat twisted, trying to find some words.

Candlekeeper arrived at having words sooner: "I was only passing through."

Waybringer's brother then jogged towards the door past the human and the hound there sharing intimacy on the ground, and entered into the door and closed it without looking back.

Waybringer's breath was frozen, and the world crowded with blurs and spots as his lungs locked.

Inkspill stood up, walked in a curt circle, and laid back down, with his own houndly head looming above the human's. Inkspill licked at the human's forehead, collecting up a day's dried sweat on his tongue, taking it from the human's body, lick by lick.

Waybringer found his breath, and lied there, letting the dog do what the dog was doing, as he breathed.

Tears came.

Inkspill began licking at Waybringer's eyes, taking the salty tears from his biped.

"I love you," Waybringer said to the dog.

The dog gave a few licks on Waybringer's mouth, and then returned to the eyes.

Eventually, Waybringer sat up, wriggling out from the dog's attentions. He sat there with his back against the wall, and stroked at Inkspill's back.

The two of them would have to go inside eventually.

Waybringer stood, and began towards the door. Inkspill stood, and followed after.

Inside, Candlekeeper was at the table, preparing strong waters. Glancing up at the two entering, Candlekeeper mentioned to Waybringer, "I am making extra, if you might care for any."

Waybringer thought on it, and then nodded. "I think I might."

Candlekeeper continued about his business of preparing all of the components of the drinks. He asked, "You are like lovers to one another?"

Instinctually, without any mulling it over, Waybringer nodded. Then, in the little silence that followed, he felt frozen for any ability to convey just how fully of lovers he and his houndly companion truly were.

Candlekeeper, graciously, merely nodded as well, and said, "A good love it seems to be."

Waybringer's brother then took one cup of drink and walked away, up a staircase, smiling as he went.

The moments and the days continued moving by.

Waybringer and Inkspill stood at a booth at the sea ports, taking alternating bites of a bowl of mixed foods, Waybringer handing down most of the flesh to Inkspill, and the other non carnivorous things for himself.

Waybringer and Inkspill swam about a plaza, no boat to hold them, paddling at the waters with paws and feet and hands and following after one another.

Waybringer and Inkspill laid on a rooftop. Waybringer looked up at the stars; lying there long enough, the stars spinning laid bare how his own planet merely spun among the cosmos, no special thing itself, a mere lone player in this incandescent cast of characters. Inkspill's nose pulsed at the air, little breaths moving in and out, and he learned, of the neighbors, that a nearby building might have seemed to suddenly possess many more rats, someone upwind was smoking a kind of tobacco the hound had never smelled before in this city, and someone was cooking fish at a particularly late hour of the night. In the height of all of these smells, learning so much about the world around, Inkspill looked up to Waybringer for a kiss, a landmark to assure it was all cemented, real, here. Waybringer leaned down

and met the kiss fully. Inkspill wagged as he slid his tongue into the mouth of his tall lover.

Waybringer brought them along the way of an unpopulous canal, himself and Inkspill. Coming the other way, another gondola, steered by a human, and accompanied by a hound. The hound of the other gondola was of brown hair, short. The human of the other gondola bore a long beard, but was not old in years, it would be a surprise if the human had ever once shaved.

As the two vessels were passing, Waybringer slowed, as did the other driver. The dogs of each vessel rose, and leaned forward over the edges, sniffing at one another.

Waybringer began, "Do you and the dog ever kiss?"

The other steerer answered, "It is a joy to."

Waybringer sought to be sure, "As lovers?"

The other steerer answered, "As lovers for lovers we are."

Waybringer, resolute, remarked, "Here, then, is a mirror, as we pass by."

The other steerer's cheeks raised gaily, and they wished, "A good day to you two."

Waybringer answered, "And to you two as well, a good day."

The steerer and the dog paddled on, through the canals.

CONVERSATION, LIKE, TALKING WITH EACH OTHER ABOUT STUFF

AJ stood at the counter, wagging an imaginary tail and singing a song to himself as he counted the bills from the register into piles of 100s.

“Got money today, got it here in my paws, sold vegan food today, smoke weed and break laws, got money today—Woahhhh where are you going with that?”

The new hire, Fief, stopped walking with a huge bag of trash just as he was nearing the front door. He turned and looked back to AJ.

“Benny said to take out the trash.”

“Yeah go out the back, you can’t get in from that way, there’s like a gate that’s gonna be closed unless it’s trash time. Trash time? Day. Trash day. Garbage day.”

AJ continued to wag his imaginary tail, and wished the kid would laugh along with his it-has-been-a-long-day-today-oh-my-god line of thinking to arrive at the word for garbage day, instead of just standing there holding the garbage with a concerned frown. But, if he wanted to be all serious, his loss.

Fief offered by way of explanation, “Benny said to go out back too, but I only saw the one door back there and it said an alarm will sound if I open the door, and I didn’t want to set it off so I was going to go around front, is there a way I could open the gate out front, like is there a key or something I could use?”

“Nah just go out the back, don’t worry about it.”

“So, set off the alarm?”

AJ snickered, and said, "Yeah I unplugged that twenty million years ago."

"Okay, but the door did say—"

"It's fiiiine, plus we're closed, it would be fun to set off the alarm even if it did happen. You done after taking that out?"

"Yeah."

"Sweet, remember your stuff and have a good night, I'll clock you out when you go."

"Oh uh, okay. Sounds good."

Fief headed behind the counter again with the garbage, headed for the back door.

AJ continued his song.

"Got money today, most of it was on cards, no one uses cash today, something something some bards." As he finished totaling it all up and jotting down the figures on a scrap of paper, he said to himself, "Allright, not bad," and then shouted into the kitchen, "Money good!"

He then heard a shout back, "Yay money good!"

"Home soon good!"

"Home not soon!"

"What!"

AJ put the money into the safe under the counter, and then walked into the kitchen to find out what heresy Benny meant by home not soon. He passed by Fief, who was on his way out. Benny there in the kitchen had a clipboard in his tattooed hands, and was marking items off on a checklist that all of the equipment had been turned off and cleaned.

"Thanks for the help Fief."

AJ and Fief high fived, it kind of didn't connect amazingly but the spirit was there. AJ snapped his fingers, did a clap, and then slid up to the punch in thingy, brought up Fief, and waited until a little bit after he heard the front door close to punch him out. Then he turned around to yell stuff at Benny, and saw Benny had been standing directly there behind him.

"Oh. Hi," AJ said, and began timidly wagging.

"Hi you," Benny said back.

AJ got up on his tiptoes, and he and Benny kissed.

"Why are we not home soon good?" AJ inquired.

Benny gave a smooch to AJ's forehead, minding he didn't mess up AJ's fox ears headband. "Do you really not remember?" "No?"

"It was your idea?" Benny prompted.

AJ: "Benny I have no idea at all what you're talking about."

Benny: "We agreed to do the dishes of that sit-down Chinese place two doors down."

AJ: "You are fucking me."

Benny: "Um. Not actively."

AJ: "You are fucking WITH me, Captain Grammars-A-Lot."

Benny: "Nope. Unless I'm going to be really surprised by the totals you counted, getting paid to knock out these dishes is actually the only way we're making a profit today, like, personally, and our home loan kind of depends on like, that."

AJ groaned, but didn't disagree. He also remembered that it completely was his idea. It had come up in a group chat with a bunch of the local businesses that the sit down Chinese place's whole dishwashing apparatus basically needed to be completely replaced, and the sit down pizza place next door made an offer on cleaning the dishes during the day but they closed early, and so he had jumped in and offered to clean up the end of day for the same rate proportional to the number of dishes, which was a steep figure but it was a figure that meant the Chinese place could stay open while their dishwasher was being retooled, and anyways they had agreed to it.

AJ groaned a second time more loudly and for longer.

Benny rested his hands on AJ's shoulders, and gave the fronts of the shoulders little massages with his thumbs. "Hey, we're doing alright," Benny said. "It was always going to be a stretch starting a vegan burger place out here. We're making it work. I'm proud of us."

Timidly, as though the answer might change if he acted small enough, AJ asked, "How many dishes are there?"

"They left a pallet out front—"

"A pallet!!"

"Yeahhhh."

"Godddd. Alright let's do it." AJ karate chopped away Benny's hands off of his shoulders, and started trotting for the front door. Benny snickered, and followed after with a cart.

Outside, AJ had turned his head up to the night sky and was letting out a groan like howling at the moon. Together, the two of them piled the dishes from the pallet onto the cart, and then brought everything inside to their sink.

“Okay okay okay okay okay,” AJ said, “let’s throw them in the dishwasher and let that run for like forever and meanwhile we will go outside and I will eat your face, like, make out.”

“Ohhhh, *not* like a zombie.”

“Right.”

“You’re not going to eat my face *off* like cannibalism, you’re going quote-on-quote ‘eat my face’ like kissing.”

“Right.”

“Okay let’s do that.”

Benny turned on the water and soap feeds to get the sink going. The churner thing inside didn’t seem like it would be a problem for any of the dishes they were about to throw at it. It was a pretty general purpose, straightforward piece of machinery. Benny and AJ piled in all of the dishes, both of them lamenting how caked on some of the crud seemed to be. Neither was optimistic the dishwasher would get the entire job done, but they agreed it would at least help. When the basin was all full of dishes and water and soap, AJ turned off the feeds, started the churning thingy, took Benny’s hand, and led the two of them outside.

There were a couple of park-style table-benches-combo things out there, for diners to eat at if it was a nice day outside. It was a really nice night out, as Benny and AJ sat down together on one of the benches: cool, but not chilly, clear sky, you could be out in a t-shirt and it would feel great.

AJ wriggled up onto Benny’s lap, and sat there as the two of them started pressing their lips together and doing stuff with their tongues. Benny’s whole mouth and stuff tasted like vanilla cake vape.

The two of them had met about five years ago. AJ was making a vlog of offering people piano lessons at a public piano. And then a skinny tall boy—guy, adult, AJ just said boy a lot for that—a skinny tall boy with messy hair and tattoos of geometry and howling wolves and deer antlers and stuff came up, and it was over, AJ was in love at first sight. He played it pretty cool,

showing this cute boy how to play up a scale, and that went well and they joked around a bunch, and then AJ asked, “Hey so would you wanna meet up for another lesson sometime, or like, food, we could eat lunch together, I am asking if you want to go on a date tomorrow or whenever, I like you.” And Benny said yes, and the two of them turned out to have so much in common it was uncanny. They were both vegan, both artists who did lots of drawings of animals, both into doctor drama TV shows, both had gone through a period of going by she/her pronouns but then went back to he/him, both ambidextrous, both atheists, both interested in projects like vlogs and blogs and making video essays and all of those internet entertainment kinds of things. Each of their follower bases were very into the fact that they were dating each other, it was a perfect match. And it really was. It wasn’t just for the fact that them kissing and being snuggly on the selfie cameras did numbers, they were just chronicling their lives, and their lives now happened to involve kissing and being snuggly and having a really aesthetic and intimate existence.

AJ moaned as he kissed Benny, sitting there in his lap, and Benny ran his hands all over AJ’s body, feeling, touching, taking AJ in. AJ’s imaginary tail wagged and wagged and wagged.

Both of them jumped a little as they heard from the parking lot, “EEEUUUUUGGGGGG!!!”

A cry of disgust, on par with a lot of AJ’s earlier groaning about the dishes, but something different. Angry rather than despairing.

The two of them looked, and saw a man with grey hair and a collared shirt walking by, looking at them as he went. He went on, “Gross!”

Benny asked, “Gross?”

The man jeered, “Sickening!”

AJ snickered. “Sickening you say?”

“Eugh, awful. Two GROWN MEN defiling each other!”

AJ clung tight around Benny, both of their stomachs contracting in trying-to-keep-quiet laughter against each other.

The man went on, at this point speaking louder as he had passed by them and was not looking back, “You’ll be fired for

this! I'll be sure to call in about employees in an illegal 'relationship!'"

Benny lost it, and began laughing openly. AJ drummed his hands against Benny's chest rapidly in excitement, and whisper screamed to Benny, "He said *illegal!!* He said 'relationship' like sarcasm!!! aaaaaa!!!!"

"You won't be laughing TOMORROW when your manager FIRES YOUR ASSES."

Benny called after the guy, "We're co-owners of the restaurant sir! Have a nice night!"

AJ called after the guy, "Being gay is legal also!"

Benny called after the guy, "We're gonna keep being so gay back here!"

AJ called after the guy, "We both used to be trans too but we changed our minds!"

The old man shouted, "Don't shout at me, that's assault! I'll press charges!"

Benny asked AJ in a much quieter tone, "Do you think he was in the store's security cameras that whole time?"

AJ answered, "Bro yes and the front door is mic'd."

Benny gasped.

AJ headbutted Benny's chest in excitement.

Benny hugged AJ, and said, "I am so gonna start editing this right when we get home, this is goldddd. Homophobia in 2024, that is so amazing."

Benny and AJ, AJ in Benny's lap, sat there hugging as they both calmed down, a process marked with many reignited giggling fits on both of their parts.

Benny repeated, "He actually said we were *defiling* each other."

AJ nuzzled Benny, and said, "He did. That was so funny of him."

Benny: "What did he think that meanssss."

AJ: "Like, in all honesty, probably he thinks we should have wives and make offspring and we're ruining our potential by getting with another hairy boy instead."

Benny: "Why does *he* care if we have kids!"

AJ: "Bro he is tripping I'm not defending him."

Benny: "Wait, oh no, I did forget to check again when we sat down whether or not you consented to kissing."

AJ: "Oh no, you did."

Benny: "I know we had made plans that we agreed about to go kiss, but I forgot before we started to check in and make sure that those plans were still something that you consented to."

AJ: "Right."

Benny: "You didn't ask me either."

AJ: "Oh no."

Benny: "Maybe we *were* defiling each other."

AJ: "That seems possible now that you mention it."

Benny: "Did you consent to all of that kissing that I forgot to ask about your consent with?"

AJ: "Yes. Did you also all of that stuff?"

Benny: "Yes."

AJ: "Phew."

Benny: "Phew for real."

AJ started petting Benny's back, and asked, "Do you consent to more kissing, just a little?"

Benny: "Yes. Do you consent to more kissing, just a little for fun before we go in and do dishes?"

AJ: "Yes."

AJ licked Benny's lips, and the two of their mouths connected as one again.

Eventually, thinking of how the dishwasher had probably done all it was going to do, AJ rested his palms on the sides of Benny's head, gave one last big mwah, and then gently pushed Benny's head back.

Benny gave a disappointed little groan, and asked, "Do you consent to going back inside and helping me with the dishes?"

AJ slid off of Benny's lap and stood up and stretched, and then said, "Mmmmmm yeah, I consent to helping with the dishes. You kind of already implied you will be doing dishes also, but just to double check because it's always good to be safe, do you also consent to doing dishes with me?"

"Yeah, I do."

"Yay." AJ wagged his imaginary tail a little.

The two of them headed inside, and got to work. Throughout the process, they shared questions of, "Do you consent to trying

to get this gunk off of this dish? I can't get it." "Yeah. Do you consent to handing me that dish so I can do that?" "Yeah. Oh sorry, do you consent to me handing you this dish so you can do that?" "Yeah." "Do you consent to starting to drain the sink?" "Yeah I'll hit that. Boom, there we go, sink is draining. Do you consent to sniffing some of these with me to make sure they're clean?" "I consent to you doing that in front of me but I don't think we need to sniff the dishes, they're clean." "Do you consent to toweling some of these off with me so we can stack them up and get them back?" "Yeah. Do you consent to the towel stuff too?" "Yeah."

When the dishes were all ready to be brought back, the two of them wheeled the cart out. Benny unlocked the front door of the sit-down Chinese place with a key he'd been given for the occasion, left the cart inside, and locked the door behind himself.

"Phew," Benny said.

"Phew indeed," AJ agreed.

"Home now."

"Home now yay so glad."

The two of them started walking for their car.

AJ asked, "You got the keys?"

"Yeah I'll drive."

"Cool. You still gonna start working on that video when we get back?"

"Nah I don't know."

AJ mentioned, "Sarah is good on mornings, she honestly wants us to leave her alone and trust her more I think."

"You think?"

"Yeah I think."

"Hmmm," Benny hm'd, and then said, "Yeah if you think, I will stay up late and work on it then."

"Do you consent to me lying on your feet under your desk while you do?"

"I don't know why you like that so much."

"Dog stuff."

"You do like dog stuff. Yeah you can lie on my feet."

"Ayy, glad, yay."

Benny unlocked the car with the remote key thing, and AJ got into the passenger seat and settled in and relaxed as Benny turned the ignition.

Benny drove them out of the parking lot and onto the road.

AJ turned on the radio, and closed his eyes as some R&B played.

At some point in the drive, Benny turned down the volume to one.

AJ opened his eyes, and sat upright.

Benny mentioned, "Hey so uh. Talking about consent. I know we've been joking around tonight but like, I actually have some thoughts I wanted to share."

AJ answered, "Sure. What's up? I am so here for this."

Benny: "So like, remember I said a long time ago that I thought animals can't consent?"

AJ: "Yeah, and that's why you like, never would, even though you're interested. Like, you think a lot of animals are really hot, you are technically a zoosexual, but it's just fantasy and stuff. Is what you said before. But, you think differently now?"

Benny: "Yeah so like. I think I've changed my mind."

AJ: "Yeah?"

Benny: "Yeah um. I think they are really capable of expressing themselves. Like, it's actually really insulting—and I was at fault on this before, for sure—I think it's really insulting to say that they can't communicate what's on their mind. And, a lot of animals are sexually capable beings."

AJ: "Yeah, for sure."

Benny: "So like. What convinced me, and this is going to sound so spicy—"

AJ: "Oh my god please."

Benny: "I swearrr the neighbors' dogs are trying to fuck me."

AJ gasped, and asked, "Are they??"

Benny: "I swearrr dude."

AJ: "Holy shit I love that."

Benny giggled, and asked, "Really?"

AJ: "That rules."

Benny: "Like, I haven't, to be clear. I haven't done anything with them. But I swear they all want it. Like, literally I will just be sitting out back reading a book like I do, and one of these

dogs will come up, try to get my attention, or *literally* casually just grab my leg and start humping and I have to push them off.”

AJ giggled.

Benny: “And like, sometimes, like you do, one of them will come up and lie on my feet. Like, I don’t even know what’s up, I have never fed these dogs, I have barely even pet them honestly, but there are like five dogs in the neighborhood who think I’m their boyfriend.”

AJ: “I’m so happy for you.”

Benny: “Yeah?”

AJ: “Yeah. Also I know all of the dogs you mean and none of them want me like that, they so just think you specifically are dog hot.”

Benny snickered.

AJ: “They do! They must! I have never had any of them try that with me at all!”

Benny: “Well, that’s flattering, maybe.”

AJ: “I think we should give one of them a handie. Like, you jerk him off, I’ll supervise.”

Benny: “Oh my god, I. Actually kind of would like that, but I didn’t think you’d be, like. This up for it.”

AJ: “We should! Animals deserve sex.”

Benny: “I mean, hey, I agree.”

AJ: “So you’re like a real zoosexual now.”

Benny: “I mean, I wasn’t *fake* before.”

AJ: “I mean you kiiind of were.”

Benny: “Well, I know what you mean. Yeah I guess kind of. But yes, I am a zoosexual, like, fully actually now, I guess I really would do it if you’d be so okay with that.”

AJ: “Yeah man. So like, you definitely for sure approve of that stuff in real life? Like, if someone actually had sex with a dog, you would cheer them on from the penalty box?”

Benny: “From the penalty box?”

AJ: “Ugh, noooo, what’s the other one? The like, box, you sit in to watch sports from high up?”

Benny: “Ohhhh.”

AJ: “Is that also called a box?”

Benny: “I think it’s just a box.”

AJ: "It definitely has a fancier name than a box. Hold on I'm going to look it up. Uhhhh... Luxury box, oh we were close. Luxury box, club seating, suite. Anyways if someone actually had sex with a dog would that not be a big deal to you?"

Benny: "Yeah I mean if they were respectful to the dog and everyone seemed to have fun, good for them."

AJ let out a big relieved sigh.

AJ: "Fiiiiiiiiinally."

Benny: "What?"

AJ: "Okay, I, haha, the short version is I lost my V card to a dog."

Benny: "Nooooo."

AJ: "I did!"

Benny: "You just let me keep hating zoos when you were one?"

AJ: "I mean I kind of am I'm kind of not, it just happened that way that first time! And it stuck with me, like, I have a lot of animal-oriented thoughts, that I kind of ascribe to that, like, him rawing me imbued me with dog mentality. But like, there's no dogs I'm having sex with anymore, so whatever you thought about that stuff was like alright I'm not really over here having a reason to argue."

Benny: "You should have!"

AJ: "I don't think people really listen about that kind of thing, I think they just have their opinion and it is immune to arguing."

Benny: "Oh wow. I mean. Yeah."

AJ: "Hey, we got there now."

Benny: "So when you tell me about your tail, is that like, part of that?"

AJ: "Yeah totally."

Benny: "So what happened?"

AJ: "What?"

Benny: "What was your first time?"

AJ: "Ohhh."

Benny: "Like, did the dog lick you, or—"

AJ: "Oh he mounted."

Benny: "Oh fuck!"

AJ: "I said he rawed!"

Benny: "I thought you were exaggerating!"

AJ: "It was so... So like, I had been playing around with myself, learning how to bottom for some hypothetical partner, but I wasn't really out to anyone? So like, what's a fella to do, well, what I did is get myself all lubed and played with and ready, and then, there was a neighborhood near where I lived that was notorious for having ill-behaved dogs just run around —"

Benny: "Oh my god."

AJ: "Yeah and so I went there, like oh yeah these dogs definitely have balls, and a dog pretty soon did come up to me, and we got on the ground and kinda petted and swiped at each other all playfully, and then he sooooo fucked me under a pine tree, and that was my first time."

Benny: "Woah."

AJ: "It was so good."

Benny: "That's amazing."

AJ: "It was so amazing."

Benny: "Did he knot?"

AJ: "Oh yeah."

Benny: "Wow."

AJ: "I think of him basically every time I have a plug in."

Benny: "Oh my god, so, my wang has been inside of the same ass that a dog wang has been in."

AJ: "Haha, yeah I guess so."

Benny: "Wow."

AJ: "Does that matter to you?"

Benny: "It's... kind of really hot."

AJ reached over and felt at Benny's lap, and definitely felt the raised outline of a boner in Benny's pants. He said to Benny, "Alright, drive safe, you're getting road head right now."

Benny answered, "Nooo that seems dangerous."

"I believe in you."

Benny held AJ at bay with one hand, and said, "No I wanna save it anyways for uh. If you'd be up for anal when we get back home."

"Ohhhhhhhh. Yes," AJ said. "Yes let's do that, I'm into what you're going for. I consent to that."

AJ patted Benny's penis, and then left it alone for later.

APPARENTLY EXISTING

Lauren woke up with a gasp of breath, feeling everything in the world around her come into crisp detail with the invigorating oxygen like a fire flaming up from being stoked. Trees loomed over her in the daylight, their skinny arms all dancing in the breeze. Dry and dead leaves were crunched under her cheek.

She muttered to herself, only half able to articulate the thought, “What in the hell... woods?”

She sat up, and gathered her thoughts. As she did, she noticed a little homemade bracelet on her wrist: a strand of yarn tied in a loop, threaded through a scrap of paper with a hole in it. On the paper was drawn a circle with a vertical line through it from top to bottom, and two dots outside of the circle, one at 12 o’clock and the other just shy of 2.

Lauren muttered to herself, “Oh my fucking god. Really?”

The pieces were coming together. Some of the pieces. Most of the important pieces, probably. She remembered—and felt in her aching insides—that she had been drinking yesterday. And apparently had blacked out, because, she didn’t remember going out into the woods. But blacked out drunk her had apparently definitely gone out into the woods trying to get abducted by aliens. She had seen, before, in visions that were shared to her when she was growing up, Their symbology—there were many languages that They used, but the one that she had been completely informed of was based on psychically sharing symbols with one another. The one that she had written, the circle with the vertical line inside of it represented herself, and

dots and other symbols could be placed at various locations in and around it to indicate various intentions and feelings and even ailments. The dot at 12 represented Pacifism. The dot just shy of 2 represented Horny.

Lauren groaned, and rubbed her face with her hands. She ripped the paper off of the yarn and crumpled it up. No longer an accurate reflection of her state. And, she certainly didn't want to be taken for a liar, if They finally did decide to retrieve her, like They had promised to so many years ago. She would move the dot from just shy of 2 pretty much all the way around to 7, which would indicate Non-Life-Threatening Discomfort (NLTD). The Pacifism dot at 12 was at least pretty much a constant for herself.

Sitting there in the woods, she patted down her pockets for her phone, and didn't find it.

She stood up, and stared up into the sky for a moment. Past the skinny branches of the trees, the sky was a uniform bright blue. So much was up there, but so far away, and Earth so blind to so much of it so often.

She took a deep breath, feeling clarity settle in, that she had been overly ambitious last night, to think that it was the night. They would likely inform her when it was. It wouldn't happen out of nowhere.

Or it would happen out of nowhere, but They would know that that's what They were doing, and account for any unpreparedness on her part.

They were not cruel, and They understood very much more than even she did.

She took her eyes away from the sky, and looked around on Earth. Turning about 180 degrees from where she had woken up facing, Lauren saw, past some trees, a park benches-and-table thing. She didn't recognize these woods at all. She didn't think she had been here before in her life, before apparently coming here last night.

She walked towards the table. Coming out from among the trees, it seemed she was in a campground: here, there was a table, a campfire ring, and space for a tent. All around across neighboring hill slopes, there were other pairings of tables and campfire rings.

No one was camping at any of them.

She wondered if she was the Only one on the planet.

On the table that she had arrived at, there was a phone that looked a lot like her phone, a wallet that looked a lot like her wallet, a toothbrush that looked a lot like her toothbrush, and a partially used tube of toothpaste that looked a lot like her partially used tube of toothpaste.

Lauren groaned again, “Oh my godddd...”

Well, easy to find out if anyone else was still around, at least. She grabbed her phone. It unlocked with her thumbprint, and behind all of her apps was her background photo of some sailboat she had seen a week ago that had looked cool. She had bars here, enough to pull up the internet, and 41% battery. Standing there at the table, she opened the internet, searched “news,” and found a bunch of political bullshit dated from hours ago, some from minutes ago.

Yup, definitely still others around on the planet yapping.

Her stomach ached. She groaned. A shame she hadn’t packed water or a baggie of scrambled eggs.

Searching for further hints about last night, Lauren opened up her phone call history, didn’t see anything from all of yesterday, kind of a relief.

No new notifications icon on the text messages either, but, she opened that up to see if anything had been sent after she had stopped holding down record on the ol consciousness box last night.

Seeing what was there in the texts, Lauren closed her eyes hard, and groaned, “Uggggghhhhhh nooooooooo...”

There, right at the top of her recent texts, was Tasha, a teacher’s assistant in one of her classes from last semester. Archeology. Some gen-ed bullshit. Tasha had been fun to joke with about old vases and embarrassing skeletal remains and stuff, but, they hadn’t exactly said... anything... to one another since the class ended. Until last night, apparently.

She would have to look at it.

Or she could not.

But, she changed her mind back to yes, she would have to look at it. She wanted to. Wanted to see what had been on her mind last night to share with a near perfect stranger.

She tapped on it, scrolled up past a number of messages, and started from the start of last night's conversation.

23:57, Lauren B.: omg Tasha I heard you got a lab.

0:14, Tasha M.: I did!

0:14, Lauren B.: This is Lauren btw.

0:15, Tasha M.: haha yup I still see our messages about that one assignment with the wrong due date. The dog's name is Abeline. I got her from a friend of a friend, she's been very good.

Sitting there in the woods, Lauren had absolutely no idea Tasha had gotten a dog. She had probably been up to some social media stalking the night before, among, apparently, other activities, like wandering out into the woods with a toothbrush packed, ready to dip on Earthskis.

Anyways, new lore for the world, Tasha, Lauren's old TA, had a dog now, apparently.

0:15, Lauren B.: Can I see!!!

A few pictures came next, timestamped 0:18. In the pictures, there was indeed a yellow lab with a black collar on. One picture of her sitting in front of a bookshelf facing the camera seeming very amused to be asked to sit still and look forward. One of her running in a fenced in field, presumably a dog park. One of her on her back, and Tasha's hand reaching forward and rubbing her belly, and, Lauren also noted, as she looked (re-looked) at that picture, the dog's cooch was actually enormous, like, actually.

She closed the pictures.

0:19, Lauren B.: omg she is so sexy

Lauren dropped the phone onto the table, cheeks filling with heat.

She shook her head vigorously, picked up the phone again, and kept going.

0:20, Tasha M.: hahaha

0:21, Lauren B.: I want to make out with her on a bed of roses and go down on her for as long as she needs

0:21, Tasha M.: LAUREN

0:21, Lauren B.: WHAT

0:22, Tasha M.: Lauren that is a dog you know.

0:22, Lauren B.: I mean it!

0:24, Tasha M.: Hey good for you girl. If that's actually a thing for you, I can lend you a copy of My Secret Garden, there's some pages in there you might find really resonant.

0:24, Lauren B.: I want to make whoopie with your dog

0:24, Tasha M.: MAKE WHOOPIE

0:25, Lauren B.: I want her puppy maker in my face

0:26, Tasha M.: MAKE. WHOOPIE.

0:26, Lauren B.: gtg

0:28, Tasha M.: MAKE WHOOPIE AAAAAAA

Lauren groaned to herself, “Fuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuck...”

She sighed, and looked at the one last message remaining. From Tasha, timestamped a little while after the other messages, and apparently Lauren had either never seen it or decided not to respond to it, because, it ended after this.

0:44, Tasha M.: Hey, in all seriousness, I think zoophilia is pretty natural. What you are describing wanting to do all sounds very sweet :) I don't know if you were joking or not, but that's what I think either way.

Oh. Huh.

Lauren's stomach grumbled. She groaned. She looked around. Still no one nearby here. It would be a good idea to be moving towards somewhere with water, somewhere with...

She reached out and flipped her wallet open on the table, rooted around in it, found that there was plenty of cash in there.

So, yeah, somewhere, anywhere, that had any kind of food. Getting to a food place would be pretty great.

But, nah. More importantly, at least start the conversation again with Tasha, before the idea went cold.

6:31, Lauren B.: I was the drunkest last night.

There. Good, accurate start. Mitigate liability, in case Tasha had had a change of heart in the meantime, and decided someone flirting with her dog wasn't cool anymore. She had been nice the night before. Very nice. But, people weren't trustworthy. Lauren had broken a personal rule of hers in a big way last night by even bringing up to anyone that dogs were an interest anyone could have, let alone herself.

It was strange, sitting with the feeling that someone knew now. Not comforting. Someone was out there who could really go and ruin her entire life if they suddenly had a mind to. No one would ever want to hire her, allow her to rent a place from them, ring up her groceries, getting liquor was completely out since she'd literally have to ID herself, and, nope, over. She might basically have to move to China or something.

Lauren's text chime went off. So, confirmed, not the only person on the planet.

6:32, Tasha M.: girl.

Keep going.

6:32, Lauren B.: *girl I don't remember any of this.*

Lock phone, take a deep breath of the cool morning air, sigh.
Ding.

Unlock with her thumb, look at the screen.

6:33, Tasha M.: *I was rollllling XD Abeline was all concerned trying to nudge the phone out of my hand and lick my face to make me better, and that just made me laugh so much I wasn't able to breeeathe, imagining how sexy you would think her licking your face was.*

Do or die.

Maybe both.

Alright.

6:33, Lauren B.: *I would have squirted for sure.*

6:33, Tasha M.: *XD*

6:34, Lauren B.: *That is sooooo funny though, omg*

Lauren closed the phone, breathed, waited.

Apparently they were leaving it there for the time being.

Fine enough. What Lauren would most want would be to erase this little tidbit from Tasha's memory. But, short of the aliens doing her an enormous favor, it was more likely that she would just have to endeavor to keep this topic as something that was a flattering shade of dumb and funny in the TA's mind.

She stood up and went to find a place that would sell her food.

After getting her bearings, she discovered, firstly, that apparently there was a campsite way closer to where she lived than she ever realized, because she was less than an hour's walk from her apartment, and secondly, the path between this apparently existing campsite and her apartment would take her by the place for burgers food, which would be doing their breakfast menu.

After a feast of eggs and meats and cheese stuffed into buttery cleaved biscuits, she walked the rest of the way home feeling better.

She had also decided she was going to go a different route with Tasha.

Sitting on the edge of her bed, she ventured back into her texts with the TA. Former TA, or, at least, former to her, she didn't know one way or the other if Tasha was doing that again this semester for another gaggle of mostly gen-ed mostly twenty year olds.

8:01, Lauren B.: So like, obviously I would want to have said it all better, but jokes aside I really am more of a dog attracted person than a humans attracted person. I think humans look icky. Dogs are more my vibe.

8:03, Tasha M.: Right on. Like I said, you sound very sweet about it.

8:04, Lauren B.: Thank you, that's really a comfort to hear.

8:04, Tasha M.: Do you actually want to meet Abeline?

8:04, Lauren B.: omfg yes how soon

8:05, Tasha M.: haha, I'll be free from classes a little after 4PM, if you want to meet us at the dog park that's kinda if you follow the road north from downtown for a couple of miles and then take a left into those parks. I can find the name and address if you have no idea what I'm talking about.

8:06, Lauren B.: I know the ones you mean I will be there!

Lauren tossed her phone back onto the bed, and then whisper shouted to herself, so that the neighbors wouldn't hear, "I did it! I'm doing it!!!"

She was having conversations she was pretty sure could only happen on creepy outdated forums on the less-indexed parts of the internet. It was probably going to ruin her life, but, if the cat

was out of the bag, she was going to take the approach where she got to meet a dog and maybe even make a human friend. And both objectives were going... way better already, actually, than she had thought they would be. Meeting a little after 4 o'clock. Awesome.

←5ψψ~ψ`ψψβ,◀◀◀`◀`◀`

The chosen one's face was open in a big, uncontainable smile. Bumping into the table as ti arrived at it, ti set ter luggage down and then crawled up onto the table terself, and laid there flat against it looking at ter phone. The dog human had gotten back to ter about the dog. Ti channeled English words through the device until ti got back photos of the dog. Ter entire body delighted. Ti cupped the front of ter pants with one hand, the hand that already had ter nametag marking ter as horny, and ti began rubbing, getting terself more worked up, readier.

The chosen one informed the dog human of its good work in transmitting these images of supreme sexuality.

The dog human seemed amused.

The chosen one decided to leave the Earth with a farewell of one last joke, something to remember ti by.

I want to make whoopie with your dog

The dog human loved it.

One more, while ti was on a roll.

I want her puppy maker in my face

The dog human had liked the first one better. No matter. The dog human still had the first one, still loved it, it hadn't been erased by the smaller follow up. The chosen one said farewell.

gtg

The chosen one left the device and went to find the pickup location.

→

Lauren rolled up to the dog park, in her red car. Tasha and Abeline were already there, presumably having arrived in the only other car parked in the gravel rectangle, a blue SUV.

Lauren went through the double gates, and as she was closing the second one behind herself, she was approached at speed by a yellow lab. Right away, completely on instinct, Lauren got low onto the ground, meaning to just crouch, but then the dog's quick approach and nudging nose knocked her over, and so she fell onto her ass as the dog ran in circles around her, wagging and sniffing.

Tasha, some ways down the park, raised her arm in a greeting.

Lauren raised her arm back, and then got up onto her knees and pet the dog as the dog ran back and forth in front of her, pausing before Lauren again and again to be petted.

Eventually, the dog ran back towards Tasha, who was walking nearer.

Lauren stood up.

The two humans walked towards each other, and eventually, Tasha broke the ice first, shouting over a slightly larger-than-conversational gap in space between the two of them:

"Bestiality is in Egyptian records!"

Lauren looked around for cameras, like if this was a reality show. Seeing none, she spoke back at a raised voice, "Is that good?"

Now arriving at a close distance they could almost use their normal voices at, Tasha said, "It's not new."

Abeline ran around, dashing back and forth between the gap between the two humans, slapping both of their shins with her tail.

"This is fun," Tasha said to Lauren, and then turned to look at Abeline, who had just dropped a ball and backed away expectantly.

Tasha crouched down and grabbed the ball, and threw it.

Abeline chased after.

Lauren admitted, "I don't even know what I'm supposed to say."

Tasha seemed actually perplexed, and asked, "Is there stuff you're supposed to say?"

"Maybe?" Lauren answered. "Like, I mean, I'm here on a lot of really optimistic thinking that you're not going to kill me."

Tasha sounded actually hurt as she responded, “No, what? Is it that bad?”

“Is what, like.” Lauren paused.

A ways off in the park, Abeline had abandoned the ball, and was sniffing around near the fence.

Lauren went on, “I just don’t know what people say. Or like, what people are supposed to say, about. Sorry if what I already said was so bad. Like, I’ve never looked this kind of thing up, what I’m supposed to say. I have tried a few times to look up, like, zoo animal fucker, forums, and not ended up sticking around long enough to learn like anything. I get scared and close it all so fast.”

“Oh my god, you’re fine,” Tasha said, to begin with. “No just. Do you know at all who this dog used to belong to?”

“Um. You said a friend of a friend, I think?”

“Girl, he was a zoo.”

“Wait um what, like,” Lauren began, and really considered if she was going to have to get back in her car and escape quickly here. “Why did it not work out? Was he not good to her?”

“He offed himself.”

“Oh.”

“Yeah. Trent, from Archeology 102.”

“Oh.” Lauren had heard that he had died, but, holy shit. “Trent fucked dogs?”

“Well, yeah.”

“I literally never knew that.”

Tasha nodded. “Um, anyways, yeah. Left her with my friend, and then, went home, bullet in the head. No note, but, I mean. Obvious suicide. My friend thinks it was because of. Well. Not because he was a zoo as in, being a zoo is the same thing as being suicidal. Not that. But.”

Hearing Tasha struggling a bit for words, Lauren tried to help. “Yeah I get it though, what you mean. The sense that you don’t belong in the world, that comes with that.”

“Yeah,” Tasha said, and nodded. “Yeah and like, it doesn’t have to, right? He was great to her, no one should have batted an eye.”

Abeline was sniffing back and forth over a patch of grass very intently off by the fence.

Tasha asked, "Can I hug you?"

Lauren, freezing a little, asked, "Um. Why do you want to?"

"So you know I'm here. So you know you're okay and you know that I think you're okay."

Lauren answered, "Okay but I will be uncomfortable the whole time, but, yeah."

Tasha responded, "I understand. I am an icky human."

"Ha."

"Okay. Ready?"

Tasha held out her arms, facing Lauren. Lauren kind of mirrored it. Then Tasha came in, wrapping her arms around Lauren, holding her, for like, a whole little while. Then Tasha gave a couple of last pats to the back, and backed away.

Abeline had come back over, and was sniffing Lauren intently, her curiosity apparently provoked anew.

Tasha asked, "So like hey, do you like, want to try and see if she's into you? I feel like she's being deprived, and like, we're alone out here."

"Oh my god um," Lauren started, and then looked around, and, yeah, it was just the three of them out there. "Real?"

Tasha shrugged. "Up to her?"

"No of course but. She's giving me the signs." Abeline literally was. Tail held firmly to the side, literally backing her thing into Lauren's shin. "Like. I. Literally would, kinda, do sex stuff with your dog, right now."

"If you're a zoo and you're saying that's what she wants, I mean, she seems to like you, I'd take your word for it."

Lauren got down on her knees.

Abeline jumped up on her a couple of times, giving fake-out kisses, and then presented her hugely in-heat cooch, backing it up straight into Lauren's view.

Lauren put her pointer finger into her mouth quick, wetting it, and then she pressed it against the dog's cooch, as though she was getting ready to finger her own, kind of leading with the pad, and it slid right in.

There she was, her finger inside of a dog's birth canal, the passage by which a dog penis entered—or, a human penis probably had before, by the sounds of it—and puppies, in theory, could come out. It was warm, an intense heat holding

her. Abeline was the door of pleasures, and Lauren was the key placed in the lock.

Lauren took her finger out. Stood up.

Lauren said, "That was really great, but, I would want a more private place than outside in public to do more."

Tasha acknowledged, "Totally fair."

Lauren licked her finger.

Tasha asked, "Do you want to come back by my place, and, I can leave you two alone in the bedroom?"

"Oh wow um. Would you do that?"

"That was SO smooth, I never could have done what you just did."

Lauren asked, "Put my finger in?"

"Yes!"

"You never like, with yourself?"

Tasha began, "That is," and then paused, and started again, "The fact that's how you think of it says you're farther along here than I am, I wouldn't have even known it was so close."

"They're like, flesh and hormones and all of the same sex stuff too, I think."

"If you say so. It does seem that way."

"Um yes though please let's go back to your place. She is flagging me something fierce right now, so, yes, I think both of us would really like that."

"Alright. Cool," Tasha said. "Let's do that."

All of them got into the cars, and Lauren followed Tasha back to hers.

Overall it had been a good Wednesday, Lauren would do 100% of it exactly the same way if given a do-over. The day before too, fuck it.

She held her finger in her mouth as she drove.

MEDIA OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN

Though the pages are discolored from apparent weather damage, all textual contents remain legible. The text reads:

Through history, bestiality has at times been seen as a way of worshiping nature and the gods through connecting sexual energies with the gods' avatars, their animals. Bestiality has at times been seen as a vehicle for human performers to display talented acts of sexuality, fellating the inhuman endowments of donkeys or putting a tongue where others wouldn't imagine being able to. Bestiality has at times been seen as an act so unspeakably perverse that anyone who practiced it was said to have thrown away their very soul. In today's ethically-minded world, the importance of bestiality is not a matter of what it proves about the human, but rather, the importance of bestiality is how it has effected the animal. If an animal is harmed by a human's lack of sexual care, this is a bad act; If an animal gets pleasure and relief from a human's offering of sexual care, this is a good act. The former unethical, the latter ethical.

Is a human now to be completely left to the wind, though? Some of us certainly make no objections to being used by a canine flatmate like their personal toy and having our own needs ignored. But many humans do want something for themselves out of it too: Even when the animal comes first, we can hope that the human at least sometimes comes second instead of not at all. If a human orgasms from being mounted by a dog,

they haven't lessened the experience for the dog, and have gained something for themselves.

Some humans may find great pleasure in bringing kink play into the equation, but rightly wonder whether it will make the partner-of-greater-legginess uncomfortable. Some kinks, like performing bondage and flogging upon an animal, are without doubt the territory of abuse and unethical sexual interactions. But there are other kinks, like wearing a pup hood while you get mounted, where there's no real argument to be made that the animal has been impacted negatively.

Watersports

Consuming urine can be hot for some: One has described their first time with drinking pee—their own—as feeling like their own mouth was a urinal; the taste and experience was evocative of the smell of urinals in a public restroom. In their own continued experiences, they enjoyed the taste, the way it marked them as being in an unclean state, and the intimate sexual nature of peeing on their own person or of having another—a dog—pee on them. If there is a dog who you are already intimate with, who doesn't mind you putting your head under them in any other situation, it may be that they don't mind you putting your head under them when they take a leak. A less intense entry point may be picking up the yellow snow made by dogs and having a smell and a taste, or putting a hand under the path of the dog's stream and tasting one's own fingers afterwards. But experiencing the stream directly at one's own face, into one's own mouth, is a very intimate thing.

Chastity

It's easy to talk about getting pleasure out of cumming, but some humans have discovered that they can get pleasure out of not cumming as well. The idea is that when having sex, or when masturbating, the sex or masturbation is very fun, and the orgasm is also very fun, but the orgasm cannot be prolonged to minutes or hours, while the sex or masturbation can be. Chastity play, in extension, is an act of prolonging the excitement of

wanting to have sexual relief, reveling in the writhing neediness of wanting to get off. With a partner involved, one may engage in chastity play by not allowing their own genitals to be excited, but by using their hands, mouth, and or colon for the sexual excitement of others, stimulating sexual thoughts and feelings in their own mind while not giving themselves their own sexual relief, prolonging the intense feeling of want. A dog, while perhaps at times wanting access to a human's genital organs or expulsions, is not owed them, and will likely take pleasure enough if offered alternatives, licking a human's anus rather than their genitals, having their own genitals licked and handled rather than having their genitals contacted by the human's genital organs.

Costumes

Oh what fun to be a kitty cat in season with our ears and tails and a slinking sway in our steps, on the lookout for dogs who can scratch our itches. Oh what fun to wear a beautiful dress or a dashing suit, and feel highly attractive as we get down with a slobbery animal. Costumes can enhance our feelings of playfulness, heighten our feelings of having charisma to throw around, put us in the mind of our most sexy selves. Getting to share in those feelings with a dog is no cause for distress to the dog, so long as they can find the way into those garments. Dogs make for wonderful playmates, even if they may not fully realize that sexy kitten or formal-wear elite are exactly what we were going for.

There are many kinks that do not pair well with animals, ethically, usually ones that involve violence whether real or simulated. There are many kinks that are in a grey area: food play may be inappropriately coercive if it causes a sexual act which the animal would not have otherwise consented to, but fine if done as good fun to spice things up between an interspecies couple who have already established an ongoing playful sexual interest in one another and cues for enjoyment or disinterest; substance use by the human may damage the human, but not be of any poor consequence to the dog so long as the human has not lost touch with reality or with their morals.

And there are many kinks which a human can easily share in with a dog and cause no harm at all, and through them elicit new feelings of fun for the interspecies playmates, such as the human dressing themselves up. Navigate these things with reasonable prediction, and with deference towards the dog's safety and comfort.

Make those tails wag.

Or, more tactfully put,

Look ye upon a wagging tail and be merry.

POEMS

ghostly, i

I don't write poetry as much these days,
but here we are again.
I'm having a good night.
I was playing around in my butt,
not way in there,
not lubed and going for depth,
just having fun feeling around the outside,
legs apart,
touching around in between the cheeks.
Saliva for lube.
Pressing fingertips against the flesh.
No intention to even get a knuckle in.
Reslicking my fingers now and then
with my tongue
and going back at it
and going back and forth between the two,
groping my own butt
and sucking the fingers that
have been doing that.
I rubbed one out,
the same hand touching my dick
and my ass
and my mouth, any and all
directions of travel.

After I had finished,
shot jizz on myself,
I wiped up some with
the hand and ate it,
just what I do,
and then I took a shower.
A couple of weeks ago I shaved
my arms and my legs.
They're kind of stubbly now
but I still feel nice
not having
thick hair on my calves
you could comb through.
The shower,
putting a soapy cloth
over my kind-of recently shaved
body was a joy.
Afterwards
I put back on the same
shirt I had been
wearing. It still smelled fine,
and I like getting back into
clothes that have been
a little lived in.
I like this shirt too.
It has lots of holes in it,
long sleeves,
it used to be too tight on me
but I've shrunk
and it's loose on me again.
I sit now on my bed
back against some
pillows stacked against the headboard,
knees resting wide apart,
soles of my feet pressed together warmly,
top warm in my cozy shirt,
balls out in the cool air.
I sat down with my tape player
and big headphones,

and started playing a kind of trippy tape.
The light is dim,
moonlight through closed blinds.
It happened that the way I sat down,
once I was all comfy,
the shirt covered my package.
I don't mind having what I do,
but I imagined I had a vagina instead,
and kind of vaguely looked
down at my legs
as I listened to the tape,
and ran my hands
over my inner thighs,
stroking the skin
one way and then the other,
caressing myself,
feeling myself up.
I am without the two things
that were the bases of every
day last year.
My husband
and hard liquor.
I am utterly alone and sober.
My life, these days, is grounded pleasures.
Comedown.
Minding my diet
and making sure I still get out on walks.
I'm having a good night.
My left hand smells like ink
from holding this notebook
and writing on both sides of the
pages.
My right hand, well,
you can guess.
I am alone
but I do like myself.
I'm figuring it all out again.

ghostly, ii

I see ghost
images of us
when I'm out
walking. Across
the street,
coming the other
way, a slouched
over scraggly man
walking quickly
to keep up with
a tall dog whose
nose is driving
him forward
on a mission.
Coming down
towards me from up
the hill, someone
in a skirt that
is completely
inappropriate for
the winter
night's cold,
and her dog
going back
and forth
against
the blacktop path,
sniffing the
small plants
on one side
of the path
and then the other,
checking in
with what critters
have run over this
space, and finding

a good place to
poop on the
crisp grass
between the path
and the trees.
I see us when I am lying
in bed with my eyes
closed, and remembering
the different ways
we used to cuddle:
spooning; side
by side; tucked
into one or
the other's
belly; one
night we slept
under the stars while we
were camping and it
was cold
and the blanket we shared
helped just enough
to where it was still
a little uncomfortable,
but how close
we were together
that night, I hope that
I never forget it.
Sometimes I see the things
that it was easy to take for normal
when I was living it,
but now they seem
like something from an inaccessible other world,
how often I made out with a dog's butt
and he was glad for me to,
how long of walks you were happy to go on.
It is Veterans Day today.
That wouldn't mean anything to you.
It doesn't mean much to me either,
but it's something that crossed my mind

as I was approaching the part of a trail
where you had sex for the last time.
Earlier on that walk,
we had tried at another spot,
where I still see the both of us often,
a human looking around
while crouched low to the ground
as she encourages a dog to have some fun here mounting her,
but on that day,
at that spot,
you hadn't quite been able to get hard enough,
and of course I didn't want to pressure you,
even as I knew
that was probably the last note for that, for you.
Then, as we continued along
and we got to one more of our usual regular spots,
we passed by it at first,
as I worried others might be out
and I wanted to check ahead.
But when I saw we were alone,
I asked if you wanted to double back
to that second spot,
and you did,
and that time it worked,
you mounted me,
you did your thing.
I'm glad that you got that.
That your last time
got to be one that you seemed to enjoy.

ghostly, iii

There are many moments for which it can be said that
I, now,
am the last one to remember them.
There will come a day
when no one does
and they will be gone.

Awroodrongk

Awooo!
drunk drunk drunk
Awoo Awoo Awoo!!!
drunk drunk drunk
drunk drunk
Awoooooooooooo!!!!!!
drunk drunk drunk
drunk drunk

Forward, Forward, Forward

I made a rum and sprite
and it reminded me of our lifetime here
this last era of your life.
I had made mixed drinks since
but this one brought me back so specifically
feeling like I was there again
strong drink in my throat at all hours
and you.
It did not bring you back to life.
I didn't think it was going to.
I had no designs about that.
I didn't know it was going to remind me of you
to begin with.
I miss you.
I think of you so often.
When my first soulmate died
I was younger
more bent to extremes
and I felt immense guilt for remembering
any sexual moments he and I had shared,
guilt for continuing to think of them.
Grave robbing. Desecration.
With you, you were such a pal,
we were so happy to flatter each other sexually,

I still continue to think of our sexual moments
and feel no shame over thinking of them fondly.
All of it is still so on the table to me.
It was the nature of what we were
to be happy to get each other off.
I think sometimes of how you are not in this bed
to cuddle and fall asleep with.
I think very often of how you are not here to walk with me.
I think of your penis sliding through my hand
and tasting it in my mouth
and I think of the smell of your belly,
the solid feeling of patting your side as we were walking,
the taste of your paws,
and so much more,
so much more.
Your time to go came,
there was no way around it.
You are still so much a part of me.
I have learned and improved, grown,
around your knowledge and perspective,
and now I stand alone
but shaped by you evermore.
There is a negative space inside of me shaped like a dog
and the dog is very beautiful.

VOLUME 2, ISSUE β;

MAY 8TH 2024.

In this issue,
two friends pretend to be zoophiles,
and the alphabet is recited in zooish words.

*Featuring the items: False Flag For Funsies, If I Weren't
A Zoophile Skit, and Zoo Phonetic Alphabet, as well as a
few poems.*

FALSE FLAG FOR FUNSIES

May 8th, 2004

Clyde Takahashi is 23

Melvin Jackson is 19

“What if we did a reality show where we pretended to be zoophiles?” Clyde pitched.

Melvin threw all of the different colored markers in his hand across the room and stood up. The different colors were for different levels of how good or bad an idea was. Melvin walked directly to the box on the wall labeled “BREAK GLASS IN CASE OF PERFECT IDEA” with a red marker inside, behind a pane of glass, and with a little hammer dangling from the box by a chain. Melvin picked up the little hammer, smashed the glass, grabbed the marker, marched back across the room to the whiteboard, used his hand to erase a big section of the ideas written in the middle, and in huge letters he wrote with the red marker, “PRETEND TO BE ZOOPHILES SHOW.”

Clyde did a little dance to himself as Melvin was writing the idea in red.

The two of them stood in their production room—a room of their rented house that had once been a dining room off in the corner, but the two of them always just ate on the couch in the living room, so they had carried out the table and instead set up a few desks, and shelving to house their film equipment. All over the walls were different movie posters, that Clyde had gotten from his friend who worked at the local movie theater.

Done writing, Melvin threw the red marker across the room back in the direction of the wall-mounted box and the broken glass on the floor. He then turned to Clyde, and asked, "How far are you willing to go with pretending?"

Thinking aloud, Clyde said, "I woouuuuld have actual my-erect-boner-inside-of-their-coochie sex with animals on film. And cum inside."

"Duuuude. We are so doing this."

Clyde asked, "Are we a gay couple for this or just friends?"

Thinking aloud, Melvin said, "Mmmmm ggggggay couple. Obviously an open relationship, to involve animals too. I think youuuu have a dogggg wwwife, and I'm not into dogs that much, but we're both into horses and cows and barn animals."

Clyde did a clap, and said, "Fuck. Yes. Perfect. Oh my god let's get Jenna!"

"Oh my fucking god."

Clyde and Melvin both went to the desk that had the phone on it, and leaned over it as Clyde found Chet's number in their address book—under "T" for "That dog breeder guy"—and then punched in the number, and put it on speaker.

It rang a couple of times.

Then on the other end of the line came a gruff voice, "You've got Chester."

Clyde began, "Hey Chet, this is Clyde."

The tone became markedly more friendly as Chet went on, "Oh, hello! Is there something I can help you with?"

"Do you still have Jenna, the Great Dane with the tan coat?"

"Yes."

"I will give you two hundred bucks for her."

After those words from Clyde, the line went quiet.

Clyde held up a hand to Melvin as though to say, "Let it hang."

Chet eventually responded, "I could get more than that for her."

Melvin jumped in, saying, "Hey, Chet, this is Melvin, you're on speaker."

"Oh, hello."

Melvin went on, "You've had her have puppies a few times before, right? She's used to having people touching her cooch?"

Trepidation: “Yyyyyessss.”

Melvin went on, “We’re not actually zoophiles, but we’re making a pilot for a reality show where we’re going to pretend that we’re zoophiles.”

Chet took in a long inhale, and then sighed, and said, “Ohhhhhhhhhh, Christ. That’s actually a really good one.”

With a grin, Clyde said, “Isn’t it?”

Chet went on, “I think you’ll actually get picked up with that one.”

Clyde went on, “We wanted to have Jenna be my dog wife. One fifty for her now, and if we get picked up an extra five hundred for every season that airs that has her in it.”

“You’ve got a deal.”

“We’ll be right over,” Clyde said, and hung up.

Clyde and Melvin both jumped in place facing each other, swatting at one another and saying “dude dude dude!” and “holy shit oh my god oh fuck!” and “this is it! this is the one!”

The two of them ran out of the production room and into the living room, sat down on the floor together and each tied the other’s shoes, ran outside and down the street to Chet, got Jenna who wagged to see them, and then Clyde and Melvin and Jenna all skipped and ran back home.

Inside, Clyde and Melvin unclipped Jenna’s leash, and allowed the huge Great Dane to sniff all around the house, inspecting things and wagging.

Melvin said, “Okay, episode outline. We introduce ourselves. Do some VO about what being a zoophile means to each of us, while B-roll plays of us walking Jenna and of like horses just standing around in a field. You and Jenna are having your Screw Each Other Day and we walk the viewer through how that dynamic works with the three of us, I’m just sitting outside of the room but I am glad to know that you two are having fun—I’ll actually be in there filming but, we stage it like I’m not. After that we go to Justin’s farm and hump one of his big animals—”

“Are you up for sex with animals on film too?”

“Yeah I’m in.”

“Righteous.”

Melvin went on, “And then me and you and Jenna get home and do our cozy evening routine, and then we cllloose on the

next morning, symbolizing that we're still just getting started and have a lot more to do and a lot more to show to the viewer."

Clyde and Melvin shook hands.

Jenna came up and licked Clyde's hand.

Clyde got down on his knees, and pet and praised Jenna while Melvin went to grab a camera and some sound equipment.

As Melvin was coming back, Clyde was already deeply nuzzling Jenna's flank, as Jenna leaned into it and wagged.

Melvin started filming. Clyde stopped nuzzling, and grabbed Jenna's ass from either side, and said to the camera, "This piece of anatomy has many names." He then pointed at the dog's vulva, and held the point there as Melvin zoomed in and could get a good few seconds of that shot. Melvin then zoomed back out, and Clyde said to the camera, "Personally, I call this the best coochie a man could ever get."

Clyde and Melvin went around the house passing the camera back and forth, filming each other saying things like "Today is That Day of the month" and "I'm really excited" and "I'm glad to know that they're having fun right now. Can you hear that? I don't know if the sound can hear that, but they're definitely having a lot of fun in there."

Clyde and Melvin and Jenna, walking towards the master bedroom, all felt their heartbeats racing, mostly Clyde.

Melvin said, "Moment of truth."

Clyde said, "Pshhh, yeah."

Jenna wagged.

Inside the master bedroom, Melvin set up the camera on a tripod, and then Clyde and Jenna did a few takes of climbing up onto the bed together. Clyde and Jenna made out a little, Clyde's clothes still fully on so that they could air it. Melvin set up a few more cameras, to have a variety of shots. Ultimately, Jenna was on her back with Clyde on top. Then, moment of truth, Clyde unzipped his pants, stuck his hard dick through, slicked himself a little by passing make-out saliva from his mouth to his hard-on with his hand, took a little bottle of lube from his back pocket and made sure with his fingers that she was all good and ready on the inside, and then he pushed his cock into a Great Dane's dog pussy.

With a shudder, he said, "Ohhhh, I love you Jenna."

Clyde made sex faces, and breathed with sex cadences.

Jenna laid there with her dog legs spread, taking Clyde's shaft, occasionally wagging and licking his face.

Melvin minded the sound equipment.

Melvin eventually said, "Give me some lines. We're going to have to blur like the entire screen, so, we need audio here."

Clyde moaned, "Ohhhh Jenna, you feel so good. It feels so good to be inside of a dog. I love making love to a Great Dane. Ohhh good girl, I'm so close good girl."

Jenna wagged a lot at that last line.

Melvin asked, "Out of character, how do you really feel?"

"She is *really* good."

"Daaaaaaaamn. You're not actually getting an animal fetish from doing this are you?"

Clyde, still thrusting, said, "I'm not saying I'm not, I'm not saying I am."

"Sounds like you are."

"I'm just saying that if it's between my hand or this dog, I know for sure I'm not always choosing my hand anymore."

"Oh shit. How about my ass or her?"

"Nnnnot sure. You most of the time. But right now I wouldn't swap."

"Oh shiiiiit."

The three of them continued to work on the scene, until with a lot of "ah ah ah" and "AHHHH"-s, Clyde finished inside of Jenna.

Clyde sat at the foot of the bed in the afterglow, as Jenna laid on the bed licking herself off.

Clyde and Jenna kissed a little more just to check in with one another as Melvin collected up the equipment, and then Clyde changed clothes to a wedding dress and Melvin tied a tie on Jenna, and they got some wedding pictures in the back yard to use when talking about Jenna being Clyde's dog wife.

Clyde and Melvin left Jenna at home with the AC on and like all of the deli meat from the fridge sitting in a bowl on the floor for her since they didn't have dog food yet, and drove towards Justin's farm to get the barn animals bestiality parts.

Clyde mentioned, "Oh shit, on the way let's go through downtown and shoot the intros."

“Oh, yeah.”

Clyde pressed hard on the brakes, and made a turn to go towards downtown.

Melvin mentioned, “I wanna do the spinny shot.”

Clyde agreed, “Oh yeah for sure.”

At a plaza downtown, Clyde and Melvin got out of the car.

Clyde, wearing a lapel mic, faced Melvin, who filmed from a little distance away.

Clyde said in a voice-over-y voice, “My name is Clyde Takahashi—nope, let me retake that, I don’t wanna use my name-name for this.” He took a breath, recentered. Mischievous smile. Calm. Confident. “My name is C-Slice.”

As Clyde stood there in place, Melvin walked in a circle around Clyde, holding the camera. The plan was that this would be sped up with frames dropped, to make it seem like a sort of stop-motion spin around Clyde.

With the camera back where it had started, a full circle done, Clyde went on, “And I’m a zoophile.”

Melvin gave a thumbs up. Melvin then handed the camera to Clyde, and Melvin stood where Clyde had been standing.

Melvin began, “My name is Mel-Dog—”

“Nope, uh-uh,” Clyde interrupted. “No way your name can have dog in it when we’re going to be doing a show that has so much to do with dogs.”

Melvin began again, “My name is M-Slice—”

“Noooo, we can’t both be Slice.”

“What do *you* want me to do?”

Clyde suggested, “Just say Melvin Jackson. ‘My name is Melvin Jackson.’”

“What, so you get to be C-Slice and I have to use my real name?”

“I think it would make it sound more credible if you did.”

“Fine. My name is Melvin Jackson.”

They did the rest of the shot, and then continued to Justin’s farm.

“Juuuuuustiiiiiiin!” Melvin bellowed towards the house as they got out of the car and started walking towards the house.

Justin came out of the front door, hungover and looking hungover. He asked, “What?”

The three of them met at the edge of the porch, Clyde and Melvin standing on the grass, Justin up on the porch, leaning on the railing.

Melvin explained, "We're doing a pilot where we pretend for the pilot that we're zoophiles."

"Oh, that's actually really good."

"Isn't it?"

"Can we (whistle whistle) your horses on camera?"

Justin sighed, and pinched the bridge of his nose, and said, "Tell you what. You help me muck out the stalls, and if you still want to be inside of the animal that made all of that, mi caballo su caballo."

Clyde and Melvin and Justin shook hands.

The three of them went out to the barn, set up some cameras on tripods, and cleaned all of the horse droppings up, as Melvin now-and-then throughout the process made sure to come over to each of the horses and say hi and meet them.

During a break in the work, Clyde got some interview shots of Justin.

"Say nice things about bestiality."

"Hey, you know, the way I see it, God wouldn't have made men and mares so compatible if he didn't expect a little funny business between the two of them."

"Love it."

"I've never seen anyone take better care of a horse than someone who was hoping for the opportunity to romance them later on in the night."

"Perfect."

As Justin was leaving the barn, Melvin said, "Okay. That pony, Dasher, seems really friendly, and also with her being short, I wouldn't need a step stool or anything, you could do me while I do her."

Clyde and Melvin shook hands, and went and got the shots.

As Clyde and Melvin were leaving the barn, and the pony was following after Melvin trying to get him to stay, Melvin said, "That was *not* bad."

"Right?"

"That was a labia that led into a vagina."

"Animals have coochies!"

“Animals *really* have coochies. We uh. I’m glad we’re doing this show, haha.”

“Yo same,” Clyde said, and then slapped Melvin’s balls through the pants.

The two of them got home to Jenna, who wagged from the couch and got up to come meet them as Clyde was filming.

The three of them hung around making dinner, eating dinner, reading books, chatting, having a cozy evening.

Then, Melvin made himself a bed on the couch, doing a monologue to camera about how on this night of the month, C and Jenna like to have the bed to themselves. Then they got shots of Clyde and Jenna getting into bed, again, and this time just snuggling with one another. They all actually went to sleep together in the master bedroom on the same bed.

In the morning, they got shots of all of them waking up from their respective positions, yawning and standing up.

They got shots of all of them in the back yard, eating fried eggs and hash browns to start their morning.

Before lunch Clyde and Melvin recorded all of the voice over they would need, and by dinnertime, they had the episode put together.

Sitting there on the couch watching it, Clyde and Melvin and Jenna, Clyde and Melvin kissed, and then Clyde and Jenna kissed, and then Melvin and Jenna, out of character, kissed as well.

IF I WEREN'T A ZOOPHILE SKIT

In this skit format, all performers stand side by side facing the audience. Together, all performers sing the following chorus:

Ohhhhhhhh,
If I weren't a Zoophile
There's nothing I'd rather be!
But if I weren't a Zoophile,

Then, the performer furthest to one side will step forward and announce what they would be, and do a little chant about it twice. After this, all performers sing the chorus again. Then, the next person down the line announces what they would be, does a little chant about their role twice, and repeats themselves as the first person does their chant again over the top of them. This repeats, until by the end all performers are shouting their different chants over the top of one another. In the end, the chorus is sung one last time in a modified fashion, where the performers announce in a heartfelt tone, "Why, there's nothing I'd rather be."

Ohhhhhhhh,
If I weren't a Zoophile
Why, there's nothing I'd rather be.

The chants of each performer are generally accompanied by a little pantomime or dance that relates to what they are chanting.

Some performers may have a role where they break from the format in a comedic way, often to do some kind of interaction with the other performers or with the audience.

Depending on the number of performers participating, a variety of roles can be used or discarded. Performers may also come up with their own roles that are not listed here if they'd like to! But these are some ideas for roles that a performer may have.

This is a version of the skit that would have nine roles: A Furry, A Dog Breeder, A Philosopher, A Pirate, A Werewolf, A Tree, A Bear, A Faunophile, and A Loser.

A Furry

The furry does a cute little dance, perhaps swiping with hands that are balled up like paws, and then striking a cheerleading pose.

Why, a furry I would be!

UwU, Maws are hot!
Also I like tails and knots!

A Dog Breeder

The dog breeder does a cheesy seductive dance, rocking left and right as they chant.

Why, a dog breeder I would be!

Take my hand Lucky,
It's time to make a puppy!

A Philosopher

The philosopher stands upright with a grave demeanor, hands clasped behind their back. Perhaps they gesticulate with one hand, or place the hand on their chin in thought. Or, perhaps their hands simply remain clasped behind their back. Rather

than repeating the same line over and over again, the philosopher improvises new variations on their line each time it is said.

Why, a philosopher I would be!

What IS an animal?

Is a human an animal?

Is a dog an animal?

Is a fish an animal?

Is a muskrat an animal?

Is a tree an animal?

Is the planet an animal?

Is the moon an animal?

Is God an animal?

(Turning to an adjacent performer) Are YOU an animal?

A Pirate

The pirate gesticulates with a hand that is balled into a fist but with one curled finger extended, mimicking a hook hand. They close one eye and snarl, mimicking an eyepatch and a gruff demeanor. Doing a pirate voice and projecting at a very loud volume is encouraged.

Why, a pirate I would be!

Mermaid, manatee,

Capture either one for me!

A Werewolf

The werewolf holds all fingers out splayed and curled like claws, crouches, and generally assumes the posture a werewolf might be seen to have. The werewolf breaks from format, merely howling for arbitrary lengths of time as everyone else chants to the same measures they had been doing before. Sometimes the werewolf may turn and howl while facing away from the audience.

Why, a werewolf I would be!

Awoooooooooooooooooooo!

Awoooooooooooooooooooo!

Awooooooo!

Awoooooooooooo!

A Tree

After announcing what they are, the tree throws both arms into the air in a way that mimics tree branches, and remains frozen and silent for the remainder of the sketch.

Why, a tree I would be!

A Bear

Dependant on the “Tree” role being present. Likely, the bear comes just after the tree. Like the tree, the bear does not have any lines after their initial announcement. The bear will begin throwing back against the tree, ostensibly to scratch their back as bears do in the wild, though it certainly appears that the bear is putting on a show. The performers for the tree and the bear should discuss beforehand if they are comfortable doing these roles together, and discuss how much the bear intends to do, for example, adding a moment where the bear turns around and kisses the tree on the lips briefly may be comedic and unexpected, but should certainly not be done if the tree does not want that.

Why, a bear I would be!

A Faunophile

Dependant on the “Bear” and “Tree” roles being present. Likely, the faunophile comes just after the bear. The faunophile breaks from format, and does not do a chant in the same measure as everyone else. Instead, they begin cheering on the bear,

applauding and voicing how hot they think the bear's back-scratching is.

Why, a faunophile I would be!

Awww yeah!

Aw that's what I'm talking about!

Wooo!

Woohoo!

Yeah!

A Loser

Breaking from format, the loser runs around and gesticulates desperately, criticizing the other performers and telling them to stop being what they are. Lines may be improvised or performed as written. Likely, the loser is the last performer in the skit: at some point midway through the loser's performance, the werewolf will stop howling and go to the bear, if both are present, tap the bear on the shoulder, and the two will whisper into one another's ears and nod, and begin walking towards the loser. The faunophile, if present, perhaps wanders away, hands in their pockets, kicking at the ground and moping. Once the loser has criticized everybody, the bear and the werewolf will run forth and carry the loser off stage, the bear and the werewolf each grabbing under one of the loser's arms as the loser tucks in their legs to facilitate the carrying.

Why, a loser I would be!

To the faunophile: "No, you shouldn't find that sexy! Bears aren't doing that for you, oh my god!"

To the bear: "Dial it back, bear! Do you know that you're encouraging people to be zoophiles?"

To the audience: "And why are YOU watching this?"

To the werewolf: "You do NOT have permission to hump a wolf-

wolf, if you were thinking about it! I WILL call the police if I see you at it!”

To the pirate: “PER. VERT. WHYYYY? Why would you want a manatee? Why would you even want a mermaid, the fish half is the bottom! MAYBE if you wanted a blowjob I could approve! And that’s IF I didn’t think you would be thinking about the fish half during, which seems doubtful given the manatee comment!”

To the philosopher: “A man is not an animal! I mean, man IS an animal, but not in THAT way!”

To the dog breeder: “You’re fine.”

To the furry: “Oh my god, SHUT UP about maws and tails and knots!”

General Notes

Be confident and have fun! Project so that all can hear. The point is that things get very chaotic and difficult to understand as the skit goes on, so it is okay to be shouting over somebody else.

ZOO PHONETIC ALPHABET

Anima
Bucking
Closer (as in, “more close”)

Darling
Elk
Feral

Golden
Harpy
Impala

Jack
Knotswell
Lipstick

Mare
Night-run
Oh-so (as in, “oh so cute”)

Paw-play
Quiver
Racc-snack
Smelly

Tail-tip
Undercoat
Verdant

Whisker
Xeno
Yellow
Zeta-ly

Zip
One
Two
Three
Four
Five
Six
Seven
Eight
Niner
Ten

POEMS

Put To Good Use

It is a very nice memory
The feeling of someone
A dog in my case
Having sex with your body.
I would be grabbed by him
And he would slide his penis
Through my hand
Knotting with my human digits.
Getting held and pounded.
Warmth and a lot of nice hair.
Good times.

Cool Dream To Have

I just had a sex dream about a deer

So that was pretty cool.

I have a therian deer friend
she has shared a lot of her spiritual perspectives
and I was about to send her a message like,

“Also I just had a sex dream about a deer
so if that was you thanks that was fun.”

I think I’ll just send her this,
this account of it.

And if she decides it’s her, thanks.

And if she decides it’s not,
(it’s probably not,)
sorry for sleep deer friend cheating on you
or something.

I was walking towards the liquor store
just coming down the hill
almost there
(there is not a hill there in physical reality
like at all
it’s a McDonald’s parking lot
but anyways)
in the grass across the liquor store’s parking lot
there were two deer lying down.

I paused, glad to be surprised
to see this animal beauty.

One of the deer got up,
charged straight towards me
and head butted me at full speed

and I died.

Or, the scenario started over.

This time I was not surprised to see the deer
and tried to casually go past them
towards the door, no fuss.
This time the deer killed me against the liquor store's wall.

The third time, I fled around the corner:
out of sight,
out of mind,
I hoped.

The deer followed,
galloped
(or whatever deer do)
in an arc overshooting the corner on their way to me
and I planted my face into the top of their head
as they came to me,
nuzzled in the soft and bodily warm space in between their ears.
The deer awkwardly made me go to the ground,
legs all over pushing and nudging
until I was there on the pavement.

In broad daylight
me and this deer made out
in a parking lot behind the liquor store
no one else right-right there
but cars driving by pretty near
and maybe some surprised viewers from behind sun-glared
windows.

I had never made out with an herbivore before.
As we were going at it,
the deer's weight on top of me,
human lips touching big fuzzy deer mouth,
I tried to push kisses in a way
that I would feel the teeth

and be like “neat,
all flat, not pointy.”
I don’t think I really accomplished that,
but anyways I leaned forward
(in a way that doesn’t make sense,
if you think about it I would be going like,
through,
the deer,
to do this)
and I started feeling at the deer’s butt,
hands kinda resting on the flanks
at either side of the hole,
chin planted just shy of the tail.
The deer was warm and into it.
I licked a finger,
not sure if that would be good enough,
and started poking in a little,
first with a finger on the left hand,
then replaced with one on the right.

We were having a great time.
I loved it,
the deer was certainly constantly coming in for more,
doing all the sex and kiss stuff back at me
you know?
Like, there were no words,
but how would someone being made out with by a deer
who just killed them twice
not know the deer was having a great time?

Anyways, the dream ended
in the midst of the finger stuff.

Again, it was fun.
Thanks,
(probably not thanks,)
and/or thanks for listening about it.
And thanks for being someone this would make any sense to.

Repeat

I like the smell of when you get into a hot car.

When I put on a nice white shirt, I imagine what it would look like soaked in blood and being cut off of my wounded body.

I have a great friend who lets me be a defenseless drunk gremlin around him night after night.

Waking up, one way I double check what was a dream is by considering whether the layout of any buildings I was in is wildly different to how it should be in real life.

Sometimes I feel like a giant, like, just that humans are all giants, compared to the pencil on my desk or the blades of grass in people's yards I walk by or a squirrel.

On this day I am in existence.

I love loving animals.

I want to find something reflective to quickly check that my hair isn't messed up.

When I get home, what am I going to work on to put animal love positivity into the world?

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 2;

SUMMER SOLSTICE 2024.

In this issue,
a dog and a human participate in a group date,
and a ceremony is performed at an altar.

*Featuring the stories: C.O.A.S.T., Basement Lounge
Night, Sidra Kaieem, Reception, and Sin Offering, as well
as a few poems.*

C.O.A.S.T.

or; Creatures of a Shared Taste

We woke up from a nap that evening, the kind of nap where you have plummeted into your deepest abandoning of consciousness, not a gallop over to sleeping and back without stopping, but sauntering over and staying, sniffing prolongedly at the clovers of dissociation, the saplings of demented all intense dream, and only pulled out back to the waking world as though we were a heavy tree being dragged by chains. In our case, being pulled back by the ringing of the phone. We woke up from a nap that evening muzzle drooling on bare stomach flesh, arm limply resting around hairy nape and hand resting twitchily on hairy side, pawpads resting against flesh and claws resting against ribs, dog breath and human breath in the air all smelling about the same, as for our lunch before napping, dog food and spaghetti had found its way rather freely into either mouth, and as we were settling in for the nap, the mouths had shared licks more directly, hard specks from the dog food incidentally passed, aftertastes of tomato evened out across each tongue and lip. We woke up from a nap that evening, stretched against one another, came back from the deepest abandoning of consciousness concretely by pressing the warm fronts of our lips together, no puckering and no licking, just pressing warm and wet lip against warm and wet lip for the sake of having them be together, and then an arm reached up and grabbed the phone

off of the cardboard box that stood beside our floor-bound, legless mattress.

Simultaneously, a sluggish word and a piercingly-high yawn greeted the caller.

A call to check in, and make sure plans were still on. Yes, today, we know. We'll get going. Limbs now stretch as the call goes on, slow licks made against salty skin, strokes of the hand deep against coat, getting the good spots, pressing to pet not just the surface of fur, but massaging the coat down and down and down again, making the ribs feel known and cared of.

The phone clunks down on its spot again, and we stand up, and go around, getting ourselves ready. Journeys back and forth through doorways with frames in disrepair over a carpet adorned in sticky wrappers and empty cans, crinkled papers, chewed sticks and crusty bowls. A change to an outfit washed of bodily scents, a gathering of car keys and loose money and little hard biscuits, and then leaving into the air outside florid with trees in bloom and grass lush, heavy air like walking out of the house and directly into a sauna that has no ceiling, only a middlingly blue expanse far away above, and a bright street light across the road that stings our eyes as we walk out. Front door locked behind us as we go forth. Looking up and down the street as we walk to the car in our driveway with the windows all down, and clean inside, we worked on it this morning, all of the clutter moved into the trash bin, surfaces wiped of crud and stick, freshly washed blankets thrown into the back. Up and down the street, some neighbors standing around in their front yards, doing work or just standing. Car doors opened, we lunge into the sweltering car, all windows down the seats are still baked hot from the apparently recently daytime sun.

The engine goes on, and we drive, the wind patting and swiping at our faces, at our hair, and cooling the car off once we've gone just down the street. We make turns and halts and speed-ups, a nose sniffs out of the window, a hand grips on the wheel and makes jerky movements, and an inverse hand rests steadying and calm on scruff, now and then petting a little, now and then when the car has briefly halted and the wind has briefly halted a warm set of words goes across the car, and a tail wags, now and then a muzzle comes back in and turns the other

way and licks at a mouth or an eye or an ear, and then goes and hangs back out of the window again.

The car enters a parking lot and parks. We exit through the same door and cross the parking lot and enter through the same door into a room abuzz with people chatting and shifting around at different tables, and others walking around in between the tables, and the clinking of utensils on plates and the smells of spicy peppers and chicken. At a big booth in the corner someone stands up and waves to us and shouts for us, and we cross the room, and people scooch over until we have enough room to sit at one end of this corner booth's wrap-around bench. Plates are handed to us and we begin, looking around at the communal bowls of foods at the center and around at the eyes, friendly eyes, of our friends sitting here. A muzzle, the only muzzle at the table, takes up shredded chicken as fast as it is placed before it, a fork now and then goes out to something and takes it into a flat mouth to be polite, though the flat mouth's stomach would rather be left alone at present, already full from earlier, and so the portions are tiny, performative. All the more goes to the muzzle, and the flat mouth is free to speak when the others want it to speak. Eventually, the deliveries of shredded chicken to the muzzle cease. A scruff is pet. The eyes of the muzzle and the eyes of the performative eater meet, and then our tongues lap at lips and teeth, sharing the tastes we've had. Others at the table see it looks fun, and begin following example among their own pairs.

One at the table announces it's time to get going if they don't want to miss it. Person by person we make our exit of the booth, money is left on the table, we all go out of the same door into the night which has cooled a little though is still warm and rich, and four cars depart in a line, and follow one another out of the busy and short roads of town, into the long roads among hills of trees and grasses.

The four cars pull off to a gravel road, our car rumbles as we go over the rocks. One by one we stop at a booth and hand money to someone inside, and then drive into a wide open parking lot, where, looming on one side of it, a screen is showing the projection of a still image, standing by for a film to play. The four cars spread out, finding their solitary spots, keeping

distance from the other cars that are already parked here and there.

When we stop, and our engine is shut off, we get out, and walk back and forth along one edge of the lot, stretching our legs, exploring the space. The noise of crickets fills the air, occasionally accompanied by the wind.

The still image on the big screen goes away, and soon, a motion picture is on display. We get back to the car, and we climb into the clean back seat, with the soft blankets and just enough space for us. We close the door behind us, and begin kissing, tilting our heads to get better access to the tasty depths of the back of a mouth, grabbing and pulling closer with hands and with claws. We see in flashes, as a bright moment in the movie briefly illuminates hair or eyes or a nose. Now and then we pause to nuzzle at one another, or to lick an eye or a forehead. When we are sated, we nestle in with one another, clothed chest breathing while pressed against breathing furred chest, limbs entangled, a hand a pillow for a furry temple that is heavy from utter relaxation, utter abandon of keeping itself up, utter non-objection to resting furry head in hand of flesh.

When the movie ends, many drive off. We who came from the booth get out of our cars, all still parked in the lot where the screen is now on standby again, and we all find a spot together in the center of the lot to stand, and converse with one another again before we leave. We are all breathless, hair all a mess and clothes all fitting oddly on ourselves.

We will do it again.

We get into our cars, and depart again for now.

BASEMENT LOUNGE NIGHT

“She has no idea what she’s doing right now.”

“Literally completely out of it.”

Jeff sat with her back against the corner of the basement lounge, grabbing with alternating hands at invisible points in the air. Earlier in the night she had been wearing underwear, but as she sat presently, Corbin, Vernon, and Mitchel could all see her balls and cock within her skirt.

Corbin began, “I am... well actually I am the most drunk, but I also have the highest tolerance. Am I babysitter?”

Vernon, Corbin’s younger brother, said, “Oh my god I had two hard apple ciders, I am literally still sober I can be her babysitter.”

Jeff let out a bark. Kind of a high-pitched, “Rrrarf!”

The basement lounge had a green carpet, wood paneled walls, and some display shelves and cases with mostly gaming memorabilia, little character figurines or framed medallions or collector’s edition contents. The space smelled a little bit like tobacco and mostly like hard cider breath and whiskey breath. Of course, a big TV on one wall, and a couch facing it, although Jeff was sat in a corner far away from the TV, far away from the couch, kind of just in a nothing corner that happened to not even have any clutter in it at the moment.

At the call of her bark, a jingling collar and a clatter of pawsteps came down the stairs.

Austin, a mix of Pit Bull, Lab, and who knew what else, went right to Jeff and pressed the side of himself against her to be

pet. Jeff did pet him, rubbing back and forth on the dog's shoulders and sides, and cooing deep dog noises, "arrrooo" and "agghh." Soon after Austin's arrival, Jeff was toppled onto the floor fully, laying on her side there in the corner.

Austin, the Pit Bull / Lab / etc mix, stuck his nose into Jeff's skirt and started licking.

Vernon, Corbin's younger brother, began, "Woah um—Austin hey!"

The dog kept licking, only wagging at his name being called.

Corbin gave a shrill whistle.

Austin stopped licking inside of Jeff's skirt, and moved up to licking Jeff's face, giving thoughtful licks to her lips and eyes; her face faded back and forth between reciprocating interest and delirious unrelated doings. Jeff did, some of the time, kiss Austin back.

Corbin suggested, "Mission accomplished?"

Vernon countered, "Well..."

Mitchel chimed in, "This is uh... within her interests."

Corbin asked, "Oh?"

Mitchel went on, "We were talking about furry stuff, and this is like. She's okay with this, I'm like, ninety percent sure."

Jeff deftly disrobed of her remaining clothes and threw the top and skirt away from herself. She and Austin made out on the green carpet on their sides, Austin pulling at her with his forepaws and Jeff grinding her now-hard dick against the dog's sheath.

"She is literally gone-gone."

"This... wow."

Mitchel mentioned, "They've... done this before, I think."

"Seems like it."

Jeff stopped making out, nuzzled her face under Austin's chin into his neck, and apparently fell asleep.

Austin licked her shoulder blades a little bit longer, and then rolled over and burrowed his back into her to little spoon.

Jeff was soon snoring and Austin appearing fast asleep with her.

"I really don't care about what we just saw."

"Yeah they seem good."

"Yeah."

“Let’s... agree to be really really nice about this?”

“Yes.”

“On board.”

“No jokes.”

“right.”

“Right, solemn.”

“Like, when she comes-to from obviously being black out right now, let’s make it obvious we know and that’s fine, she can be like this.”

SIDRA KAIEEM

Its eyes moved again and again between the windshield (which ostensibly showed the empty void of nearby space and the tapestry of stellar bodies far away) and the readouts on its console (which, so far, read that the nearby space being mostly empty was correct: the only nearby body was the scout ship with no power running and no living lifeforms aboard.) The scouting ship was not especially visible to the naked eye, and, so far, the console did not read anything too noteworthy into its being there.

It licked its lips in anticipation.

Scavenger. Parasite. Demon.

The last readout came to the console: absolutely no signs of life detected, besides, of course, itself, who sat reading the console.

Sidra placed its hands into the control field, and began making the hand signs and minute movements to bring its ship on an intercept vector with the scout ship.

It had skin as black as the void outside, two horns that came to deep red points, a 12 inch cock, DD breasts, a mouthful of pointed teeth, a black serpentine tongue. It had been born human. In terms of rights it still could be called a human, although so far out past any significant colony, the matter of rights was a rather academic hypothetical, a kind of trivia that was more likely to be assessed post mortem rather than allow it any real benefit. It had appeared normal in its youth (blonde, monogendered, omnivorous chompers) but it had visited a

moon that specialized in augmentations, and had gotten a lot done over the course of a couple of years. Then, summarily, it left behind interactions with the living, off into the distant frontiers. It had had a given name before it had called itself Sidra Kaieem. It barely remembered what that name had been.

Among its augmentations, besides the aesthetic ones, was an implant into the skull to induce sleepdeath: the death, end, cessation, of the need to sleep. Chemicals were synthesized in it to give the brain the constant benefits of having slept, without the need to actually do it. It had been awake more than half of its life now. It rarely blinked.

Its ship intercepted with the scouting ship. Its ship's black tentacles began reaching over the scouting ship, jumpstarting the scouting ship's power, finding viable entrances, patting it down (feeling it up) for anything the remote scanners had failed to highlight.

A few minutes passed before a scathing hiss from the dashboard indicated that the tentacles had successfully coupled the ships: Sidra would be able to exit its port and enter the port of the small scouting ship. No EVA suit needed. It could go in its comfy black rags.

The scouting ship was more or less a cockpit that was adjoined by a few closets for different utilities, and one beast of an engine that comprised the back 9/10ths of the vehicle, hardly hominid-enterable aside from some maintenance crawlspaces.

It went straight to the pilot's seat, and viewed the insignia on the corpse that sat there.

It whistled to itself.

"Brigadier general. Good eats."

With the scouting ship's console back online, revived off of the jumpstart from Sidra's ship, the cause of death was revealed in the series of warnings in the log history. Glitch in the life support. Huge fluctuation in temperature, dropping to -200 Celsius in a second or less, and remaining there for seven hours. Sidra had seen it before. Some common-ish model of life support technology had the same defect. Inconvenient for those who were expecting the arrival of the person the defect killed. Convenient for scavengers. Parasites. Demons.

Sidra took the knife off of the brigadier general's belt and began cutting the clothes off of the corpse, then began at cutting the corpse into its constituent meat, indulging on a few raw bites to chew on during the process. In about half an hour, a skeleton and the associated inedible flesh remained in the pilot's seat, and mounds of meat stood around the cockpit floor like buildings in a surrealist miniature city. Sidra went back into its own ship, brought a jar back into the scouting ship's cockpit, and began sprinkling over the cuts a type of bio-hostile salt that cooked, dried, and preserved within an hour's time.

As the brigadier general was cooking, Sidra went into the maintenance crawlspaces of the engine, and took out the bits that were worth having. In its own cockpit, it commanded its ship's tentacles to begin taking the power supply from the scouting ship.

It crouched beside the skeleton, facing out of the scouting ship's cockpit. For lightyears and lightyears in any direction, there was no life except for it and its own microbiome, and there was not even any former life except for that of the one beside it, now being transferred into its own life. The idea of a planet filled shoulder-to-shoulder with such interactions... It astonished it that it had ever been able to be a part of something so busy and dense.

With the scouting ship jumpstarted again, there was no doubt it had sent out a broadcast signal to inform some allies of its location, and the fact that its pilot had become deceased. Another scout would come to assess and collect.

From its own ship, Sidra obtained a brush and paints, and got to work on the scouting ship's windshield. There were classic slogans, that it had used before: a favorite was, "Fuck you, I got mine." These days it liked to do things more memorable. On the windshield, it took its time painting a dog's ass with its tail raised, and a black hand reaching to it, and sticking a finger into the dog's anus.

Some scout would have something new to write on a report.

Sidra collected up the meat, brought it back into its own ship, and decoupled, and fled away into the vast frontier.

RECEPTION

It was a muggy day outside, causing one to sweat within seconds after they had stepped out into the world. The air wavered as though the whole city were possessed by a funhouse mirror's lively spirit, and the high noon sun glared off of every surface. Through this summer day, one hundred and three residents of the city had walked, biked, or driven, to arrive at the same hospital waiting room, and fill it three beyond capacity. The air conditioning was a pleasantness to all who entered the hospital's sliding doors. In the waiting room, mumbled conversations could be heard here and there in different languages, as the receptionist steadily, if not incredibly quickly, allowed patient by patient to be summoned to the desk and then pass inside to the hospital proper.

The receptionist called out to the filled up waiting room, "John Andrews."

Two John Andrewses rose up from their chairs at the same time, made eye contact, and then awkwardly both sat back down increment by increment.

"Looking for Andrews, John."

The two Johns, glancing at one another while avoiding eye contact, both raised a hand for the receptionist's attention from their respective seats.

The receptionist, seeing this and their little glances to each other, remarked, "Oh, ummmmm let me see." She clicked her computer mouse, looked at the monitor, and then called out, "John Percy Andrews?"

Both began to stand again, and then, seeing the other, sat back down again.

“Hm! Date of birth is February 1st, 1989.”

No dice.

A few in the waiting room who had had nothing better to do during their entire wait were turning to see the hubbub head on.

“Wellll, something in the medical record will have to do... Blood type A positive?”

The two Johns looked to each other, gave exaggerated faces that conveyed “no idea,” and they each shrugged a little.

The receptionist gave an annoyed scoff, and then tried, “Currently seeing a therapist for diagnosed zoophilia?”

A few of the conversations halted, as more ears were suddenly pulled in by that exciting word. The halt in conversation cascaded through the room as others realized that something might be going on, and in very short order, the room was completely silent except for the receptionist impatiently ticking her nails on the counter. Many more eyes had turned to face the receptionist, so that they could be aware of if something was causing delays.

Both Johns’ cheeks began to burn, and they got up with half a mind to cover their face as they walked up to the front, and then, each making one farewell glance to the other, they saw that once again they had not been told apart, and in dread they sat back down among the other waiting patients once again.

The receptionist sighed, and said, “Last four social security digits are 4321?”

One John Andrews pointed to himself and mouthed “Me!” to the other John. The other John Andrews pointed to himself and mouthed “ME!”

The receptionist clicked her mouse like it was a voodoo doll made against either of the Johns in her waiting room. She then began reading aloud from her monitor: “The basis for this diagnosis of zoophilia, even as our understandings of sexuality evolve and become more permissive, is, indeed, not Mr Andrews’s attraction to his male Golden Retriever alone. It is more for the social distresses it has caused for the fact his apartment neighbors can hear him masturbating the dog and his inability to cease the activity or embrace some more private

venue; it is nearly as much a diagnosis of voyeurism, though is specific to the dog. It has caused him to lightly intersect with the criminal justice system. By his own admission this attraction interferes with his life, and by his own request he wishes that something here be cured.”

One of the Johns (both of them still possibly being up next to the desk) said to the other John, in the otherwise silent and rapt waiting room, “Would you be interested in skipping your appointment and going to get lunch together?”

“Yes.”

The two Johns both finally actually got up for realsies and walked very quickly out of the waiting room.

SIN OFFERING

It was a cool Fall morning: I felt it immediately upon waking up, the way that, coming in through the open window, the lingering chill of the night made the room idyllic for one snugly wrapped in a blanket, such as I was. I dwelled in bed a little while longer, eyes open and staring idly up at the wooden beams of the ceiling over me, appreciating the comfort, like sitting down to a campfire in the Winter, or like handling ice for quite some time and then folding your hands into your armpits. Coldness: relief. Here I had threaded into relief without having had to touch coldness at all.

The air smelled in part like dead leaves. Wet sheets of them were molded over the hills outside, deep oranges and browns, while their sugar maples stood over them naked and unburdened. The air also smelled in part like heated apple cider. My wife, Madeleine, had long been an earlier riser than I.

I lifted the blanket from myself, stretched, and in my pajamas made my way out of our bedroom, down the hall, and into the dining room. It is a lovely room with many drawers. My brother in law, being a carpenter, often surprises us with gifts of practical items of furniture: a wide and shallow chest with a cushion on top fit for sitting on and changing shoes, a hat rack with a hidden drawer in the pole, a squat chest of drawers which Madeleine keeps flower vases on top of, and many more and many more, and much of his gifted furniture has ended up here in the dining room, if we've nowhere else for it. At the table, in this room of drawers, Madeleine sat in a blue dress with a

steaming mug of apple cider in her hands, smiling at me. Across the table from her was another steaming apple cider mug.

I gave her the hand sign for *thank you*, drawing it out, really telling her, *thank you and I love you*.

Continuing to smile, she closed her eyes and rocked slightly in her chair.

I sat down on my side of the table, rumbling my chair across the floorboards as I pulled it out.

Madeleine opened her eyes, set down her mug, and asked, *How did you sleep?*

I told her all about the wonderful morning.

When it was about time for me to be going for the day, I returned to our bedroom, and changed from my pajamas to my suit. Black jacket, black waist coat, blood-red undershirt, black tie. A golden chain hanging in a U from the breast pocket, and another golden chain of the same length hanging higher up in an askew U off of the right lapel. On the right sleeve, embroidered in black onto the equally black fabric, two words, each word on its own line: *Mors Immatura*.

In the mirror on Madeleine's vanity, I groomed and oiled my beard of grey and brown. The hair atop my head, short as it was, needed attention hardly ever, and all the less the more that it receded.

As I passed into the living room on my way out for the day, Madeleine stood beside the table, holding a plucked dandelion. She held it up in front of me. I bowed down, sniffed the sour thing, gave the sun-like yellow flower a kiss, and then stepped in and shared a kiss with Madeleine as well.

We went to the front porch. As Madeleine inspected my dress for any errors, it occurred to me to ask her, *Did we receive any telephone calls this morning, before I was awake?*

She answered, *None that I saw*.

Jason, my brother, an electrician, had wired our telephone so that rather than ringing a bell to alert someone about a call, it would instead illuminate the several red lights that he had placed into all of our different rooms for this purpose.

Thank you, I signed, really signing, *Thank you and I love you*.

I love you, she signed.

I love you, I mirrored to her.

She took my hands, held them for a moment, and then let them go and turned and began inside. I turned as well, and began on my walk into town.

Many days, particularly in the Summer and the Winter, I would be inclined to drive our automobile into town—though the way by road is longer than the way by trail, being able to drive it means that I will not be sweating from the very start of the day. On many lucky days though, especially in Falls like these and in the earlier days of Spring, the weather is ideal for taking the path that winds through the woods, channeling many of the remote hillscape houses into our town.

I was quite alone on my walk this day, aside from the birds and the squirrels.

Coming out to a minor clearing, I saw that something had been constructed here, in the time since my last walk through these woods, which had been three days ago or so.

It was at the center of the clearing, and it was like this. In a circle I estimate to have been fifty feet in diameter, there was a ring of sticks that had been driven into the ground, creating a sort of fence around the rest of the construct. The sticks varied in height, some regions having sticks that rose out of the ground only a foot, such that they could be easily walked over, and other regions more varied, having sticks that rose anywhere between one foot and up to four. Within this fence, at the center, was something that I first thought to be an anvil, and then, as I was coming closer to the construction, I saw that it was similar in shape to an anvil, but in fact a fully symmetrical piece of iron, with a flat top, and broad hooks or horns coming out of the left and right. The area within the fence had a floor fully of sand, distinct from the floor of wet leaves that the rest of the woods had in this season. Besides the iron piece, the only other item within this fence was a slab of grey stone, which I estimate to have been two feet in height, three feet in depth, and five feet in width. Atop the slab of stone was wax residue, distinctly in the shape of there having been candles burning there that have been plucked off. In some places the wax ran in lines down from the slab, towards the sand.

All of this I observed as I passed by, taking the time to tread very slowly and search for any further details. The fence of sticks, the iron piece, the slab of grey stone, and the candle wax upon the stone, are what I recall from that time of seeing it. I continued on into town.

The usual sights and sounds were around in that late morning, mules and horses pulling carts along the streets, distant conversations between men who talked loudly, here and there a barking dog. I purchased a newspaper from a girl on one corner. With this paper in hand, I continued on to my own office, a building which stood alone with a wider gap between it and either of the others up and down the street, with a neatly-kept lawn of grass in the interstitial spaces. The mower, it appeared, had already come earlier in the morning.

No services were scheduled for that day, at my funeral home. I swept and dusted. I now and then spritzed perfume throughout the rooms, in the entrance and in the chief service room. I read the day's paper. I looked over the appointments and services for the upcoming days, and made telephone calls to check in on wellbeing and inquire whether any other person's plans had changed, and reassure that all would be handled here. Throughout the day, a rather slower day than usual, no one placed a call for my office, and no one entered through my door. I do not hurt for business, generally: mine is a field where I am a desired help in an unavoidable thing.

In the evening I decided that I would return home for the day, and make the walk home while there was still some light.

As I again approached the minor clearing, I could see, in the dimming evening light, that there was a man walking upon the sand within the fence. In the days following, as me and the man became friends, I would learn his name to be Fox Question, though I did not know what to call him that evening. That evening, to me, he was only an unknown man.

I paused at the side of the clearing, subconsciously unsure of whether it would be disrespectful to the man to pass by his altar as he was at his ceremony. On the slab of grey stone were seven lit candles, and on the sand before the slab of grey stone was a work of straw and flowers, a miniature statue of a goat.

The man said to me, in a German accent, “You may watch, stranger, if you want to watch.”

I approached. I lowered myself onto my knees outside of the fence of sticks driven into the ground.

The man explained to me his religion.

“My thinking on things is like this. There are Jews, Muslims, Catholics, Protestants. There are the legends of the Sumerians and there are the legends of the Greek. There are Hindus and there are Pagans. Who is to say who is right? I say, I do not know this. But I do notice that many of these gods, they are very interested in what we say for ourselves, what explanation we give to things. And so, I explain. Here, I have broken a rule of the Christian god, and put my seed in this goat. Very grave to Him. But, other gods would encourage this, sharing love with all beings. And so, here, I explain to the Christian god. I tell Him that it is done out of love of His creation. In the way He appears fond of, I give him a sin offering—no flesh, for I must be truthful to my ways and what I tell him, but rather, an offering of what she means to me, that I would craft her so carefully in straw.”

The man burned the straw goat upon the altar. As it burned, he spoke of his love towards her.

After the sacrifice was finished, I continued my walk back home. Madeleine was in bed. I changed into my pajamas and joined her. There, under the blanket, she grabbed me and hugged me.

POEMS

Said I

Fool said I you do not know
The miles each night that he and I go
The hours that I am by him led
The recesses hereabouts his paws have tread
The air heavy and humid in late July night
The air screaming and freezing in December's bite
The strange decorations on houses we've passed
The minutes we've taken to smell at the grass

He is my best friend
My north star
And I've fantasized a lot
About how if someone attacked him
While we were out on these walks
I would kill them

Happy Dog

I am in a room. The door is closed. I am in a recliner. In the next room, I can hear dog nails tick-tick around on the hardwood floor, and then arrive at the closed door to this room. Under the door, I hear the dog sniffing. Snnnnniff. Snnnnnnnnnnniff. The dog bashes at the door, standing on her hind legs to come down and hit it with her forepaws. I leap up and open the door. She runs around me three times as her tail wags, and then runs out of the room to the back door of this house. I jog after her. She is waiting at the door, poised to run as fast as she can the second the door is opened for her. I open the door. She runs left and right across the yard, again and again. I call her back in, and then have her wait outside at the back door as I go in and grab something to wipe her muddy legs with. I come back out, we wash the dog, and then we come back inside together.

Figurine Man

Jacob Bride sets his mug of coffee down on the side table, and sits himself down in the rocking chair on his back porch. He looks out at the open desert. Takes a big smell of the fine dirt in the air. From the side table, he picks up his sharpened knife and a block of basswood. He looks down at his hands as he works, though his mind's eye is jumping ahead. He whittles off the corners, molding the basswood block into a shape that is curved, organic, reminiscent of something living.

From out of the wood, Bride uncovers the rough geometry of two backs and eight legs, two tails, and four floppy ears. One figure, large with fluff, stands with all four legs planted on the ground, while the other, lithe with short hair, has only the back legs on the ground, and the forelegs locked onto the fluffy figure's hips. He carves out the undersides of the figures, leaving a sheath and testicles for the one with all four legs on the ground, and a vulva for the figure who is mounting.

With the rough shapes done, Bride retrieves his glasses from the side table. In doing so, he also remembers his coffee, and has a long drink of it now that it has gone from piping hot to warm.

Glasses on, Bride holds the wood closer to his eye level, and leans in and around the work as necessary. The fluffy figure is a tangle of waves from a windswept ocean, billowing and free. The lithe figure flexes her muscles as she humps, and her claws grab into the cloud of a coat below her. She presses her chin down onto him, reveling in his softness and the solidity underneath. He carves her toes curling in pleasure. He carves the male's back legs in a wide stance to support her weight upon him.

Bride sets the figurine on the side table. He stands steady, and she clings to him.

The Doorway

I'm thinking of a conversation I had
on my phone
in the doorway of an Olive Garden
where I told my friend
who I was moving in with
that it really mattered to me after all
that we can find a place that will allow me
to have a 100 pound dog.

Life changingly glad
that we had that talk.

Remain

It's so easy
to stay inside
all day
when no one
is asking you
to leave.

Taking out
the recycling this morning
I saw a sky and felt air
I hadn't in a while.

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In this issue,
a bottle of cold water is poured on an anthro fox,
and a dog is beheld and exalted.

*Featuring the story Incubus & Comrade, as well as a
lyric.*

INCUBUS & COMRADE

Nanny

Nicki didn't know the point of half the shit her brother used. She sat on one end of the couch, as he writhed atop all of the plastic cushions with his head in her lap, digging his balled fists into his stomach, giving deep moans, occasionally kicking the far arm of the couch with the bottom of his foot. Nicki held a plastic bottle of cold water, and poured another line of it over him from his face to as far as she could reach, about past his junk. He didn't stop writhing, even as the line of water hit his balls he didn't flinch or stop moaning or anything. The little table beside her was stocked with two more plastic bottles of cold water, the living room carpet in front of them had eleven empty ones.

The drug that Tamtam was on was called Thistle. It induced a biting, piercing pain at points all over the body. It felt like you were being slowly pierced and unpierced from head to toe, the locations coming on and going away and coming back somewhere else worse. Apparently it also alleviated worry: during, and usually for some time after, you could not be bothered about bills, death, politics, relationships, if someone brought them up you could not be more disinterested in what negative things they had to say. That part, she got. Why he didn't just do it with alcohol was the mystery to her. He could drink a beer, sip wine, she had seen him drunk once in a while. She poured another line of water over him. She didn't get the point.

She even asked him before, one time when he was about to take it, "Are you a masochist?" Not as a criticism, as a question.

He'd shrugged, and said, "Not really. I just like this."

He was beautiful. Everyone was beautiful. He stood six feet even, had a glossy coat of orange fox hair, the ears and muzzle and teeth and all of that to match, hands that ended in black fingernails, plantigrade legs, he usually dressed in ripped jeans and black vests with lots of little chains and patches adorned on them.

There at home on the couch, he was naked, his fur soaked in cold water.

His package was vulpine junk. Erect, he was of average human endowment. At present, while very much not erect, nothing was poking out of the sheath.

Nicki was beautiful. Everyone was beautiful. She and him had coordinated on still looking like twins in some ways, when they had been choosing, all that time ago: She was also an anthro, also stood six feet even, also had plantigrade legs. She had chosen to be a cat with black and grey stripes. Her skin underneath was grey. She had chosen claws, retractable. She had chosen boobs. She had chosen to keep her human cock, although she was presently on day three hundred and sixty one of it being in a chastity cage.

The living room was a mess. Besides the newly discarded plastic water bottles, there were empty take-out boxes stacked under the window like trophies, broken and bent blinds on the window letting in the afternoon sunlight to illuminate the empty cans of beer and diet soda like gemstones, dirty clothes from each of them everywhere, and Nicki and Tamtam's phones both plugged in on the outlet beside the hall that went to their bedrooms, one charger plugged into the top outlet and one charger plugged into the bottom outlet, the wires all tangled up, the phones resting on the ground on the carpet, neither of them cracked.

On the couch, Tamtam shuddered. Facing towards the black screen of the off TV across the room, he asked Nicki, "Hey, do you wanna... like we used to..."

"You don't even like touching yourself when you're like this."

“Yeah but I’d like...” He stopped, groaned, hit his stomach repeatedly, kicked his foot down against the far arm of the couch repeatedly. Then he went on, “I could call you bro again.”

“Ugh, god, please don’t.”

“Or sis, sis was always just as good when that started.”

“Just let it pass, Tamarin.”

Nicki poured another line of cold water down Tamtam.

There was a little left in the bottle.

Nicki poured it on Tamtam’s face.

He was back to writhing and groaning, didn’t seem interested in whether the water on his face was to take extra care of his face, or, like she had meant it, to do something to him for trying to hit on her when she knew that he would never get it up right now, never let her get a fingertip into him without him clambering away, with him dealing with the pain of the drugs and not being able to take more stimulus. Even dry humping, even cuddling, would be too much. He needed a cushioned surface, something to kick, no clothes, and someone to pour cold water on him.

One time he had used Thistle in a snow fort the two of them had made, and she had packed snow onto him to keep him cold. She felt like a cannibal who was trying to keep her kill from going bad. That had been fun, actually.

Right now it was summer.

A water bottle and a half later, the fox came out of it. He stopped writhing. He laid very still, aside from breathing heavily, long breaths in and out.

He sat up.

Nicki offered out the half a cold bottle of water that was left.

He took it into his hands. He drank the water in a spaced out series of small, difficult swallows.

He said, “I’m gonna take a bath.”

“The tub is ready for you, should be hot.”

“Oh,” he said. “That bath was for me?”

“I didn’t get in it.”

It was like they hadn’t done this thirty different times. Like he still noticed for the first time, every time, that she knew what to do to take care of him.

On the couch, she turned, grabbed his cold fox muzzle with both of her hands, turned him towards herself, and gave a kiss to the front of his cold wet lips.

He was completely void of reaction or care. Not turned on, not thankful, not looking like he wanted to throw up.

Still holding his muzzle, she said, "The bath is for you, it's hot."

Then she let go, and pushed him on the back to get him to stand. On his feet, he shuffled dragging footstep after dragging footstep towards the hall.

The bath would not be hot, it would be lukewarm at this point, but it would feel boiling hot to him after all of the cold water that had just been poured on him.

Nicki grabbed towels, and started drying the carpet around the couch. She started a load of laundry, picking up a basket's worth of her and his clothes that would work in a cycle together. She started picking up the plastic water bottles, and threw them in the recycling in the garage.

There in the garage was her distillery. She made booze. Beer, wine, and moonshine, there was a densely packed-in series of drums and pipeworks throughout the space where you would park two cars. And, besides enjoying partaking in the fruits of her own craft, she made good cash off of it too. She had a reputation of making the good shit, and it was accurate. If you saw her at a festival, it was worth buying off of her, even if she was charging more than the already trumped up prices you used to pay for a cup of Modelo or Budweiser.

For the last week, there had been a gay pride thing in the city square and in the area surrounding. She started packing up her cooler to go hit it up again.

Bunny

Laura was having a lot of fun sticking his mousy fingers into the clothes of the driver he was seated passenger from.

So, basically, there was a bar in Bentonville, Arkansas, which was the city Laura had been crashing lately, and there was a guy in the bar who must have been there every night, because, he was there every night Laura showed up. The guy's name was

Damian. Laura, for the last eleven times he had visited the bar over the course of about a month, had flirted with Damian and then been driven home to Damian's apartment and then railed the shit out of Damian, slept in his bed, and been politely gone before Damian had to get to work at his job at the gas station the next day. Like, Laura wasn't trying to seduce his way into Damian's home to steal his shit or anything, he was in it for railing Damian and then crashing and then leaving.

Damian hardly drank. Laura had seen. The guy with the long blue hair that was parted down the middle—Damian—would nurse a beer for three, four hours, pretty much not touching it. He was there hanging with his friends who did drink. If Damian wanted a second drink, he would order a virgin orange soda.

This night, Damian had heard about some girly drink from a viral video earlier in the day, and ordered it virgin, missing the beer entirely.

So, anyways, while Damian drove, Laura was having a lot of fun putting his mousy fingers in Damian's breast pocket of his purple flannel, reaching his mousy fingers into Damian's belt and fluttering the fingers against his hip bones, rubbing his mousy fingers against Damian's skinny bare flesh tummy.

Damian was beautiful. Everyone was beautiful. Damian had an impish, elvish sort of sharpness to his facial features, and tall daggered ears. You could have almost believed he had not transitioned away from human. He had blue hair and purple eyes, pale lips, perfect teeth. No facial hair to speak of. A skinny body, with cute muscles.

Laura was beautiful. Everyone was beautiful. He was an anthro mouse. Five foot eleven. Here to have a good time. Red digital camo cargo shorts. A baggy black sweater that said "URINAL" in white text on the back, and on the front had an image of a giraffe. He had bought it off some guy who had gotten it printed for himself, after a hookup like a year ago. Laura himself could take it or leave it as far as getting pissed on and giraffes, but he really resonated with the energy of the sweatshirt, and it was comfy on him, too big but that was a nice thing about it, in it he felt small and mousy.

Laura took a deep breath, and then slinked an arm around Damian's shoulders, and looked out of the front of the window.

They were getting to parts where no one lived. Like, people did live there, but it was no longer a city.

In the headlights, there came a bunny on the other side of the road.

Damian floored it, steered to hit the bunny, and ran it over.

“What the FUCK,” Laura said.

Damian was all hysterical giggles.

“Let me out,” Laura said.

Through giggles, Damian said, “It was funny.”

Laura said, “Stop the car.”

“What’s your problem?” Damian asked. Pretty quickly, he was no longer giggles, but sounded like he was about to cry.

Laura repeated, “Stop the car.”

There was no one else around on the road. Damian did press on the brake a little, letting them drive slowly, but he didn’t stop. “What’s the problem?”

“That was a person.”

“Hey, woah, there is hardly *any* chance that was a person.”

Laura repeated, “Let me out.”

Damian asked, “What is even around here?”

Laura said it bluntly, in his deepest, most commanding voice, “If you don’t stop the car right now I will stab you to death, I have a knife.”

It wasn’t something that you wanted to hear from someone seated passenger to you in a car.

Damian braked hard enough his tires skidded, it felt like they swerved a little, and then they were parked on a random road.

Laura got out and slammed the door behind himself.

Damian floored it and drove away.

Good riddance.

Laura sighed.

Tonight had seemed like it was in the bag. Easy hookup, easily contented, easily gone in the morning.

Now there was a corpse somewhere behind him and his hookup a distant pair of red lights on the road ahead of him, disappearing and reappearing over the crests of the hills in these grassy fields.

And he did have a knife. Left pocket of his cargo shorts, a deck of cards; Right pocket of his cargo shorts, butterfly knife.

He could do tricks with either. It basically never came up with anyone else, but, it amused himself, that he had these things, that he practiced these things when he needed something to do with his mousy hands.

Headlights appeared in the distance, coming towards him. Laura heard it from afar when, as Damian and the other car were passing one another, one of them honked, really laying on the horn.

Laura stopped kidding himself that it was a mystery: Damian honked, really laying on the horn.

Laura walked to a good spot, where he would be near to the top of the crest of a hill as the other car was approaching.

When the headlights arrived at the bottom of the hill, Laura stood on the shoulder and stuck his mousy thumb out.

The SUV slowly ascended up the black road, and then braked by Laura with the passenger window down. The passenger, some rocker with lots of piercings who still looked human, asked, “Did that jackass leave you here?”

Laura nodded, saying, “Yes, he was scaring the hell out of me, I asked him to let me out.”

The passenger extended their hand out of the window and pointed to the road ahead, and said, “We’re headed into Bentonville for the pride festival downtown. Want a ride?”

“Please.”

The passenger turned to the back seat, and said, “Make room.”

Laura stuck a hand forward, and said, “Laura, he/him, very pansexual.”

The passenger, hand raised and poised to meet Laura’s, said, “Clyde, it/its, demisexual.”

Laura and Clyde slapped their hands together and shook.

The rear passenger door swung open, and Laura climbed inside.

Scent

Nicki couldn’t remember if it was a courthouse or a bank or what, but on one side of the town square, there was a building with big steps. A band was on the steps playing something

upbeat with acoustic guitars and an accordion, and Nicki was dancing with others on the closed off road. The black and grey cat was in her element and in her uniform: off-white t-shirt that had a big cut-out picture of an orange cat's face on it, and off-green pants. She really enjoyed being the cat with the cat shirt. She had a lot of cat shirts. Slung over her shoulder, she had a bandolier of cold beer bottles and single shot bottles of moonshine, that clinked as she spun and rocked and grooved.

Night seven of the pride festival, and downtown was still packed with people in colorful accessories and snarky shirts.

Nicki's black feline ears perked as she heard someone call, "Beer girl!"

Lazarus, a red lizard dude, regular customer.

Nicki left the dancing, and went over to the sidewalk.

Lazarus handed her two twenties, and Nicki took one of the beer bottles from her bandolier, saying out of habit, "Twist off," as though this one wouldn't know. She asked, "Are you gay?"

"A festival's a festival, and shit I don't know some of these dudes are hot, it could happen this could be the start of a whole new part of me."

"Use a condom if you're bottoming."

Lazarus turned and projected a cackle at the air, and then said to beer girl, "I have no idea how to take it in the ass, I cannot fathom how that would even work."

"I'm sure we can find someone here who would walk you through it."

The red lizard hopped in place a couple of times, and then twisted off the cap of the beer and took a drink.

He asked, "What is your *secret*?"

"Ummmm I don't know, you're an alcoholic."

"True," he said, and took another drink.

"Did you see any of the drag show earlier, with..." Nicki trailed off as the smell of dog came to her. It was a smell as though she had buried her nose right in a dog's belly and taken a big sniff, but, obviously she hadn't. This was just some dog smell that was so intense it was permeating all of the air. She turned to look for dogs. Her cat nose twitched a couple of times as she smelled the air. Her eyes darted around. No four-leggers, but there was an anthro dog walking by, past the group of people

dancing on the road, and the dog was carrying a mouse guy bridal style, as the mouse was saying things and sticking his mousy fingers into the dog guy's shirt to pet the dog guy's tummy or reaching mousy fingers into the dog guy's belt a little.

Nicki said to Lazarus, "I'm sorry I have to go fuck somebody," and started following after the dog guy.

Nicki assumed pronouns. That was her own damage. It was bad of her and she should have been the last person to do it, but, to her, the dog guy and the mouse guy looked like he/hims.

She jogged a little to catch up, and then, walking beside them, she used a line that had always got her in the door so far: "Can I buy you a beer?"

She held a beer out to the dog guy.

The dog guy stopped walking, Nicki stopped walking, the dog guy set the mouse guy down.

The dog guy asked, "Um, like, just free?"

The dog guy was beautiful. Everyone was beautiful. The dog guy had a six pack that showed through his tight black tanktop. He looked to be a yellow lab, and stood about six six.

Nicki put a gentle hand on the dog guy's chest, leaned towards him, and took a big sniff of his tanktop.

A little bit of dog smell.

Still leaving a hand resting on the dog guy, Nicki leaned over and smelled the mouse.

Bingo.

Nicki handed the dog guy the beer, picked the mouse up bridal style, and started walking away.

The dog guy said, "Hey wait um..."

The mouse was all giggles, and started sticking his mousy fingers into Nicki's clothes.

Using a lot of strength to carry the mouse guy one-handed for a second, Nicki turned her beer sash around so that the beers were hanging along her back instead of along her front, and then continued to hold the mouse guy in both arms as they walked along. A wet diagonal line of condensation from the cold beers was left along the front of Nicki's cat shirt. The mouse guy was wearing red digital camo cargo shorts and a baggy sweatshirt that had a giraffe on it.

The mouse asked, "Are we going to the black tent?"

Nicki answered, "I am carrying you to the black tent."

"So into that," the mouse said.

The mouse guy *already* had a hand under her bra and was getting a feel of a boob as she carried him along.

The mouse mentioned, "You sniffed me and then picked me up. Are you a zoophile?"

"Yes, is the short answer."

"What's the long answer—ooh, chastity cage," the mouse said, upon sticking his mousy hand down Laura's pants far enough that he had gotten to her chastity cage.

Laura made a chk-chk noise of "yup you got it," and said, "Key is on my necklace."

The mouse guy went on, "What's your zoophilia story, how much of a zoophile are you?"

"I've done it here and there, but as far as the dog smell thing, my boyfriend used to work with dogs all day and then come home reeking of dogs and I would fuck him."

Tamtam used to work feeding and grooming and picking up after a fabulously rich guy's 40 dogs, and take dog dick and pound dog pussy on the daily, and then come home reeking of dogs and Nicki would fuck him. Sometimes Nicki had come with to visit the dogs. Good memories.

Nicki asked the mouse guy, "How come you smell so much like dogs?"

The mouse guy, touching Nicki's cat face with a mousy hand that now smelled like the cat's balls, said, "Oh it's this perfume, all organic and ethical and everything, there's a neat video on the process of how they collect it from the dogs, like the dogs stay alive and everything it's just a deal of now and then milking these scent gland things that they feed them a diet to make produce more, and like, the dogs all live on this big ranch and have great lives and everything."

"Oh for real?"

"Yeah," the mouse guy said, and then kissed his fingertips and put his fingertips against Nicki's cat lips.

As they were walking through the night, Nicki spotted a familiar face in the crowd. Nearing it, Nicki said, "Hey, Clyde!"

The mouse chimed in, "Hi Clyde!"

Nicki came to stand face to face with the rocker with the piercings. "Hey Laura," it said, giving a salute-ish sort of wave to the mouse.

The mouse guy in Nicki's arms said to Nicki, "I'm Laura, he/him."

"Nicki, she/her. You know Clyde?"

"Clyde and I go way back."

Clyde laughed, and said, "I met this dude today."

The mouse guy, Laura, went on, "That was so many hours ago, we've pretty much been friends for forever, me and Clyde are tight."

Clyde snickered. Brell, Clyde's partner, a blue skinned individual with antennas, came and grabbed Clyde's hand, and rested their head against its shoulder.

Needing to be going, Clyde asked, "Hey can I get a couple beers?"

"My hands are full, but yeah you can grab two."

The rocker stuck cash into one of Nicki's pants pockets, and then it took two beers off of Nicki's back from her sash.

Clyde said, "See you around."

"Enjoy your night," Nicki wished.

Laura said, "Bye Clyde bye Brell I'll miss you both I'll think about you lots."

Clyde snickered, and shook its head, and walked off with Brell.

Nicki resumed walking along, with the mouse guy in her arms. Down the road, the big black tent was now in sight, tucked into a spot between the city's buildings and the trees of a park, there were two bonfires outside and a lot of people standing around topless or in harnesses.

Laura asked, while reaching into Nicki's shirt and petting her stomach fur, "What's the deal with the chastity cage, how long have you been locked up?"

"Is it after midnight?"

"Yes."

"Three hundred and sixty two days."

"What!!"

"I am ready to nut hard inside of this mouse I found."

“Oh my god!!” Laura said, and lightly drummed a hand against the top of Nicki’s boobs excitedly. “That is almost a year, are you breaking your streak for me??”

Nicki squeezed the mouse in her arms a little, and said, “I wasn’t doing it for bragging rights, I was just gearing up to shoot the load of my life and tonight is the night.”

Laura squirmed, and asked, “What’s the plan what do you wanna do?”

“You unlock me, I suck you off and then I dump a huge load of kittens into you.”

“Yessss.”

Laura pressed a finger against Nicki’s mouth. The cat sucked on the mouse’s finger like a pacifier as they walked past the bonfires, and into the black tent.

The space was lit sporadically by torches driven into the hard dirt ground. Moans and expletive cries filled the air, people all around thrusting, writhing, hitting, dancing, playing. A pair of drummers at one side of the tent were going ham on their drums. Somewhere someone was playing long, drawn out notes on an electric guitar to go along with them. In the center of the tent were vendors, with toys and all kinds of gear on display at their booths. Nicki carried them towards the vendors, specifically towards the table that had a big sign saying “FREE” and had a bunch of condoms spread out on it. And, there was a dispenser for lube that was like a fast food ketchup dispenser, little paper cups and everything.

“Alright, down,” Nicki said, and put down the mouse.

The mouse wobbled for a second as he found his legs.

Nicki grabbed a little paper cup, and got them some lube. She picked up a condom, and Laura swatted it out of her hand.

Nicki snickered, and said, “I fucking knew you would hate that.”

“Kittens IN me, girl.”

Nicki took a big, huge sniff of the guy’s dog smell again.

She and him went and found a spot. They disrobed, she handed him her key, and he unlocked her cage. With him standing and her on her knees, the cat gave oral to the mouse, until he was gasping and thrusting and then finished. Then, the

two of them laid on the dirt, and she dumped a huge load of kittens into him.

“Fffffuck.”

Both of them laid on their backs, panting, staring up at the black void of tent ceiling overhead.

It was very good to be unlocked. It felt amazing to be back in the game.

The mouse guy rolled onto Nicki and straddled her, and the two of them made out, Nicki lifting her head up off of the dirt to push in to his kisses.

Eventually Nicki let her head thump back onto the dirt, and she gently pushed Laura off of herself.

Laura tumbled away.

Nicki reached to her things, grabbed two beers off of her sash, and offered one out towards Laura. “Twist off.”

As he was opening his, she leaned over and smelled him again. Absolutely wonderful. She had forgotten how into it she was, how Tamtam smelled like that when they were younger. She thought of the times she had been with dogs herself, and, yeah, a lot of fun, it was great.

The cat and the mouse clinked, and sat and drank their beers. They looked around at what the others were up to in here.

It looked like the two of them had been pretty vanilla, actually.

When their drinks were finished, Nicki asked, “Wanna head back out together?”

Laura grabbed Nicki’s hand. The two stood up, and started towards the exit, and then Laura halted in place, and mentioned, “Clothes.”

“Oh! Yeah.” Yikes.

They circled back to their spot.

Nicki stepped into her underwear and pants, put her cat shirt back on, fitted her bandolier back on so that the beers were across her front again. Actually just one beer, and the rest was still the little shot bottles of moonshine.

Turning to Laura, she saw that the mouse had put his cargo shorts back on, and was just holding his sweatshirt balled up by his side. She put a hand down into the front of his shorts, and felt mouse balls and no underwear.

“Did you remember to grab your undies at least?”

“In my pocket,” he said, patting one pocket of his cargo shorts for effect.

Nicki went in to give Laura a quick kiss, and then the mouse was pressing his lips into her and moaning and grabbing her, and the two stood clothed and made out as others around them fucked.

Nicki’s stomach growled.

She gave one last big smooch with a moan, and then stepped back from the shirtless mouse guy.

“I need to eat.”

“Seconds?” Laura asked, and glanced down at his groin and back up to Nicki with palpable hope in his eyes.

Nicki laughed, and walked past Laura towards the exit of the tent.

Laura came with, and the two of them left side by side.

As they went along, Nicki walked with a purpose towards a corner where she knew one of the public booths was. Laura orbited around her, skipping and doing little dance flourishes and stopping to compliment people and ask if he could hug them. He had gotten a *lot* of hugs by the time they had walked a block, and were arriving at the booth.

Wooden structure, rectangular, slanted roof on top, about ten feet long and five feet across, that basically amounted to a bunch of shelves to put waxy paper bottles and boxes on. The shelves were overflowing with the packages: the city of Bentonville could not give the stuff away fast enough. Cases of the bottles were stacked on the ground in front of the shelves, undoubtedly left by city workers when they came with a delivery, saw that there was no room, and dumped it anyways rather than having to lug the case back to anywhere else. Hunger due to low income was no longer heard of. Ever since the globe had made it clear that it was no longer saying “maybe someday” on climate disaster, and the US military itself had turned and bit big ag hard and taken command of food operations, there had been a lot of changes. All of the soylent, liquid or brick, was certified vegan, had all of the stuff you needed to keep kicking, and came in a variety of flavors depending on your preference.

Nicki grabbed a bottle of “roisserie chicken” soylent, ripped off the pull tab part of the waxy paper top, and started gulping down the chalky liquid.

The cat had criticisms of the government. A lot of them. But for right now, the food game was on the ball. The “chicken” tasted exactly like the real deal used to. Nicki and pretty much everyone else she had asked about it had been hesitant about the texture, and about drinking food, when this had first rolled out, and so far, Nicki had not met someone who wasn’t used to it within a matter of days, or who hadn’t at least survived until the solid, brick alternative started being distributed. Shit was convenient, free, good for the planet, and tasted fantastic.

Restaurants and grocery stores had started coming back, in the last couple of years, in very limited, approved-case-by-case sorts of ways, and for the most part were required to be supplied through new ag.

Nicki was halfway through her ‘chicken’ dinner, lost in her thoughts, when it occurred to her to see what kind Laura had gotten. Something to chat about.

She turned, and saw Laura was crouched down and stacking a pyramid of the soylent bottles.

The cat asked, “Not gonna eat?”

“Hm? Oh, no, I’m fasting. What did you get?”

“Rotisserie chicken.”

“Oh, yeah that’s a good one.”

Nicki made quicker work out of the rest of the bottle, and was done with it as Laura was finishing up his pyramid. She went to the drinking fountain adjacent to the booth, got a drink, rinsed out her mouth.

The mouse offered out a hand to the cat. The cat took it, and the two of them began walking under the nighttime sky, taking their time, circling back towards the square, where there were the big steps that a band had been playing music on. Presently, when they arrived, the band had departed, and the ambient droning of different conversations filled the air.

Hand in hand, the two of them were slowly passing by the big stairs, when Nicki spotted a fat human dude standing by himself with an assault rifle held pointed down in front of him, hand

flexing on the barrel, face sneering, rocking back and forth on his feet.

Nicki stopped, and said to Laura, "He's gonna shoot this place, we need to go."

She pulled on the mouse's hand to bring them back the way they had come, but the mouse stood in place, facing towards the man with the gun, not letting himself be dragged back, not letting his attention leave the man. He dropped his sweater on the ground.

"Laura!"

The man shouted into the air, "THIS IS FOR OUR CHILDREN!"

As the man was lifting his gun, Laura's hand shot into his pocket, and came out flipping open a butterfly knife. And then, Laura disappeared, leaving a small breath of black smoke where his chest had been. A pitch black humanoid appeared behind the man, and the pitch black humanoid reached around the man's neck and stabbed him in the throat twenty times, over and over, no trace of mercy to be seen. Twenty stabs in five seconds as the man collapsed. The gunman fired one shot in all, on his way down, the shot hitting the ground.

The pitch black humanoid disappeared, and Laura reappeared in front of Nicki, and staggered and grabbed her for balance and coughed up black smoke, as others around were screaming and running away in different directions.

Still coughing, Laura bent down, picked up his sweater, stood back up, threw an arm around Nicki's shoulders, and then Nicki blinked and both of them were standing on a dirt road in the middle of a wide open landscape of grassy hills. Instantly, they were away from the screaming and the running crowds and the city's street lights. Instantly, all of it had been replaced by the buzz of cicadas, dim starlight, and the crunching of the dirt road under Laura's shoes as he staggered, clutching his chest, continuing to hack and wheeze. It was such an unexpected change that Nicki felt like she had woken up from a nightmare and just needed to get her bearings now, and accept that none of that stuff had just happened. But, no. That had all been real, and now this was real.

Laura was hunched over on his knees and palms, gasping and sputtering.

Nicki asked, enunciating clearly and loudly to the mouse, "Can I do anything to help you?"

Laura scrambled to his feet and ran away from Nicki for as long as he could last, about three seconds, and then he screamed and the night lit up with a 40 foot tall plume of fire coming out of his mouth.

When he had gotten the scream out and the fire disappeared, he stood there panting, and then he said to the cat with the cat shirt, "I'm good now. Promise."

"WHAT WAS THAT."

There in the dim starlight, the two of them on a gravel road among rolling hills, standing about ten paces from one another, the mouse said, "That was me not practiced enough at tapping into so much energy at once, and losing control of it, and needing to purge it all fast. I'm an incubus. But, I'm emptied of excess now, I am just standing before you as a mouse."

Nicki looked the mouse up and down, and asked herself whether or not she trusted him.

Runes

In the months leading up to her quinceañera, Nicki had practiced her runes in her notebooks, in the sand at the beach, in the fog in the bathroom mirror, on the backs of her hands with whiteboard markers. She could do them with her eyes closed. Cat, stripes, black, grey, and on and on, down to the fine details of what she was going to be asking for when the time came. She had had long discussions at the temple with Brother Rodriguez about it, sometimes with dad and sometimes not, making sure that everything she wished for was there, and making sure that her plea seemed within prudence. None among the temple saw anything that was cause for worry when the girl handed them a written-on paper and asked for their opinion.

On the big day, the twins both stood in the great kiln, a stonework room in the temple where intense fires could be kept. At present the great kiln's stones were cold, and the twins,

human, stood side by side in tunics, facing their family who was at the mouth of the room, a safe distance away. Brother Rodriguez paced around the twins as he delivered the ceremony, projecting words about butterflies, blossoming, ascendance. Brother Rodriguez handed a stick of chalk to each twin. Nicki and Tamtam both knelt to the ground, and began drawing their runes around themselves. Brother Rodriguez reviewed the runes, and then solemnly, paced to one wall of the kiln where two clay jugs were kept. With effort, he lifted up one in each hand, and placed them before the twins. The twins poured the ritual gasoline on themselves, letting it fall down over their heads and making sure to get both arms and let it soak down to their feet. Brother Rodriguez paced to the family, where a lit torch was placed into a stand outside of any of their reach. He lifted the torch, said nothing to them and did not meet their eyes, walked halfway back to the twins, and then threw the torch at the ground between them. The twins were engulfed in fire.

Everyone was beautiful. Humans with toned muscles and sharp jaws. Humans with lithe figures and pretty smiles. Humans rotund and with flabby cheeks. Humans with fangs. Bipedal dogs, cats, foxes, moths, spiders, cardinals, bluejays, hummingbirds. Humanoids that had hardened flesh of lumps and ridges that looked like stone.

Some endeavored to leave humanity. Into the natural kingdoms, this was easily granted. Many throughout the generations of humanity had left the ritual fire as a deer, and bounded off into the forest. Many had become a tree, or a gem; a fable spoke of a sailor who, wrecked on a desert island and near to starvation, had taken the ship's kerosene and engulfed himself and become a grain of sand, so that he would fly in the wind, get stuck in men's boots and under children's fingernails and arrive at many merry dinners, wash up on new beaches forever and ever.

Those who endeavored to leave the natural kingdoms sometimes succeeded, and sometimes were consumed by the fire. Mermaid, vampire, phoenix, these types of beings did enter the world out of human origin, sometimes.

The last human in history so far to be granted Nephilim had been in World War I. The beautiful, hideous, screeching half-

angel who towered from trench to clouds had lived six hours on the battlefield before a shimmering light overtook it and then it disappeared, leaving behind only a gargantuan collar bone, which cracked but did not break in two when falling to the ground.

The fire went away from the twins, and there stood an anthro cat and an anthro fox. The two of them gave noises of excited delight as they looked down at themselves and at each other, they touched each other's new hands, they hugged, they were beautiful. Tamtam wagged, and Nicki purred.

Laura had worked at a national park as a ranger. It was in his contract that he was forbidden from deviating from a human appearance.

Humans who became wild animals could, optionally, have a blue tag put onto their ear, to mark them as human-born.

Laura had been sitting at a picnic area one day, eating his lunch, when a brown bear with a blue tag approached through the trees. Laura made a point of picking up his rifle and showing it to the bear, and then setting it back down, getting up, and moving to another table with his lunch, turning his back on the gun. The bear approached into the picnic area with something on her mind, and that was Laura's first time, he lost his virginity finishing inside bear pussy.

He slept around with deer, let his hand or his face be used by mice. It came to not always be just the tagged animals: a pair of tagged wolves had introduced him to the pack that roamed in that park, and he roamed among them, and they partook of the unique pleasures his human body could give to them. Campers were often adventurous sorts, and he spent time in tents with campers who were into the uniform, came to their parties when he was invited and had a great time.

One day, when he walked into the office, he was called to his superior's desk, and there on her monitor, he was shown a trail cam video of him fucking a wolf. He was told that that was obscene, grossly unacceptable for any upright person to do, let alone a ranger, and he was instructed to give over his hat.

Laura slammed his hat down on the desk. He went out to the supply shed, grabbed a jerrycan of gasoline, put down the runes he had had in mind for a long time, and set himself on fire.

To him, incubus was granted.

Scent 2

“I’m an incubus. But, I’m emptied of excess now, I am just standing before you as a mouse.”

Nicki and Laura stood apart from one another on the gravel road, facing one another.

Nicki asked, “How do I make you an incubus again if I’m more into that?”

Laura smiled, and dragged a shoe through the gravel once. “I mean. I’m a lust demon. I derive energy from people getting off with me.”

Nicki walked forward on the gravel, rested her cat hands on the mouse’s shoulders, leaned down, and smelled his chest.

Oh. Disappointing. “You don’t smell like dog at all anymore.”

“Oh! Uh, that was not actually perfume. Incubus thing.”

“Oh my god, you magically smell like whatever turns people on and that’s why I wanted to fuck you so bad.”

“Nnnno. Close. I can magically smell like whatever I want. I wanted to fuck someone with a knot, so I went with dog and found that dog guy, but then I was really into your vibe. So like, I do choose the smell, and it’s just that smell, I smelled like dog to everyone, not just zoophiles.”

“I mean, I *am* a zoophile but it’s not like.”

“I’m a zoophile huge time.”

“Oh, cool.”

“It’s really cool, I fucked a pack of wolves.”

“Okay incubus.”

“Hehe.”

“Floor, now,” Nicki said, pressing down on Laura’s shoulders. She wasn’t sure if it was called the floor if they were outside, on a road. She was more used to telling guys what to do indoors, apparently.

There on the road, Laura took off his pants, and Nicki ate his ass, taking in his natural smells, and able to get her tongue inside real good, with him already lubed still from earlier. They started there, Nicki got lost in the enjoyment she got from it, and then they went on to do other stuff when Nicki realized that

the mouse guy smelled like dogs again. Still a big plus, still a big turn on.

Eventually, the two of them were lying side by side on their backs, staring up at the stars. Nicki was catching her breath. Laura took long and sharp breaths like he was just getting warmed up.

“Okay,” Laura said, “I’m glad you were still into me, because that was going to be a long, and, really awkward walk back into town if you weren’t into me. But, I am recharged enough to bring us back, if you want. I’ll probably bring us back to the parking ramp nearby, not the exact place we jumped from.”

“Jesus, that was intense, what happened, at.”

“I’m trying not to think about it.”

“You were an actual hero.”

“I’m really trying not to think about how I killed a guy and I’m fine with it.”

“You stopped a threat effectively.”

“Yeah.”

Nicki scratched Laura’s tummy.

Laura took a deep breath in, and then the next second, they were lying together in a parking space, in a parking garage.

“Oh *warn* me a little,” Nicki said, and then snatched her underwear and pants from Laura and scrambled to put them on.

A man and a woman who were getting into their SUV craned their necks towards the naked furies who had just materialized, deep frowns and creased brows.

Gesturing between himself and Nicki, Laura called to the humans, “Perverts! We’re just perverts for each other! We’ll be gone soon!”

Nicki snatched her bra from Laura’s hands, and said to him, “Get your shorts on, you’ll get in trouble if your balls are out in public.”

Laura did get his shorts on, as the couple got into their SUV and drove off.

When they were dressed, both standing there, Nicki buried her face down in the mouse’s chest, and took in his doggy scent again. That was not going to get old for her.

“Do you want a ride somewhere, or, you’re welcome to stay with me and my brother if you want.”

“I’d love to spend the night with you.”

Laura had crashed on hookups’ beds or in the woods every night in the time since he had become an incubus. Not altogether too different from his lifestyle as a ranger, but, back then he had ostensibly had an apartment, rather than ostensibly being homeless.

“How long have you been an incubus?”

“About three months.”

“Oh, new to it? Used to it?”

“Getting the hang of it.”

Nicki gave Laura a kiss and a hug.

Comfort

A couple weeks passed.

Nicki, opening her eyes one morning, found herself lying on her side, pressed into hard ground that was only partially mitigated by a rug that didn’t cover the entire floor. Tamtam was big spooning her, an arm draped over her side, his breathing chest pressed against her back. They were cramped into the small room together.

Nicki grumbled, “Guh. What... Hey, wake up.”

“Mm?” Tamtam asked, waking.

“I think I got roofied last night, I don’t remember why we’re in the laundry room.”

“Bitch. It was only me and you in the house last night, you blacked out.”

“The culprit has access to the house...”

“You wanted me to bang you over the dryer while it was running.”

“Elementary.”

“What?”

“Do we have Gatorade?”

It wasn’t Gatorade by brand, but, “Electrolyte Hydration Solution” was too many syllables for the cat at that moment.

The fox said, “I thought you might ask.”

The two of them sat up, and Tamtam reached between the washing machine and the wall and pulled out a waxy papery container. He ripped the tab open, and handed it to sis.

“Oh I love you,” Nicki said, and started drinking.

“Love you too,” Tamtam said, and started petting Nicki as she drank.

Nicki and Tamtam were back to fucking. They had never exactly stopped, but they had put it on the backburner mostly, while Nicki had been in chastity for about the last year. Now that she was out, for the last couple of weeks they had been reignited big time.

The two of them found their way onto the couch, and Nicki laid on Tamtam’s chest, with a blanket draped over her back. Nicki purred, and Tamtam wagged.

Fight

No clutter, bed made, carpet vacuumed the day before. Sun shining in through the partway tilted open blinds. The scent of a cinnamon candle in the air.

Nicki sat at the desk in her bedroom, reading letters and writing checks. She had a strong vision of the way she wanted the world to work, and she did not delude herself in thinking that she was going to be the person who fixed the world singlehandedly. She preferred to fight smart. She preferred to dial in on her craft, and use the benefits she reaped to uplift others. Sell excellent booze for a steep price, and pay forward the excess to those who were doing hype propaganda, or those who were taking effective direct action.

She looked through some production stills from Carson, a colleague who did video and podcasting; the latest letter she had gotten from him had glossy pictures from the set of a piece he was currently directing, raising awareness about a lawsuit that, if successful, would be the end of health insurance, and force the US government to offer free unqualified health care as a fundamental human right in a functioning society. The lawsuit was going better than expected so far, and insurance companies were fighting like hell to squash it. The video Carson was doing was projected to get a lot of eyeballs and channel a lot-a lot of fundraising towards strengthening the resources the lawsuit had to throw at this, hiring more staff to work on all kinds of the things that needed to be done: honing the language of

arguments, developing compelling exhibits, combing through text, securing experts, basically overall helping make sure the suit couldn't be dismissed just because the insurance companies could get those things done with ease and make the suit look like amateur hour.

Nicki wrote a big check to Carson, and began writing the addresses on the return envelope.

Minimize harm. Maximize care. Minimize practices that only existed to uphold a codified idea of how people should be hated. Maximize empathy.

From the doorway behind her, Tamtam said, "Hey, Comrade. Guess what."

Without looking back, Nicki said, "Tamtam. Holding mistletoe over your cock has worked like the last 200 times, but it is not a cheat code to get me to blow you."

"Kay, I'm gonna look at porn."

Nicki glanced around her desk, and said, "I'll be done in two minutes. Actually the mail guy came already, what am I talking about, I can do these letters later."

Negotiations

It was a chilly day, relative to all of the summer heat that they had been getting lately. Big grey clouds overhead, probably going to rain later. Nicki sat outside at a new ag-approved coffee place's patio. "Coffee" really, but, she couldn't tell the difference. She took a sip from her iced coffee, and it tasted like coffee always had to her.

She smiled as she spotted mouse guy coming up the sidewalk in an outfit that looked like it was out of some anime. Black coat with all kinds of little metal spiky studs, black and white striped undershirt, baggy cargo pants. When he took a hand out of his coat pocket to wave, she saw the fingerless gloves.

She had liked his sweater that said URINAL on it—they had had fun with that idea when she had first seen that his sweater said URINAL—but, the new threads looked good on the guy. She waved back to him.

He glanced around, and then teleported the rest of the way to her, arriving reclined on the chair opposite her with his feet kicked up onto the table.

“I like the new look.”

“Hehe, thank you. I always wanted to try something kinda like this.”

They had been meeting up and fucking, since that first time that they’d met and fucked and Laura killed a guy and revealed he was a sex demon and then they fucked more.

Nicki had gotten into the habit of starting off their interactions with things about herself that could be dealbreakers, to get them out of the way. The first time they had spotted each other again had been the day after their first meeting, at the same pride fest, they had both attended again to prowl for one another. When they were on their way to the black tent again, this time really taking their time and chatting, Nicki had mentioned, “Whenever I talk about a boyfriend, that’s my twin brother, he and I have been screwing each other for forever.” Laura was really into that, like, really into it, and responded, “Hot.” Nicki went on, “He’s an anthro fox.” Laura mentioned, “I’ve been with twins before. There were a couple pairs of twin wolves in the wolf pack. Never human-born twins though.” After they had spent their time in the black tent, Laura teleported the both of them to a cruise ship, and they wandered around the deck and ended up getting into a hot tub in their street clothes and relaxed there together for a while.

The other dealbreakers that she gave to Laura were pretty mundane, after the twin brother thing. The fact that she was a communist. The fact that she was a radical believer in animal rights, shit, Laura was too. Her being trans, like, assigned male at birth, yeah that one was really not much of a shocker.

There on the patio of the coffee place, Nicki had a sip of her iced coffee, and then said, “I’m serious about the communist thing. Queer rights, animal rights, rights to health care. I don’t just talk the talk, I put my money where my mouth is. I send off my extra income from selling beer to a lot of different projects that are actually working on overthrowing fascist systems.”

Laura took his feet off of the table, and sat hunched forward, elbows on his legs, head bowed towards the table. “I got fired

from the only job I ever wanted by a fascist. To be a park ranger they need you to carry a gun, and they can only give you a gun under eighteen if you've graduated high school. I graduated high school when I was fourteen. Everyone thought I was on my way to college, to be a super genius, but no, that was the last school I ever took, I just wanted to be a park ranger. I was really good at everything we did. My superior still hated me because I had fun doing all of it, and she didn't like how much I socialized with the campers. I was there for years, thriving, that place was my home. Then a few months ago she caught me on a trail cam humping a wolf, and." Laura made a gesture of cutting his head off with his thumb.

"I'm really sorry to hear that, Laura."

He shrugged. "I'm an incubus now, so. Thriving in different ways. There's this tasty cat I've been draaaining and she just keeps coming back to me all filled up again."

Nicki purred.

Laura asked, circling back, "So the money you send off."

"Goes to projects that are having a material effect on bettering the world."

Laura nodded, and said, "Tell me not to do something really stupid right now. Like, actually tell me to do it, but, I'm just saying."

"Do it."

Laura disappeared.

Nicki stared at the puff of black smoke that the mouse guy left behind. It floated there for a moment, and then there was a gust of chilly wind, and the smoke dissipated pretty quick.

Nicki sipped on her iced coffee. Had the last sip, actually. She turned and hucked the cup of ice in the direction of the trash, and actually got it in. She cackled to herself.

Laura reappeared, panting, and dropped a heavy duffel bag on the table. He unzipped it and lifted the flap a little bit, so that Nicki could peek inside. The bag was stuffed with loose bills, a lot of fives, tens, and twenties.

Laura asked, "Can you use this?"

Nicki thought about it.

Shit. She could.

"Yes."

Laura gave a big sigh of relief, and then also tossed a brick of plastic wrapped powder onto the table, and said, “Some cocaine for Tamtam.”

Users

There had been one time, at a family get together, that they had gotten too handsy with each other too openly. They were 20, Nicki had gotten into the wine even though she wasn't supposed to, Tamtam was stoned. There on the couch in the corner had felt like their own private world all to themselves, but, it wasn't.

There had been a lot of shouting. Nicki had peeled away, drunk, with Tamtam in the passenger seat crying. When they got home, both of them sobbed on one another, and then they got into their liquor cabinet and started making mixed drinks and laughing and playing loud music on the speaker and shouting along with it.

News

Nicki had told Tamtam about the incubus. The day after she and Laura had met, Nicki had the news on in the living room, sitting cross-legged on the couch. Coverage of the attempted shooting the night before. Laura had left already, really early in the morning.

When Tamtam shuffled into the room, Nicki pointed the remote at the TV, and asked the fox, “Did you hear about this?”

He sat down beside her, and said, “Yes. I got your texts that you were okay. Thank you for checking in.”

Nicki paused the TV, on a picture that the news was showing of the pitch black figure standing behind the gunman. “That guy who stabs the shooter, right there. I met him.”

“Oh?”

Nicki told Tamtam everything about the night. Tamtam listened, nodding, and hugged Nicki when she was done.

Nicki mentioned, “So, besides all of that other stuff, I *am* out of chastity now.”

Tamtam gasped, looked down at Nicki's freed dick, and said, “Let me go do an enema, I will be *right* back.”

Relinked

Laura teleported himself, Nicki, the duffel, and the brick into Nicki's living room, before they could be caught with the brick.

"This is gonna be huge," Nicki said.

"Have powers, get to using them. Is that how that goes?"

"The Spiderman quote?"

"Yyyes," Laura guessed.

"Not even close."

With sleep in his eyes, Tamtam came stumbling out of the hallway to see who was here. He gave a little wave to the mouse guy.

Nicki gasped, and said, "Tamtam, this is Laura, he's the incubus!"

Still groggy, Tamtam said, "Oh Jesus the incubus in our house, okay, hi." He staggered forward with his arms held out for a hug.

Laura hugged the groggy fox.

As they hugged, a noise filled the air that sounded like an oncoming semi truck was about to smash through the house at full speed. Laura and Nicki and Tamtam all looked around—Laura especially was ready to take them all somewhere else in a heartbeat.

When Laura and Tamtam had stepped back from each other, the noise faded away.

Laura muttered to himself, "What the hell... I have no idea what that was."

Tamtam pointed to Laura, and said to him, "Freaky."

"Can we try that again?"

"Yes."

The mouse and the fox hugged again, and this time no loud noise filled the air.

Laura then remembered, "Oh, hey, I got this for you."

He reached down beside the duffel and grabbed the brick of cocaine, and handed it to Tamtam.

Tamtam held it in both hands, skittered in place, and then ran off to his bedroom with it.

"He likes you," Nicki mentioned.

Drop

Nicki looked at the bank account app on her phone. The first drop had gone through. She started looking through her letters to see who the money was going to. She had some ideas and needed to check back on some details.

Sword

Nicki hung upside down from some monkey bars, wearing one of her cat shirts.

At one of the pavilions nearby, some people were drinking and playing loud trumpet music from a boombox.

Coming up around the corner of the park trail, around some trees, was mouse guy, wearing his new black and flashy threads.

When he got to the hanging cat, he crouched down, and kissed her.

“What revelations today, Comrade?”

“I don’t know what else to tell you,” Nicki said, and kept hanging there, upside down, legs hooked into the playground bars overhead. “Uh. In high school I broke the CD tray on one of the computers in the computer lab, and then said to the teacher that it was broken and I asked what to do, pretending like I had found it broken like that, and I got away with it, you’re the first person I’ve ever told.”

“Scandalous,” Laura said. He sat down in front of upside down Nicki, cross legged.

“You tell me one about you,” Nicki requested.

The mouse shrugged, and said, “Laura isn’t the name I was born with. I actually only started using it when I became an incubus. I think of myself as always having been Laura retroactively, but, the name just kind of sprang into the front of my mind when the fires went away. Like my truest self all at once had been freed in body, mind, and spirit.”

“You tell me your dead name, I’ll tell you mine.”

“My legal name is Devon Rider.”

Nicki found her eyes going wide. She let herself drop from the monkey bars, just letting her legs slide off and dropping straight

to the ground. With playground pine chips stuck to her, she knelt in front of the sitting mouse, touched his chest, touched his arms, stared at his face.

Laura kind of made a bemused face. "Okay, that one was a big deal."

Nicki asked, "Devon Rider, brother of Nicholas and Tamarin Rider?"

Laura's eyes went wide.

The triplet. Nicki and Tamtam called themselves twins, but, there was a triplet. In the divorce when they were little kids, Nicki and Tamtam had gone to dad, Devon had gone to mom, and mom had moved to Washington and never contacted them again.

Laura reached out and grabbed Nicki into a hug, and the two of them laid there together, clinging to each other on the wood chips.

Nicki mentioned, after a long while, "You *reek* of dog right now. Like, dog fur, dog ass, you are going hard on the dog smell, I notice."

"Yeah you said you said your brother—OUR brother—used to fuck dogs all the time, I'm getting myself ready to turn him on hard, when are we having a threeway?"

"Like right now. He told me when we were younger that he fantasized about you."

The cat and the mouse took each other's hands, scampered off into the woods so that their sudden disappearance wouldn't be seen by any onlookers, and then the two of them were in Nicki's living room.

Tamtam was there on the couch with his fox dick in his hand, with a video of dogs humping on the TV. He stopped stroking, and said, "Hi."

Nicki went to Tamtam, grabbed each of his wrists, put them behind him like she was arresting him there on the couch. He complied. She gave a "come here" gesture to Laura, and he complied.

"Tamtam, smell this guy. Wait—"

She cupped a hand over Tamtam's nose.

"Wait like, five seconds so you don't cum right now."

Nose covered, Tamtam said, "Okay."

Laura sat down on the couch as well, himself and Nicki on either side of the fox.

Nicki, going based off what she knew of Tamtam's limits, looked at his dick, looked at his face, and said, "Mmmm okay now smell, hands still behind your back." She took her one hand off of his nose.

Tamtam turned and put his fox muzzle against mouse guy's chest, and took a sniff. Right away, his legs curled up and he clung to mouse guy with both hands, and started running his sniffing nose all up and down mouse guy's chest.

Nicki grabbed Tamtam's hands, put them behind his back again, made him face forward again.

Which was not perfectly ideal for stopping him from getting off, she realized, the TV still had video of dogs humping, it seemed to be a compilation.

But, he didn't seem to be cumming hands free just yet, so, good enough.

She asked him, "Are you ready if I tell you something you're going to love to hear?"

"Um, give me a sec..." Tamtam took on a serious face, and then said, "Okay, if you call me bro right now I won't cum."

"Okay wait," Nicki said, and then grabbed the remote, and turned off the TV so there weren't dogs.

"Oh wow," Tamtam said. "Hold on I'm thinking of huge turn offs."

They gave it a few seconds, and then the fox lost his wood enough that the knot deswelled, and his shaft slid back into its sheath.

"Okay, perfect," Nicki said.

"Can I smell dog ass guy more?" Tamtam asked.

Laura cuddled up on Tamtam's side.

Nicki swatted Laura away from Tamtam, and said to Tamtam, "You are going to love who dog ass guy is. I swear I'm not making it up. I didn't know until just now when we came here."

"Okay?"

"He goes by Laura now."

"Yeah?"

"This is our brother Devon."

Tamtam's eyes went wide, and he reeled around on the couch towards the mouse, stroked his fingers down the mouse's cheeks, grabbed the mouse on the biceps, leaned in and sniffed the mouse on the chest.

"I thought about you so much," Tamtam said.

"I thought about you a little, I was admittedly busy fucking a lot of wolves."

Tamtam gasped, and said, "Me and, I was, dogs."

"I heard," mouse guy said, and took the fox into a hug.

The fox hugged back, nuzzled deep against the side of the mouse's neck, and then asked, while they were still hugging, "You're an incubus?"

"Yes, huge perv."

"Do you wanna..."

"Please."

As they were hugging, the fox started humping the mouse, junk not even out of his sheath again yet, mouse's clothes still on.

While Tamtam was humping him, Laura unbuttoned and unzipped his pants, got out of them, took off his jacket and his shirt, and then started writhing around with his brother, making out and grinding their junk together.

Soon they were on the floor, Tamtam and Laura and Nicki, kissing and touching one another, all of them hard.

And then, as though they had just woken up from a dream, the three of them were in a different place entirely.

They were in a very large room with pitch black walls, and very big paintings hung of mating: Adam and Eve, wolf and wolf, cat and cat, man and dolphin, woman and Doberman Pinscher, and more. Throughout the room were several trees, their bark red, their trunks taking the shape of woman and woman embracing, an octopus clinging to a gorilla, an erect man with a python over his shoulders, and more. The floor was an ever-changing fuzz like TV static, not black and white, but deep purple and black. The three of them stood, naked, side by side by side. In front of them stood a bear on four legs. A brown bear, who had a pair of very long arms coming out of her back at her shoulders, red arms that Nicki and Tamtam and Laura all

associated as looking like the flesh of a dog's penis, but in the form of biceps, forearms, palms, digits.

"You," Laura said, and fell to his knees.

The bear answered, "Your first."

Laura nodded, bowed his head.

The bear said, "I am Mah'eigh, the goddess of lust: you have done very well."

Tears fell upon Laura's cheeks.

Nicki and Tamtam glanced at one another.

"Stand," the bear said.

Nicki and Tamtam remained on their feet. Laura stood.

The bear of lust said, "You three have lived a life in honor of me, and you have been upright in bettering the world. You have not flinched at adversaries and you have not flinched at companionship. I have now my sword and my swordsman."

The bear stepped back, revealing a chest she had been standing over. She pawed it open, revealing a flaming sword within.

She continued, "This is the flaming sword that I Am That I Am set to guard Eden. I ask that you take it, and with it, go back in time and slay holy Moses. You three will take his place among the Israelites. Where he commanded purity, you will command grace. Where he commanded sacrificing the flesh of animals, you will command worshipping the flesh of animals. You will command strongly, as he commanded strongly, and you will engender a better world."

Laura stepped forward. He hugged the bear on the head. Mah'eigh stood, took Laura into her bear arms, and hugged him back.

Laura took the sword.

Nicki raised her hand.

The bear said, "You."

"Can I have a vag and a uterus and the whole deal? I know it's not what I chose back when I had the chance, but, you know."

The bear stepped forward, reached out a red hand, and pressed Nicki's penis in. When she withdrew her hand, it was a vulva, vagina, the whole deal.

The bear also, with each hand, reached to Laura and Tamtam's balls, and reversed their vasectomies.

The bear stuck her head into the chest the sword had been in, pulled out a backpack with her teeth, and dropped it in front of Tamtam.

She told him, "This backpack will never empty of drugs."

Tamtam snatched up the backpack and hugged it to his chest.

Laura took in a deep breath, and then said, "We are the Sodomites, and we want our city back."

The bear sent them back in time.

END.

A LYRIC

slowcore:

Bone of my bone
And coat all your own
Blameless above man
My eyes in the dark
Wet and gay maw
And fragrant paw
Sharing a den
Hearing your voice

chorus: Burgeoning!
 Grateful!
 Night skies!
 Sudden rain

Miles in the car
Hither and far
Your thoughts on the trail
The smell of your breath
Landmark water towers
Minutes and hours
Laid out on the grass
Laid out in the sun

(chorus)

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 4;

WINTER SOLSTICE 2024.

In this issue,
a doctor visit is kinda awkward,
and someone gets to dream they're a furry.

*Featuring the stories: Jaguar Herpes, Wicked Talents,
And in Dream I, and Twenty Thousand Units Down, as
well as a poem.*

JAGUAR HERPES

PATIENT is sitting in a chair in a doctor's office. As he is idly looking around, he scratches his groin, but quickly stops when he hears a knock at the door.

After the knock, DOCTOR enters. She sits down in her swivel chair, and looks at PATIENT. She gives him a look as though she's puzzling something out, tilting her head and putting a hand to her chin.

DOCTOR

Your lab results came back, you have jaguar herpes.

PATIENT *immediately defensive*:

Is "jaguar" like, a specific version of normal herpes?

DOCTOR

It's herpes that you get from having sex with a jaguar. Big cat with the spots.

PATIENT

Do jaguars even have herpes?

DOCTOR

Yes all of them, it's one of the only STIs an animal can give to a human actually. In most cases we're different species and the STIs kinda just bounce off, so if you're looking at bestiality,

PATIENT *interrupting*:

Woah woah woah, no one has said anything about BESTIALITY.

DOCTOR

Well, it's, jaguar herpes. You get it from having sex with a jaguar.

PATIENT

Could it happen if like, someone was AROUND a jaguar?

DOCTOR *amused*:

It's not airborne.

PATIENT

But like, if a jaguar sat somewhere, and then later a human sat there, is there like, a chance that maybe her rash could get onto him?

DOCTOR

No.

PATIENT

Not even a one in a thousand chance?

DOCTOR

It's transmitted by a jaguar's sloppy pussy juice interacting with a human's precum and then going back up the dickhole, it's innate unless the jaguar is VERY aroused and the human penis is SIGNIFICANTLY involved.

PATIENT

Okay okay okay sure, but a human can also get it from
ANOTHER HUMAN who has it.

DOCTOR

No the jaguar pussy juice is crucial.

PATIENT

Ugh, well, maybe someone was just, working on jaguar
breeding and then ate lunch without washing their hands?

DOCTOR

Yuck.

PATIENT

Well I'm just saying! It sounds like there could be a lot of
different ways it COULD spread around!

DOCTOR

Nnnno it's from having sex with a jaguar. The first research
papers on it actually said "masturbating using a jaguar" even
to refer to like, an alive, aroused jaguar.

PATIENT

Oh that's weird.

DOCTOR

Right?

PATIENT

Huh.

Pause.

PATIENT scratches his groin. Then he suddenly moves his hand
away, and says,

PATIENT

Sorry.

DOCTOR *totally nonjudgmental*, “*nah don’t worry about it*”:
No I understand.

PATIENT

I just think there must be other tests we can do, to figure out if it might be something else.

DOCTOR

What do you do for a living?

PATIENT *busted*.

I work in a... zoo.

DOCTOR

What’s your job in the zoo?

PATIENT

Security guard.

DOCTOR

Do you work days, nights?

PATIENT

Nights.

Awkward pause.

DOCTOR

It’s probably jaguar herpes.

PATIENT

It’s probably jaguar herpes.

DOCTOR

Shortly before the itching started do you recall if you had sex with a jaguar?

PATIENT

Shortly before the itching started... it is true... that I did...
now that you mention it... have a little bit of sex with a jaguar.
She was eyefucking me through the glass, how could I not get
in there, you know?

DOCTOR *flourishes a prescription paper:*

Take one of these every day for the itching, also kangaroos
have gonorrhea and most gorillas have syphilis.

WICKED TALENTS

I rub a hand against my cheek, and my stubble makes a sound reminiscent of scratching a dog. Heh.

Down the hall a door opens, out of sight from my cell in the brig unless I were to go to the bars and press my face against them. Footsteps approach. I yawn, covering my mouth, as Petty Officer Wanner enters my sight. He pauses, turns to me, and shows me his startled look openly.

“Chief Boston sir,” he says, and then he salutes me.

I stand up from the metal bench and give him a salute in return. I lower my salute, and he lowers his.

He asks me, “Do you need to be let out?”

“Check the logbook,” I instruct him.

He turns to a sheet posted between two of the (empty) cells opposite mine.

Not that I’m counting, but he has made three mistakes already, in his very brief time since entering the brig and walking down to my cell. Firstly, when entering he did not shout ALL UP, and then use the video streams on the station nearby to the door to ensure that all detainees have complied and stood hands-up in the center of their cell; his decision not to follow protocol will, likely, go unremarked upon, only because his only superior who is in this room currently is also one of the detainees, actually the only detainee at present, and, it’s been a long day for me, and if I don’t have to go through the rigmarole of turning naked in a circle to prove I’m not concealing anything, I won’t look a gift horse in the mouth. His second

mistake is that he has volunteered an offer to free a detainee, and this decision has only failed to be a catastrophe because of the detainee's good will. Thirdly, he has then turned his back to the detainee because the detainee asked him to, and this decision has only failed to leave him out cold on the teal nuvo-steel floor because the detainee has not smuggled or crafted any manner of shiv to throw (and, again, because of my good will).

This is not the kind of work that I like to see from my crew.

Petty Officer Wanner, reading the logbook, is currently finding out that I was checked in three hours ago by Petty Officer Yates under the authority of Master Amdi, who he knows (or, ought to know) is visiting to assess our operations.

Petty Officer Wanner takes in a long breath, and lets out a long, harsh sigh.

He turns to face me again, and asks, "You don't have any weapons or anything, do you?"

I spread open my bare hands.

He gives a little sigh. He does not like this. He asks me, "What are you in for? And—no, first of all, who's piloting?"

Ding ding, he has found the million dollar question to ask upon seeing that your pilot is locked up in your brig sans clothes or yokes. It's not that the work needs my supervision at all times, anyways: in the vastness of space, and with long-range sensors as good as ours, I can typically program a course days out. But yes, he indeed should be wondering who's deciding where we go right now.

"Master Amdi's pilot, Chief Nance, has taken over my responsibilities with regards to navigation."

He nods.

I could be making it up. He should not trust me. But I am learning today that I exude a very trustworthy aura—more-so than is always warranted.

He asks, "So, what the hell happened? What do they think you did?"

Even there: not "What did you do?" Instead he wants to know "What do *they think* you did?"

I tell him, "Imaginary treason."

He is perplexed. "Imaginary, sir?"

“As part of Master Amdi’s evaluation of me, I was placed into a simulation and given an assignment. As the situation inside of the simulation went on, I decided it prudent to abandon the mission objective, lie to my superior, desert, and pilot a Draather vessel to Earth.”

He looks at me, his feelings injured, as if to ask, “You? YOU would do that?”

“It’s the same decisions I would make in real life. They wanted to know what I would do? I showed them what I would do. There you have it.”

Petty Officer Wanner croaks out, “Why?”

In no hurry, I step forward towards my cell’s bars.

He backs up, making himself out of reach.

I rest my forehead against a gap between bars, glare at him, give him a really evil look, and I tell him: “They put my dog in the simulation. So I said, fine: gloves off.”

He nods, and then without another word, he continues past my cell, and exits through another door on the opposite end of the brig.

An hour later, my stomach is grumbling. It’s past what would normally be dinner for me.

A door opens.

“ALL UP!”

I rise from my metal bench, and stand in the center of my cell, hands up. One of Master Amdi’s officers who I don’t know has me turn slowly in a circle, hands still raised, and then she places some items of clothing on the ground outside of my cell. I dress in the pale blue t-shirt, the blue boxers, the white pants. She has even given me socks and sneakers. I am supposing that I will not get the opportunity to shave, but, notwithstanding, the outfit comes together well enough. It has a very civilian look to it. I embrace that.

Master Amdi’s officer who inspected me and gave me the clothing opens my cell, puts me in handcuffs and shackles, and then her and three more of Master Amdi’s officers perform a high-flight-risk escort on me, leading me out of the brig.

I expect that we are going to the interrogation room, and am surprised when I am brought to one of the conference rooms; Two types of rooms that are similar in concept, I suppose, but it

does feel quite a good deal more optimistic to be brought to the conference room, of the two.

In the room, there is a round table with an off-white surface. Upon the table are two dozen scattered candles, red wax, and these candles provide the only light in the room after the door is closed behind us. The walls are all painted black; there are display screens embedded at certain points within the walls, but, with them currently switched off, they blend in with the black paint. Master Amdi sits at one side of the round table. I am put into a chair opposite them, and then Master Amdi's officers back off to the edges of the room, observing. The round table is just large enough that leaping over it to strangle Master Amdi would be an awkward move, even if I were not in handcuffs and shackles (not to mention that my good will persists).

Master Amdi leans back in their chair for a moment, and then leans forward over the table, cupping their mouth in their hands, pensive, philosopher-like, wondering, staring at me.

I tell them, just like I told them when I got out of the simulation: "You wanted to know what I would do. I showed you what I would do."

Mouth still cupped in their hands, they say through their fingers, "Let's review what it is that you 'did do,' Chief Boston. I want to make sure we're on the same page about that."

I nod. I ask them, "What would you say that I did?"

"The simulation began with yourself, Commander Neemen, and Specialist Lim aboard a space craft orbiting a Draather exoplanet. A very, very cold sphere in the cosmos. Sunless, of course. The mission, as Commander Neemen went over with you, was that you and her were to be teleported down to the planet adjacent to a Draather arms factory, operate sophisticated surveillance technology to gain crucial intel about their supply routes, and then you and Commander Neemen were to each inject yourselves with a marking agent, allowing Specialist Lim to target each of you with the teleporter, and bring you back aboard the orbiting space craft. Do we agree, or do we not agree, that this is the board that we began with?"

"You had also put down a king."

Master Amdi sighs through their nose. They go on, "As Commander Neemen was discussing these items with you, you

were reviewing some of the intelligence that had been gathered about the exoplanet, and about the arms factory.”

“I was.”

“And what was it, in your words Chief Boston, that stood out to you from among that intelligence?”

“Vaquero.”

“Being?”

“Among the assets boasted by the arms factory, one was an Earthling creature of canid form, but with six robotic legs, each prehensile, and a pulse grav-pack apparatus allowing for the ability of flight. They claimed to have taken this Earthling creature from some type of celebration, honoring the creature’s accomplishments in war, and were studying the creature to be recreated for their own side. There were two photographs included as well. I recognized that they had captured my partner, Vaquero.”

Master Amdi does not nod, does not shake their head, does not sigh, and all around could be mistaken for a statue. They then say to me, “Tell me about Vaquero.”

I answer, “He likes butter.”

Master Amdi laughs. They pick up one of the red candles, and seem to ponder over it for a moment, deciding whether to do something with it (throw it at me? blow it out? I don’t know,) and then they merely continue to hold it. I see a line of red wax begin to melt over the side of their clenched fingers. Master Amdi goes on, “So, you did all of what you did, because Vaquero likes butter.”

“Vaquero is a hero,” I go on. “October 27th, 2209. The Craigen experienced catastrophic failure on reentry into Earth’s atmosphere. Before being drafted, I specialized in search and rescue work, with my partner, Vaquero. The Craigen Mislanding was not far off the coast from where we lived. I flew us out and we participated in the rescue efforts. He saved seven hundred and nineteen lives.”

“Did he.”

“A sheep dog can guide many sheep; Vaquero guided many sheep that day. He is a hero. He is a vastly valuable asset to Earthlings, and Commander Neemen was going to let him be

killed and dissected by the enemy because she failed to appreciate his worth.”

“She was your superior.”

“She was not superior to him.”

Master Amdi leans back in their chair. The red candle, which they had still been holding in their hands, they set down on its side on the table, pressing out the flame with their thumb and pointer before laying it down.

Master Amdi continues. “So, then. What happens next. You, Commander Neemen, and Specialist Lim are reviewing the intelligence, the mission objective, and are planning your itinerary.”

— — —

Commander Neeman places two sewing pins into the map out on the table. “Our recon points will be here, and here.”

Chief Boston glances up from the intelligence papers, nods, and looks back down to the papers.

Specialist Lim comments, “I can *almost* bring each of you down at exactly those locations. Commander Neemen, you will be, five feet off, I can bring you in behind this boulder here.” He points to the boulder on a photograph of the location that is laid out on the table.

Commander Neeman looks at the photograph, and says, “That works.”

“Chief Boston, you will have to go a bit farther, but, not much. I could bring you in ahead of the exact location, but, there’s no cover, you would be appearing in the open and then having to retreat, if I do it that way. Instead, if I bring you in thirty yards back, it’s a little bit of a walk, but through *this* path, you’ll have cover the entire time.”

Chief Boston continues to stare at the papers.

Commander Neeman prompts, “Chief Boston?”

Chief Boston says, without looking up from the papers, “Thirty yards is fine.”

Specialist Lim mentions, “Chief Boston, if I can get you to look at the route that I mean, there is this one important part here, you’ll have to walk low, to keep your cover.”

Chief Boston glances up and assesses where Specialist Lim is pointing to in a photograph. “Noted,” he says, and again looks down at the papers.

Commander Neeman goes on. “With both of us able to pick up the ricochet encryptions from either side, we should have an unscrambled feed pretty instantaneously, and be ready to go back up within five minutes, give or take depending on what part of the comms cycle we catch them in.”

Chief Boston looks up from the papers to Commander Neeman. “Go down, observe, and return, is the entirety of our mission? We’re not actually setting foot inside the factory at any point?”

“No we are not. No need.”

“You’ve reviewed this intelligence as well?”

“Yes, why?”

“All of it?”

“Yes,” Commander Neeman says again, “Why do you ask?”

“Just wanting to make sure that if any hazards stood out to you, I wouldn’t miss them.”

“No, nothing of the sort if we exercise CARE, and CAUTION. Stick to the plan. Stick to the routes. And we’ll be down and back before lunch, and Earthlings will never have to think about this exoplanet again.”

— — —

Vaquero and I bounce around the air above the sea, nearby an oil rig, in the Gulf of Mexico. Three dimensional fetch: we love it. I bounce with my grav-pack and hurl the stick we brought, throwing it towards the distant shore of Texas. Vaquero darts after it, hitting the grav pulses again and again back to back, and snatches the stick out of the air with his teeth. He then pivots and soars up into the air above me, and drops the stick, sending it falling to me. I catch it out of the air. He soars out away from me, and then turns back and looks at me, coming forward now as slowly as the grav-pack’s propulsions will allow him, wagging, waiting for me to throw the stick again. I throw it, this time towards Mexico.

That night in our guest quarters on the oil rig, I am in bed reading a Sherlock Holmes adaptation, a romance novel where Holmes and Watson are together. Vaquero has laid down with his tail end near my head. He passed gas a little earlier, I heard the little ptht and glanced over to see his tailhole pulse. And I'd be lying if I said the smell of my partner didn't endear me to him, make my affectionate feelings for him all come to the front of my mind, be it the smell of his breath, the smell of his fur, or, sure, the smell of his gas. The romance novel gets steamy. I set it down, tilt my head over to Vaquero's tailhole, and give my pal's butt some licks and smooches. Vaquero's tail wags; I can feel the base of it rubbing against the side of my head.

— — —

"They must have changed the schema," Chief Boston says through the comms. He keys his outgoing comms off after saying it, not wanting to gum them up with his chattering teeth.

Commander Neeman asks once again, her voice impacted by shivering, "You have the receptor dialed in to six, subbearing eighty one, key A 4 4 A F O 2 A 2 5?"

Chief Boston keys back on his outgoing comms and repeats the information back, and says, "Yes. The blockage opacity goes down to... ninety nine dot nine eight seven nine one, if I toss a receptor over the boulder, closer to the factory, but to actually go out there and get even that much, I would need to go into open view."

There is silence on the comms for a moment.

— — —

I have flown us back out, after we have dropped off the large portion of the passengers that we were able to get aboard initially. I keep our craft going in a slow, lazy circle above the Craigen wreckage. Every few minutes, Vaquero carries another passenger up to me in his six robotic prehensile legs, drops them off, and then dives back down to see if he can go fetch another. I spend most of my time in the cargo hatch (now functioning as an infirmary) and I tend to broken bones and burns, keeping

one eye on the data feed in the side of my goggles, that shows me a video feed of what Vaquero sees, and allows me to butt in on his radar readings. Through my mouthpiece that is connected to his earpiece, I can let him know, "Heat signature, right, forty yards." And then he turns right, and proceeds through the wreckage, nose sniffing for the next one to fetch up.

— — —

Chief Boston and Commander Neeman both arrive at a small access door into the arms factory. Both are breathing heavily, and have opened the outer layers of their cold-weather clothing.

Commander Neeman says, "This should be MORE than close enough. I'll stay here. You get around to the other side. And then we'll get out of here. If you encounter ANY trouble along the way, inject yourself, have Lim bring you back, and we'll try again another time."

Chief Boston looks down at one of his radar instruments, points it at Commander Neeman, and depresses a trigger on it.

Commander Neeman's comms cease to work, incoming or outgoing.

Commander Neeman goes on, "You get the plan?"

Chief Boston nods, walks past Commander Neeman as though to begin going around the arms factory, and then as he passes her he takes the marking injector from her jacket pocket, and instead of continuing around the building he enters the small access door, and locks it from inside.

— — —

I have woken up in the middle of the night, mouth and throat dry, and no dog in my bed. I shamle out of bed and go down the stairs, avoiding the parts of the stairs that creak, not wanting to wake Vaquero, if he's gone down to fall asleep by himself on the couch, for some odd reason (he and I almost always share a bed, but once in a while he prefers the floor beside the bed, and so him sleeping down on the couch is imaginable)

As I get to the bottom of the stairs, I can see, by the glowing light of the oven and microwave clocks, that Vaquero is in the

kitchen, his front paws up on the counter, and he is licking the stick of butter that I leave out for cooking, and he is intensely happy to be doing so, savoring the flavor, loving it.

Later as the sun is rising we play fetch in the back yard, and then when we come in, he uses his grav-pack to get up to my head and start humping the back of my hair midair. I laugh, and let myself fall down onto the ground, and there on the ground I drop my drawers and let him grab me and breed me and form his tie with me.

— — —

Chief Boston attempts to wipe the purple blood off of his left eye as he makes it into the laboratory. A canid in the room begins barking very loudly. Chief Boston looks around, spots the canid in a cage, and runs forward towards the cage. On the way, Chief Boston retrieves one of the marking injections from his jacket pocket and removes the cap. At the cage, he reaches through the bars of the cage with the injection, and injects the canid. Then, using the other injection, he injects himself.

Chief Boston shouts through his comms, “EXTRACTION, BOTH MARKS.”

In short order, the canid and Chief Boston vanish from the Draather laboratory, and are then on the orbiting vessel Chief Boston had come from.

— — —

“Draather,” Master Amdi goes on, “after all of this disturbance, do notice the orbiting vessel, and send a ship to recapture Vaquero from you. Using the orbiting vessel’s weaponry, you and Lim eliminate the Draather crew from a distance.”

“Easily.”

“And then you see it fit not only to board this Draather vessel, but in fact pilot it, directly, back to the holiest of holies, Earth itself.”

“I did a comprehensive sweep of the Draather vessel. There were no unknowns.”

“There were no unknowns *that you found*,” Master Amdi emphasizes.

I ask them, “Was anything present in the simulated ship that I missed?”

They hold a scornful look on me, and then they answer, “No.”

I say again, “I did a comprehensive sweep of the Draather vessel. There were no unknowns.”

“So at the end of this all, you do not accomplish the mission objective. You have stranded your superior on a hostile planet, almost certainly to die. And you have deserted.”

I lean down to one of the red candles on the table, and chomp out the flame with my teeth.

Master Amdi seems impressed.

I give them a real evil look, and I say to them, “We fight these wars for our loved ones. You brought in the loved one, made yourself an enemy against him, and now you act astonished that I fought for him.”

“You regret nothing.”

“Not a single thing.”

Master Amdi gestures for one of their personnel to come over, and then takes an item from him. Master Amdi holds up, over the table between us, the key to my handcuffs. The metal of it glimmers in the light of all the candles.

Master Amdi says to me, “I think that a different assignment calls to you, Chief Boston. You were indeed drafted for your skills as a pilot, as we were in dire need of pilots. But you appreciate a bigger picture. You cut to the bone and do not apologize. You are heroic and sinister. And I think that you have many stories to tell. I would very much like to have you as a member of my council. You would be thirteenth councilperson.”

I ignore the glimmering key that Master Amdi holds, and glare at them, eye to eye, as though trying to mentally shoot a killing laser into their head.

Master Amdi adds, “I would arrange for Vaquero to be brought here, to cohabit with you.”

I continue to glare.

Master Amdi adds further, “He would see no combat at all.”

There it is. Excellent.

I hold out my right hand over the table (I had already removed both of my hands from the handcuffs, and was holding the handcuffs under the table in my left hand.)

Master Amdi's officers all shuffle in place on their feet, obviously perturbed by my magic trick.

Master Amdi is perplexed as well, but then sets down the handcuff key, and reaches out and shakes my hand.

AND IN DREAM I

W.J. (Waking Journal)

Today at work was hell. Stefan called in and Emile and Mariana didn't cover, so there was no one forklift certified on the shift. No shit we're not going to have any fork operators if they keep firing them for finding any criminal record, everyone saw this coming, everyone would take the guy who did time for trespassing over having nobody at all. Lizzy had me doing work that's supposed to be done with a forklift, with a pallet jack and a fucking ladder. All day. All day, carrying stock up and down, item by item, and then pulling it from one side of the building all the way to the other. All day I was thinking, over and over again, "Sleep cannot come soon enough." My feet were killing me, and I started to have an ache in my left knee when I would go up the ladder. My feet are better, kind of, now that I'm at home sitting in bed and I can take the pressure off them. I just got home. I'm going to take my sleeping pills and be in a better place.

D.J. (Dream Journal)

When I came into the dream, me and Love were having sex. We were on our sides in bed. The bed was the bunk bed that my childhood friend Kennidy had, and it was in his room too, except his room was way-way-way bigger and had a forest inside of it. Me and Love were on the top bunk, and the bed was a lot

wider than it was in real life, we had plenty of room up there for us. I was in my furry coyote form, with a penis and balls, no breasts. Love was in her furry german shepherd form, with a vagina, medium sized breasts. As we laid there on our sides facing the same way, I was slowly, savoring-ly, sliding my coyote penis in and out of her human vag. We both tend to go animal for the male genitalia, human for the female, when we're in our furry forms; not always, but it seems to be that way a lot of the time. As we were having sex, I had my muzzle-y coyote chin planted on her shoulder, slobbering on her fur a little bit, and I was hugging her, reaching my arms around her german shepherd-haired body to pet her tummy and grab her boobs. When I had been in the dream for a while and savoring it, we said while still having sex:

♥ — “Your knot feels perfect.”

🐾 — “You feel perfect, my love. All of you. I can't get enough of all of you. Your heat, your fur, your beautiful pointy ears. I needed this.”

♥ — “I needed it just as much. Let it all out in me.”

🐾 — “I love you.”

♥ — “I need you.”

I started to hump her faster, and was in love with her moans. I began putting my fingers in her mouth as I humped her, pressing her big canine tongue and feeling her strong canine teeth. At one point I went to take my hand away from her mouth, and she grabbed my hand and stuck it back in. Soon I was ready to finish, but didn't want to yet, so I said:

🐾 — “Let's switch.”

I pulled my knot out of her, and she turned around so that we were face to face on the bed, and then I gave myself a cunt that was wet and needy and roaring to go, and she had a german shepherd balls and sheath with a red tip sticking out of the end of the sheath, and she licked my whiskers once and then pressed her sheath against my cunt and started humping, and soon her penis was sliding in and out of my front, and soon I could feel her knot swelling. I spasmed with orgasm after orgasm and she filled me and used me.

She fucked me for a really long time, and when she finished, I had such an intense final orgasm around her knot, fatigued from

already cumming so much. That final orgasm consumed all of my thoughts inside of it, my every thought was a climax of orgasm from Love's swelled penis.

While she had me knotted, we spent a long time there, front to front, catching our breath and looking at one another and running our fingers across the hair on each other's faces and petting one another's heads.

Eventually when we had caught our breath, we were having a chipper conversation, while she was still knotted in my cunt. I forget a lot of it, but a part I remember was:

♥ — "Was work today really dumb?"

• — "It WAS, how did you guess?"

♥ — "Pff. It's dumb every day."

• — "It really is just the worst."

♥ — "I'm glad you're here right now and not there."

• — "Same. I'll take being knotted by you over basically anything."

♥ — "Even speedrunning Zelda?"

• — "I would never touch a video game again, if it was between that and you leaking dog juice into me."

♥ — "I didn't know you had THAT much of a hard-on for me."

• — "Love."

♥ — "I know, I'm teasing. Mm, your puss feels so good."

• — "Your boner feels amazing."

She rolled her eyes when I said boner. I still haven't found out what her preferred term is, I think it might be one I've already tried and she's just toying with me.

When her knot slid out of me, we made out and drummed pats on each other. Then Love said:

♥ — "Let's run fast."

She and I became ferals and we leapt off of the bunk bed and began running around through the woods that's in Kennidy's room. Most of the time she's a german shepherd but is sometimes a cheetah; I am a coyote about half of the time, and a stallion most of the rest of the time, and occasionally a colt.

W.J.

Work today was fine. It sucked, but it was fine, relatively. I was scanning boxes and putting the stickers on them. It sounds easy, but a lot of times the barcodes don't scan until I really work the laser around on them for a while, and then, after I put on even like 10 stickers, the adhesive started to really pull away the skin on my fingertips. Not visibly, for the most part, but it feels like that, it felt like my skin is being ripped off with every label. But, compared to other tasks, not complaining.

D.J.

When I came into the dream, me and Love were grilling veggies on a grill at our beach-adjacent mansion house. The sunlight felt serene on my fur and on my face and shoulders. I was a furry coyote wearing a black tanktop and black underwear, I had a cunt and no boobs. Love was a furry cheetah and had a vagina and no breasts, she was wearing black sweatpants and a hawaiian shirt and had a lei hanging from her neck. I don't remember very much about what we were grilling, other than that it was vegetables on the grill and that they smelled delicious as they cooked. I mainly remember just having a pure feeling of serenity, happiness, contentment, peace, joy, at being there with her.

Later on, me and Love were down at the beach, standing on the water as the sun was setting, and playing catch with a baseball, throwing it back and forth to one another. Our throws were great, heavy and accurate, and I don't remember either of us ever having to run or jump to be able to make a catch, I just remember her throws landing perfectly, smacking into my hand, and then I would throw it back.

The last part before I woke up was that me and her went under the water. We could breathe like we were still in air, and the water was hot, like we were in a hot tub. We could have our eyes open too. And so we were there on the sand under the water, smiling at each other, and I was running my fingers through the wet cheetah hair on her face, and I was wagging.

W.J.

My biggest desire is to go to sleep and never wake up again. There is the real world that the love of my life dwells in where I can be my real forms and enjoy my real pleasures. Then I am cursed to wake up, and be stuck in the same body forever and do made up work so that somebody's make believe spreadsheet makes them look good to their boss, and then that boss can look good to their boss, and so on. I long for eternity covered in fur and with my love, where the notion of moving product around is a distant memory from an old, long-disintegrated world.

D.J.

When I came into the dream, I was walking around in a library. The library wasn't one I had ever been in before, I was visiting somewhere new. The library was huge, with stairways going up and down, crisscrossing to different floors, now and then I had to walk through an open courtyard, and the green grass in the lawns wavered in the summer heat. Eventually I peered around a shelf, and there in a little reading area with a few tables was my old friend Mark. He was alive again, his tattoo sleeves looked super sharp, like he had gotten them touched up recently.

☞ — “I'm gonna sell my car. I never even use it, it's easier to get around on the subway anyways, so I think, sell the car, reinvest the money. I'll take a bus if I ever need to go out of town for something.”

He drives that car all the time, so this didn't sound like a great plan to me, but I didn't really say anything about his business, I continued along through the library.

W.J.

Mariana asked today when we were walking to the break room if I'm married. I told her no. I thought about mentioning my love, but she went on to talk about how not getting married is smart of me, her first marriage just wasn't what a partnership should be, her second husband who she's still with is much better, but marriage isn't something you need to rush into. I nodded along and didn't really comment.

D.J.

When I came into the dream, me and Love were standing on the beach at our mansion house, in the sunset. She was touching my face, licking her german shepherd fingertips and smoothing down parts of my coyote face hair. She adjusted the sash that I was wearing. I was wearing black formal pants and a rich blue collared shirt, and had a black sash to represent work I had recently done feeding the hungry. Love was wearing a black dress that had a streak of blue going across the front, it looked like someone had tossed a handful of powdered blue chalk diagonally across the front of her dress. Sometimes when I looked at her again it was the same idea, a black outfit with the streak of blue chalk, but she was wearing black pants and a black collared shirt.

♥ — “We’re ready.”

There on the beach in the sunset, we hugged, and then when we parted we were inside the entrance of a restaurant where we were meeting my old friend Mark and Crystal, his mom.

♥ — “Snookums!”

I follow the sound of Love’s voice, and see that she is standing by a waitress and needs me to come follow them. The waitress, a human, leads us through the restaurant around corner after corner, until we arrive at Mark and Crystal. When we sit down at the table we learn that Mark and Crystal have already picked out what me and Love are going to order. Me and Love share looks with one another, acknowledging without saying anything that that was rude of them to decide without us, but then me and Love also kind of start sharing smiles with one another, acknowledging without saying anything that this is part of the fun of having rude friends, that later on the drive home we’re going to have so much to laugh at about with each other. In some ways we wouldn’t have it any other way.

I had a really tasty rootbeer and tried some of Love’s strawberry soda and liked it. I remember that we all had a really long and detailed conversation, and all throughout Crystal was really funny and also made a lot of really good points.

The only part I remember specifically doesn’t illustrate that entirely, but it was:

🐼 — “You don’t even need strings and a neck to play guitar like the real famous guitarists do. Just hang a sheet off of a line, and bat on it with some sticks.”

♥ — “Ugh, you would.”

🐼 — “I’m not even wrong, try it, record it analog, play Van Halen side by side by side by side with it and you won’t know the difference.”

♥ — “Preposterous.”

🐼 — “Try it with your napkin and knife.”

♥ — “Shush. Enough about that. Who is everyone’s favorite guitarist, like, actual guitarist?”

I think about a time me and Love were in the jungle and there was a stage made of yellow blocks of stone and everyone in the audience and on the stage was an animal, hyenas and foxes and some bears looming over us who were meandering around through the crowds of us smaller animals, and some rats scurrying around lower than us. The foxes on the stage were batting their instruments with their front paws, it came out sounding thrilling and beautiful. When the guitarist fox began his guitar solo he started pouncing all around the instrument, scratching at it with his forepaws and kicking it with his hindpaws as he leapt across it again and again, and that was my favorite guitarist I’ve ever heard, no contest. I give a glance to Love as we sit there at the table in the restaurant, and she squeezes my arm in her hands and gives my cheek a little kiss, she knows this is the guitarist who I’m thinking of.

▲ — “Back in Duluth, well, actually this would have been a little bit outside of Duluth, but, that’s where I was living at the time. I was seventeen, I had a fake ID, and I was the warrior empress of the whole wide world, I thought back then. I was in a bar that I wasn’t supposed to be in, and I saw this man on the stage, and I never caught his name, but it was him up there with a guitar, and he was doing fun songs, lively but invisible things that people were having their own conversations over, I wasn’t even paying much attention to him really. But then he started playing this different song, and it was like he had become an angel. And his guitar was like he had started plucking harp for a queen. And suddenly, he had that entire bar wrapped around his

finger. And that man, whatever his name was, that's my favorite."

— "Oh wow, that's amazing. It's really cool that you got to be there for that."

▲ — "Oh excuse me, I know I was supposed to answer Eddie Vedder or something like that, not tell you about this bar from a long time ago that you can't look up."

♥ — "No, no! Our favorite guitarist is a really long story."

Mark has his hand raised in front of himself.

♥ — "Yes, Mark?"

☞ — "Try the sticks."

That really is so Mark, to be so convinced of something that no one else has heard about. I don't know whether or not in the dream it would have worked if any of us tried it.

Afterwards me and Love were out behind the restaurant, just the two of us. It was nighttime and we could only see by the light of the orange-yellow-ish tall parking lot lights, but we weren't even right under those, we were kind of over by the dumpster.

♥ — "I want to show you these gem rings I got on my last adventure."

Love took four rings out of her pocket, one of them had a gem on it that was bluegreen, another green, another yellow, and the last one red.

Love put the yellow one onto my middle finger, and I felt a heavy golden crown appear on my head, and heavy gold bracelets and anklets.

I took it off, and put on the red one instead, and then I looked down at my hands and saw I had red fur, black and white striped demon claws, fire spouting out at points on my wrists. I took the red gem ring off too.

Love put on the bluegreen ring on one hand and the green ring on the other hand, and then she looked like a really small weeping willow tree.

— "Thank you for showing these to me."

♥ — "I trust you, you know?"

It was a really good night for us, I really liked it.

W.J.

Ran a bunch of errands today, mostly just miscellaneous bits of shopping, it was a nice day out, warm and sunny with a breeze that would roll through now and then, and I enjoyed driving around. I ran into Lucy in line at the Panda Express, she still lives in the apartment building from when I first moved here although I forget the name of it again. She invited me to a neighborhood cookout a couple days from now, and I plan on going, I think it'll be nice to see some of those people again. At home I played around with Ocarina of Time a bit, playing around with Bombchus to see what happens releasing them outside of the areas and stuff like that, what kinds of collision are out there and how they react to that.

D.J.

When I came into the dream, I was sitting on a couch in me and Love's beach mansion, facing the black face of an off flat screen TV, as sunlight shined in through the window beside me. I stood up, and walked down the hall, and looked into one of our guest bedrooms. There on the neatly made bed, sunlight shining in past the thin curtains, I saw Love in her furry german shepherd form with a dog penis and a series of breasts going down her chest. She had her penis in hand, masturbating, and she continued to pleasure herself as she looked up at me. I was in my furry black lab form, which I realized I had not been in for a while. I had a cunt and pair of breasts. I went onto the bed, and began sucking on Love's penis, now and then stopping to suck on her breasts. I was happily lost for a long time in the euphoria of her belly warmth, her sex tastes, her dog smells. Eventually as I continued to suck on her, she used a hand to pleasure my pussy, rubbing the outside, running her fingers along me in a way that was just perfect, it was just what the moment needed to become perfect.

W.J.

The men's room at work had some kind of plumbing issue, and everyone has to use the women's room now. It's absurd how freaked out everyone is by this. It's as though the apocalypse has

been heralded. They put out a table by the entrance with two cards that you can flip over as you enter and exit. One says OCCUPIED / VACANT, the other says MAN / WOMAN. You were only supposed to go in if it was vacant, or if the gender card matched you. Towards the end of the day Lizzy went around saying that they had changed it from the card, to just having it so that each hour, guys can use the restroom from 0 - 14, girls from 15 - 29, guys from 30 - 44, and girls from 45 - 59.

D.J.

When I came into the dream, me and Love and another furry we had just met while out for a walk were all at the beach at our mansion house, bumping a volleyball around between ourselves. It reminded me of that game as a kid, Don't Let The Balloon Touch The Floor. I was a furry black lab again, this time with a penis that had the tip coming out of the sheath a little as we played, balls, no breasts, no pants, no shirt, and a harness made of light blue straps, complete with a matching blue collar. Love was in her furry german shepherd form, vagina, breasts, no pants, a t-shirt with a Smashing Pumpkins album cover on the front, although sometimes when I look again it's a Green Day album cover or once it was Neutral Milk Hotel. She had a canine vulva this time, which isn't very common when she's in a furry form, I usually only see that on her when she's on all fours, but she looked great with it, there in her cool music tees, in the sunlight, playing volleyball with us. The other furry, who we had just met a bit ago, was a white rabbit, flat chest, I don't know other details because he was fully clothed the entire time, wearing jeans with rips in the knees, and a t-shirt that was a concert tee for some metal band. He had a pierced jowl and a row of piercing across one eyebrow, and had studs all around his long ears. I had never gotten the rabbit's name earlier, and I intended to bring it up with Love later, because I think she had gotten it but I'd missed it.

I remember now and then my stomach grumbled, but I wasn't hungry, and we all kept playing, and it was a lot of fun, it was a good time.

W.J.

There is often no conclusion in dreams, other than waking up. Sometimes it ends on a moment of climax, a bright flash or a sudden impact that startles me awake, but often times things are in the middle of happening, and then the dream ends. This is not too much in contrast of the waking world. Often things happen, and then life goes on, without any moment of climax, without any definitive resolution. Sometimes there is climax: a graduation to end schooling, a car crash to end your time spent with a vehicle, and of course there is the big moment, death.

From a materialist perspective, it is likely that when I die in the waking world, I will never dream again. My brain will cease to have the energy it needs to create an experience of reality for me, the energy required being the same whether I am waking or dreaming. Eventually, or, depending on how I die, perhaps immediately, my brain would no longer even have the structures needed even if it did have the energy again. The parts of the brain that invoke sensory experiences would decompose, or be eaten by wild animals, or get smeared across the road after I was hit by a bus, or whatever the case may be, but, I am not so famous that someone would preserve my brain in a jar, try everything to get it working again some day in the future.

From a spiritual perspective, it is likely that when I die in the waking world, I will be sent off to an eternity in dreams. The afterlife, whether Heaven or some other thing, feels, in my heart of hearts, like it would be very dream-like. I would no longer have any fixed obligations, no damnation to a single fixed body, I would be free from the laws of space and time, I could be with Love and everyone I've ever cared for and new friends who I haven't met yet and we could experience all of the things that we would ever dream of, endlessly. Death in the waking world could, from a spiritual perspective, be the best thing that ever happens to me.

From a practical perspective, I don't know whether materialism or spirituality is correct. I don't know what will happen after my heart has beat for the last time, and the lights have gone out. But I know that right now, by serving the waking world, I am every night turned over to dreams. I know for a fact

that continuing to wake is a way of continuing to dream. It's something that was on my mind today. That maybe there is solace in waking, for the fact that every time there is one more day, there will be one more night, and I will get to dream.

TWENTY THOUSAND UNITS DOWN

From Viper (QA TEAM G COORDINATOR)
To Iota (DEV)

Do you have the documentation for the room below level 4? One of my testers was noclipping below the level and found the room, none of us knew it existed until today when she found it and asked about it. We don't know of a way to access the room by ordinary in-game means, but the contents of the room are definitely a concern.

From Iota (DEV)
To Viper (QA TEAM G COORDINATOR)

What?

From Viper (QA TEAM G COORDINATOR)
To Iota (DEV)

There is a hidden room below ancient_templ that has contents themed around bestiality. It appears on today's build and yesterday's, we don't currently have any builds older than that installed, but I can say it's appearing on all of my testers' machines, this room is in the game. Do you have any documentation on how this room is meant to be accessed, and if we're allowing this kind of content into the game? It would be helpful to know what our considerations should be here.

From Iota (DEV)
To Viper (QA TEAM G COORDINATOR)

I didn't know about this at all. Get a full report made about this.

From Viper (QA TEAM G COORDINATOR)
To Team G Channel

Okay Geese! We are going to get a report compiled regarding this room that Hammer found. Ace and Thimble, please scour the level for any way to access this room as a player, currently we only know how to get there by noclipping, but it would be great to have an idea as to whether this room can be accessed by ordinary means. Everyone else, go into this room, just a reminder that it is 20,000 units below the center of the level, you won't see it at first as you're noclipping down, but it will come into view once you get close enough. Please add to the following thread with any details you find about what's going on in there, whether they seem obvious or hidden, we just want a full breakdown of what this room appears to be. Descriptions, screenshots, item IDs, everything you can provide is helpful.

Hammer will be writing the report for this. We're going to group everything about this room into one report. This is our top priority right now, drop everything else we had planned for today.

From Pie (QA TEAM G TESTER)
To Viper (QA TEAM G COORDINATOR)

I fuckin love this room I would fuck the shit out of this entire room

From Viper (QA TEAM G COORDINATOR)
To Pie (QA TEAM G TESTER)

Fuck's sake, are you drunk at 9 AM?

From Pie (QA TEAM G TESTER)
To Viper (QA TEAM G COORDINATOR)

I'm allowed faggot

From Viper (QA TEAM G COORDINATOR)
To Pie (QA TEAM G TESTER)

Well, I am gay, you have got me there.

Report 1139 – ancient_templ hidden room with questionable contents
Author – Hammer

Navigate to the apparent center of ancient_templ. Enable noclip mode. Proceed straight downwards. After proceeding approximately 500 units below the level, a distant entity will become visible. Continue downwards towards the entity, which is located 20,000 units below the level. Upon arriving at this entity, it will become apparent that this is a room with several features that center around bestiality / zoophilia / zoosexuality .

The room is cubic in dimensions, and aligned with compass directions. Walls are all txtr_33 , floor is flr_8 , ceiling is txtr_1 .

In the southeast corner, dog model dog_3 is seen in an animation mounting and humping dog model dog_1 , while beside them, dog_3 humps villager model vg_h_2 . Alterations have not been made to these models to include genitals or to remove clothes; in both couplings, this is effectively an act of dry humping, with no actual penetration visible. Bestiality is a salient word for this scene.

On the north wall is text that matches something referred to as The Zeta Principles . Zoophiles are known to use these pseudo “laws” to ethically justify the act of bestiality, or, a human having sex with an animal. The text appears in Times New Roman, centered alignment.

In the middle of the room, several phallic shapes appear, “tips” pointed upwards towards the ceiling. These objects have no pre-defined item IDs, and appear to be rendered after the level has loaded. There appear to be 11 phallic objects

resembling canine penises (penis , dick , cock , wiener , boner , hard-on , hardon, hard on), 1 phallic object resembling an equine (horse , stallion) penis, and 1 phallic object which may be suidae (pig).

Against the west wall of the room are framed pictures, using the picture frame models pfrm_1 , pfrm_2 , pfrm_3 , and pfrm_4 . The pictures appear to be recreations of mostly historic / mythological examples of bestiality. From left to right, they appear to be depictions of Leda and the Swan, The Dream of the Fisherman's Wife, a depiction of a cave painting featuring bestiality although it is unclear if this is referencing a specific real-life cave painting, and finally there is an example of cartoon furry pornography (porn , yiff) where a bipedal (anthro) fox uses his penis to penetrate a quadrupedal (feral) golden retriever vaginally, though QA has not been able to determine an extant source for this image after using the search features of a handful of popular furry websites / databases.

On the ground in the southwest corner are three interactable / readable objects, each using the book_2 model. All three when interacted with display the text of guides on how to have sex with different animals, which appear to be copied from existing guides from the internet. The southmost book teaches how to have sex with female dogs (bitch , bitches), the next book northwards teaches how to have sex with dolphins, and the northmost book teaches how to have sex with male dogs (stud , studs).

It is uncertain to QA whether the contents of this room are legal to publish, including depictions of bestiality, directions on how to perform bestiality, and writings justifying bestiality.

QA has not currently found a method of accessing this room without noclip. The only way to enter the room appears to be through cheat codes, though it must be emphasized that QA has received no documentation on this room, and so if there is an intended way to enter the room by ordinary means, QA may have missed it so far.

Screenshots of the room are attached to this report for QA purposes.

From Iota (DEV)
To Dev Channel

What the fuck is this?

From Mustache (DEV)
To Dev Channel

looooooooool

From Wedge (DEV)
To Dev Channel

looooooooooooooooool

From Iota (DEV)
To Dev Channel

When I find out who did this I am either buying them lunch or googling how to hide a dead body, I haven't quite decided yet.

From Pavement (DEV)
To Dev Channel

lololololol

From Iota (DEV)
To Dev Channel

Seriously who did this? We're going to look at the commit records and find out when (and by whom) the code was added. You might as well come clean and say it was a joke that you didn't think anyone would notice. This wasn't ever discussed as something that was supposed to be included in the game.

From Viper (QA TEAM G COORDINATOR)
To Hammer (QA TEAM G TESTER)

Really good work today, thank you.

From Hammer (QA TEAM G TESTER)
To Viper (QA TEAM G COORDINATOR)

Thanks for saying so. I uh, am not really disturbed by these kinds of contents. I just struggle to know what's okay to say professionally.

From Viper (QA TEAM G COORDINATOR)
To Hammer (QA TEAM G TESTER)

You did great, the balance was perfect.

From Ace (QA TEAM G TESTER)
To Thimble (QA TEAM G TESTER)

Oh my fucking god there's another room

From Thimble (QA TEAM G TESTER)
To Ace (QA TEAM G TESTER)

no

From Ace (QA TEAM G TESTER)
To Thimble (QA TEAM G TESTER)

Go another 20,000 units below the bestiality room we've already been looking at

From Thimble (QA TEAM G TESTER)
To Ace (QA TEAM G TESTER)

NO

Report 1140 – ancient_templ 2nd hidden bestiality room
Author – Ace

Directly related to Report 1139, there is a hidden room 40,000 units below the center of ancient_templ. This room is cubic in shape, and features a villager model (vg_h_5) playing a banjo while sitting on a chair in the center of the room. Surrounding him, several villager models from the game can be seen mounting and humping various animal models from the game. Full list of models and animations is attached to this report.

Like the room detailed in Report 1139, there is no known way to access this room by ordinary means.

From Iota (DEV)
To Dev Channel

One of you fuckers is getting fired.

From Crimson (DEV)
To Dev Channel

This is the best thing that has ever happened.

From Hot Lava (IT)
To Iota (DEV)

So, this news is going to be kinda brutal for someone, most likely. I was able to find out that this code was added to the game alongside the addition of one of the horse models, hors_6. This horse model features kind of different approaches to geometry compared to the other horse models, and so I did some digging, and it turns out that this horse model appears to be mmmmmmostly copied from a fan mod of the previous game. Like, the fan model was copied, and then a few details were changed, maybe to make it look like it wasn't copied. And, trojan'd into that fan model, was all of this stuff that made the hidden rooms appear in ancient_templ. I don't know half of how they actually pulled that off, I would check if other levels have the same rooms added, because them being able to include injection code for level IDs they couldn't have known makes no sense.

But. Yeah.

Someone on the dev team seems to have been copying off of a fan's work, and that fan was way too clever.

From Iota (DEV)

To Viper (QA TEAM G COORDINATOR)

Does the same room appear below any other levels?

From Viper (QA TEAM G COORDINATOR)

To Iota (DEV)

...Yes, the same room appears below twenty out of twenty other levels we just looked at based on this.

From Iota (DEV)

To Mustache (DEV)

IT informed me that you committed hors_6 into the game. Did you do this, to the best of your memory?

From Mustache (DEV)

To Iota (DEV)

Yes, I originally modeled hors_6 as a fan project, before I was hired onto the team officially. Why?

From Iota (DEV)

To Mustache (DEV)

The commit for hors_6 was the source of this room being added to the game. After the model data, it included more data that would add the room below any level that the hors_6 model was loaded into. Did you put that in there, back when you were a fan, as some kind of joke?

From Mustache (DEV)

To Iota (DEV)

Oh my god I'm not nearly funny enough to have thought to do that. Did it really get in from hors_6?

From Iota (DEV)
To Mustache (DEV)

Fuck's sake.

End Of Shift Report
Author – Iota

Removing hors_6 from the game due to QA reports identifying severe issues with the model. Future compiles should omit hors_6 model.

A POEM

Fuck yeah

I saw a spider