

“Pete! Would you move!? Why the hell do you sleep all day, anyway?!” Linda called out, nearly hitting Peter with a vacuum. Peter was jarred awake from a rather deep sleep, and he was understandably pissed about it. Though as was the pattern in recent days, there was little for him to do but to sleep, and he would find another spot to continue his nap. There was every chance Linda would make a point of finding him later with an excuse of ‘cleaning’ around him, but there was little he could do on that front.

Grunting, Peter raised his back leg to press a button on his collar, an advanced form of tech he’d recently been able to purchase. It allowed Peter some ability to speak, picking up the attempted cadence of his growls and grunts while in use. It wasn’t perfect, not getting the words right often, but two years into his tenure of being a pit bull, Peter was generally used to it and tended not to make many mistakes when attempting speech.

“Because. I’m. Tired. All. The. Time” Came the slightly slow, robotic tone that was his only way to communicate with people. He preferred not to use it often, finding it cumbersome and annoying. However, as of late, he was getting tired of the one-sided arguments Linda threw at him, and he made a point to speak back to her on every occasion. It was petty, it was spiteful, but given what he perceived to be a constant stream of nagging, Pete was getting fed up to the point that retorted jabs were the only things that gave him a semblance of satisfaction.

“Tired? You don't even do anything!” Linda shot back, spitefully. She had never been a dog person or wanted to have a pet in general as much as Pete recalled from the early years of their courtship. It was obvious his fate was as forced on her as it had been on Pete, though she would likely have more empathy for an actual dog than she did for him, treating him more of the husband he was than the victim of illness he had been. So much for ‘in sickness and in health’, raising Pete’s spite all the more. However, with the collar, he was relatively limited in speech and mostly kept such thoughts to himself.

“I. Need. Out.” Pete managed to speak out, which largely wasn’t true. He was sure he could take a piss, at least, not a wasted trip. And it was a better reprieve from his wife’s spite than to find another spot to sleep that would likely be disturbed just as he was getting his rest.

Without a word, Linda moved toward the door, opening it and almost motioning for him to go out. Not for the first time, Pete was thankful they had purchased a house with a backyard, so he didn’t need to be taken for a walk and watched as he squatted to do his business. Not that Linda wasn’t tasked with picking up after him in the yard every once in a while, regardless, but it did give Pete a bit of privacy, not something that was often granted to a feral dog.

Eventually, he did find a spot to piss, something more involved than anything he would have prepared for in his human life. He needed to find the right spot, marking the yard as his

own so that other animals knew he belonged there. The instinct to do so confused him when he had first turned into a dog, and it took him some time to make sense of them. Eventually, the practicality of coordinating his urination and defecation became sensible to the point he really didn't think about it anymore. It was a facet of being a dog that he had grown accustomed to, one of the few things he didn't truly lament.

Looking up at the closed patio door of his house, Pete could see the movement of shadows within that signaled his wife was still going about her work. Even though she was right there, she had podcasts blasting in her ears, an excuse to avoid hearing him scratching at the door. Still, he tried to do so, walking up and scratching, calling out with "*Linda. Door.*" As assumed, she didn't hear him. And if he was being honest with himself, Pete wanted to stay outside and away from his wife, letting her calm down and giving him a place where he could sleep in peace. That and the outdoors were filled with a myriad of distractions for his canine senses, even when he was confined to the backyard. He would have to go through the house once more to leave through the front door, something he was not inclined to ask Linda for.

Of course, there were tons of things he missed about being human, things that he had always taken for granted but now had far too much time to reflect on now that he was a dog. His hands, for one thing. Not even being able to open doors was a pain in his ass, and Linda was hardly prepared to make him a doggy door, giving a myriad of excuses why she didn't want one installed. Pete had long since stopped trying to protest her decision. His voice, too, while back in a certain measure, was lost, a struggle to articulate himself or make his desires known. It was frustrating over the first year and a half that he had to use a combination of body language and assumption to have his needs met, more so the fact that in the midst of a global pandemic, there was little help beyond that of his wife, who did not seem inclined to provide her aid, much to the contention of them both.

Of course, there was his nudity, something he lamented even with the covering of fur and the sheath that hid away his maleness. His fur was short, and winters were cold, something he had to deal with since losing his humanity. Linda was hardly inclined to provide him a custom coat or the like, as much as she could have if she wanted to. It was hard enough to articulate when he was cold, let alone find something to deal with it. The house was warm, at least, Linda always kept it that way. But that did little for the few times a day he needed to go outside, and how long it always took to do his business in the cold. For now, at least, it was summer, but that wasn't to be the case forever. As silly as it was from a canine perspective, he hated being exposed and people seeing him now, especially with as many people who were now victims of the virus. Hell, if he was being honest with himself, save for his specific collar, he looked just like any other pitbull on the street.

Not wanting to reflect on the past too much without much hope of returning to those days, Pete did his best to shift his focus elsewhere. However, a rumbling in his belly only served to remind him of the limits of canine life. At first, he cared enough to articulate when he was hungry, and Linda was kind enough to figure out something suitable to feed him. But as the months went on and Linda's patience wore thin, Pete found little point in asking her whenever he was hungry, not wanting to piss her off. She never forgot to feed him, mind, and she never did resort to feeding him dog food, though such would have been considered abuse for a human turned animal via virus. But not having his autonomy to get food when he wanted was disparaging, though one of a long list of things he'd had to get used to moving into his second year since his humanity was robbed from him, likely forever.

Of course, he hadn't always been, as much as the hundreds of thousands that had contracted the Zoomorphic virus and experienced its most unique and rare side effects. The pandemic had been hard on most people as business, recreation, and most forms of social gathering were rendered impossible due to the risk of infection. The disease itself, origin unknown, had spread to all corners of the globe within a matter of months, something that no country had properly prepared for, much less was able to institute a proper measure of safety measures. Soon, pandemic life, such as social distancing, regular hygiene habits, and the closing of all non-essential services were the norm, leaving many lives changed forever, even those not directly impacted by the virus. All was done to reduce the viral spread, as well as the burden on the health care system, as the effects of the virus on those infected, were far more insidious and worth the massive inconvenience to avoid their most undesirable influences.

While most of those infected contracted moderate to severe flu-like symptoms, in a seemingly random population, developed the physical attributes of animals, a variety of species and breeds, though most of them mammalian. Ears, tails, noses, and other extremities were common, though many suffered the loss of hands, feet, or more extreme alterations. That was just a precursor to a full-bodied change that over weeks or months would fully transform one's body into that of an animal. While the human mind was always left intact, a slew of instincts also were instilled, leaving the victims able to control their bodies, though having to contend with the impulses of their animal forms. There was no chance of them losing themselves, no worry their minds would decay or anything of the like at least. But still, despite being such a drastic impossible change, it seemed that, for all science had tried to do for them, the process was one-way and permanent.

Though once thought that those spared from a full transformation would be stable in their new forms, as of late that was not the case, and any that showed a modicum of animalistic attributes would eventually be cursed to change into a new form. The delayed effect, something that Pete kept his eyes on as reports were released, was thought to have the potential to change back those who were infected. Still, with nothing promising to show for it, Pete had resigned

himself to likely remaining a dog forever, something he lamented and something he was having to come to terms with a little bit day by day. He had no choice, wanting to go on in life regardless of what that looked like and how much despair the prospect was for him.

In the beginning, like most people, Pete didn't truly comprehend the full impact of the virus on the world at large, much less himself. He followed the rules, of course, albeit reluctantly, to the point it would lead to fights within what was already starting to become a strained marriage. He loved Linda at first and, of course, still loved her dearly. But settling into married life was hardly the dream he had thought, Linda always acting like there was something more she should be doing and lamenting Pete for not helping provide it for her. Was it perhaps children? A larger house? She was hardly able to vocalize it, much to their combined chagrin.

Things came to a bit of a head during the pandemic when the two of them were forced to work from home, something that caused each of them to rub each other the wrong way. Too much time together led to too many arguments, and eventually, the pair found different corners of their house to plant themselves in. Linda was deathly afraid of the virus and what would happen to the world at large, while Pete was more optimistic, to the point he figured all the precautions were largely unnecessary and lamented the loss of time with friends and entertainment, often loudly at times. These differing ideologies lead to even more heated arguments and less time together, going so much as to sleep in separate rooms as their marriage strained from the pressure of the world at large.

Being one of the first ones to be infected by the transformative strain of the virus, Pete didn't notice the signs of such at first. He was sick, sure but not deadly so, his nose was running, he was oddly feverish, and largely fatigued. Of course, Linda required him to stay in the basement, something he was more than willing to comply with if it meant he didn't have to talk to her for a few days. Getting the rapid test back was a sign he was infected, but in those early days, the effects of transformation were largely rumor, little being reported in the media, and anything coming out sounding more like science fiction. And, as the weeks passed and the effects of the infection passed, Pete was confident it was safe for him to go back to life as he knew it. Linda even welcomed him back with some eagerness, figuring his life had been at risk and glad that he came out of it ok.

In those first few days, it started with strange urges, ones the two of them were not able to play off as silly. Sniffing things intently, for example, in particular the bathroom after his wife had used it, as though looking for something on her clothes. When caught doing so, it took him a few moments to find any fault with them, though the embarrassment was impossible to deny. Smaller things, too, like slobbering over his plates, and twitching his leg while scratching his ear were common for the next few days, and for a time, Pete found himself wondering if he was still sick.

Still, for those blissful few days, Pete felt his life coming together for the first time since the pandemic started, or even since the two had moved into their new home. They had even made love a few times for the first time in months, something that Pete was into from the smell of her, more than even the sight. Hell, he was inclined to have sex with the vigor of a twenty-year-old, even a little too rough for his wife. But the real trouble came on that third time, one that Linda agreed to though felt a little fatigued. It started out fine enough, Pete getting on top of her and making out. But the sensation of a thick, slobbering tongue in her mouth made her call out, Pete looking at her with confusion. It wasn't until he started to stare at himself in the mirror that he realized the tongue he possessed was far larger than it had been and hard to get back into his mouth. And it had happened in the course of a few days, making him worry for the future...

Though little information about the more rare effects of the Zoomorphic virus was out there, signs of transformation were noted in the effect of victims, ears, tails, and other animalistic attributes. Though very few had transformed further than that, as much as the news could believe, some had devolved all the way into a different form, a seemingly random animal in a process that should have, by all accounts, been a fatal experience. Aside from the loss of one's born body, there was little in the way of long-term repercussions, mental facilities intact, save for animal instincts, as much as the Changed were able to communicate. And while it was feared they were likely infectious while they changed, a process that seemed to take months or even weeks, Pete was relegated to the basement, and Linda forced to isolate as well in case she was infected. And in those brief periods, they talked, all her words were full of vitriol, further pushing them apart in an already frosty relationship.

Still, in the days and weeks that followed, Linda showed no symptoms, not even the mildest of colds. And given her spite toward Pete for something he had no control over, a resentment started to build up toward his wife, something that, even if he never got over, even to this day. The longer they stayed together, the more it seemed to build, though without a better future in sight, Pete didn't see any way out and was hardly in a mindset to hold onto the hate for her, as pointless as it was.

Pete hardly had time to reflect on his ire for his spouse, given the very real fear of all he had to lose. In the early days of the virus, most infected people seemed to gain animalistic attributes though not change any further, and while some could be disfiguring, most figured it was far better than the alternative of being animal. But Pete always had in the back of his mind that he might be one of those unfortunate hundreds that had devolved into an animal form, in his case, very much likely some breed of dog, fox, or wolf. It was too early to tell, but none of those forms held any appeal to them, and all he could do was to hope that he would be left with a canine tongue, as unappealing as it would be to possess such a thing for life.

That was not to be the case, much to his despair. Certain surface changes like the growth of hair down his back and ass, or the nub of a tail out of his spine weren't all too damning, given they were surface-level things that might stop once the virus had run its course. There was no way to tell in the early days, and he was glued to the TV for any news about what he might expect. There was frighteningly little, save for the fear-mongering and conspiracies that came with such a new reality. Most believed it was a hoax to try to scare people from obeying whatever new world order they saw the pandemic was trying to bring. And those victims of the change were highly sought out by interviewers for their shows, being the hot new topic on everyone's mind. Of course, people in Pete's condition had nothing to do but wait and see what would come of things next. Such work made almost impossible, though sick leave for those transforming was far off from being approved, and he was bleeding funds on top of everything else he was to lose.

The worst to come from the first few weeks was the gradual loss of not only his humanity but his autonomy. His culinary choices were limited as they were, a variety of his preferred treats potentially harmful to the canine form he was likely taking on. A meat-heavy diet was unwelcome as well, though he was lucky enough to have a dietary consultant, not one that came cheap, much to become a point of contention in his marriage. That, and having all his meals ordered in came with heavy costs as well, something that made it harder for them to make ends meet in the long term, Linda was forced to take on more work to compensate, something that only served to raise the tension in the household. It soon came to the point that they would go days without speaking through the divide, though that was something that he was used to, much to his chagrin.

Talking with a panting tongue was a struggle in and of itself, almost to the point he hated the guttural sounds he ended up making and stopped talking as much as possible. In hindsight, he wished he had tried to talk more, almost forgetting the sound of his own voice. It was one of the first things to go, something warping in his vocal cords that would soon make speech impossible. It became evident the first time he tried to call out to Linda, asking "Rrray! Raan Rrrro...shit! Rrraa that fuck's wrong with my...rroice..." Pete called out, only to be ashamed of the ability. Thankfully, Linda didn't hear him, Pete not wanting to suffer through her fear and disgust while he was going through so much himself. Even trying to teach himself how to talk with his new vocal cords was for naught and left him pained and winded from the efforts. Things were made worse by the fact his teeth were getting sharper, face altering, and mouth widening to the point that speech would be rendered moot. Soon, he gave up efforts to talk altogether, the guttural whines too much like a dog yet alien enough that it scared him off trying again.

It was relatively obvious as the weeks went on that he had contracted the version of the virus that would change him all the way into a non-morphic dog. Each day he woke up to no

further changes Pete found himself hopeful that it would be the end of it, and that he would be left in a hybrid, albeit semi-human state. But then little things, spreading fur, a longer tail. And with the facial changes giving him a horrifyingly warped visage, a growing part of him didn't want the changes to stop, unable to imagine looking at himself in the mirror each day. Not that being a dog was any better, but at least it was something that existed in the real world. And with that came a growing sense of recognition to let come what may, knowing there was nothing he could do about it, akin to being forced through a debilitating illness.

It seemed the progression of changes varied from individual to individual, and Pete's were to come gradually, something new and terrifying to wake up to each and every morning. Often he had trouble placing them, though made it a point to look for up to several hours to see how much more fur had grown, or how much he had shrunk. It was a little jarring every few days to realize the dimensions of his basement room had shifted, a sign of his decrease in size. It was jarring how the little things seemed to get to him, knowing that he was likely to lose it all but having to contend with each and every step in between was more than he could bear. The first steps in a long string of losses to incur over the next few days and weeks...

Through it all there was an undercurrent of fear for what the future might hold as the changes robbed more of his form. He couldn't imagine what it would be like to be an animal, a pet content to sleep most of the day, do his business outside, eat dog food, and run around chasing squirrels and sniffing other dog's butts. It was bizarre that not only would that be his fate, but he would *want* to do those things as much as any other dog was compelled by their instincts. Yes, he would be himself and remember everything about his humanity. But even humans were compelled by their instincts, and this would be entirely different to match his new brain and body. He hated the idea of the things he might need to do as a dog, the tiny compulsions that most dogs displayed. It was more than he could fathom, even though Pete was left with nothing but time in those first few weeks to imagine where life would take him.

Worst, perhaps, was the isolation, something he was starting to come to terms with as a result of the pandemic. It was far worse for him, not able to vocalize his wants and needs, and even how he felt about the changes. Linda had to deal with taking care of all of his essentials, though without being able to come down to the room, Pete let it fall into disarray, not bothering to clean up after himself and not seeing much point in doing so. It was not only thoughts of his own future that led him to despair, but the news online and on TV was just as bleak, the pandemic showing no signs of slowing down. People were isolated, angry, and scared they would be the next victims of the changes. And there were no predictions about when a vaccine would come for widespread use and allow people to get back to a semblance of normal, at least for the majority of the population that was still able to come out on the other side human. Everything he saw was bleak and depressing, yet necessary without any other distractions and a constant reminder of what was to come.

Every day he woke up with the feeling that things had hit their absolute lowest, the change was persistent in showing Pete that things could always be worse. Nothing made that point more obvious than the start of his altering hands. It was powerfully disconcerting to feel his fingers stiffening one day, the joints within starting to dissolve toward an eventual canine state. As much as he wanted to deny objective reality when it was getting harder and harder to perform basic tasks, like picking up a fork or turning on the TV, or even wiping his ass. It took some days for his fingers to be rendered moot, and in the ensuing days, he did his best to work without their reduced abilities. But the more they shrank, the less he was able to move them, to the point it almost felt like they were stuck together and rendered immobile. Thankfully, he was able to purchase an iPad with a sticky key function that his newly grown nails could operate, allowing him access to outside information and even some limited ability to communicate. But it was fleeting with the reality the changes were coming on more and more gradually to the point there was no denying their inevitable end.

All Pete could do, as his body shrank, fur covered his skin, and his muscles and bone structure made it harder and harder to stand on two legs, was hope that someday, somehow there would be a cure. It had been some months into the pandemic by that point, and the numbers of infected were reaching their apex. There were many fatalities from the virus, of course, though the number of those starting to display animalistic features was growing as well. While the progress of making a vaccine was growing by the day, there was nothing in the wind about a cure for those infected and changed, much less a way to change them back. Any hope Pete had of retaining his humanity was largely moot by this point, and all that was left for him was to await his eventual descent into canine-hood, unable to fully comprehend all that would bring.

It took over two months for the change to complete from that initial night he noticed his tongue was more canine to the point the tingling of change ceased entirely and he was sure the process was done. It was awkward at that midpoint when his anatomy was in flux and he could not walk to make his way to eat or to the bathroom, a little like being an invalid. Those were dark times he'd prefer not to think about going forward, being a canine in full was better than being at the midpoint of change. Though it was only just a little better with Pete knowing what his life would eventually be like as a dog, all he had to fear as the reality of his situation soon began to sink in that he was truly losing the body he had been born in, forever.

It took some time for the breed of his new canine self to become evident, not that he really cared on that front. Not an expert on dogs, not really even like them before, it was his wife who made it known to him, calling him a blue nose pitbull. The notion didn't bother him as much as it could have, not really caring what kind of dog he was becoming, all of them blurring together in his mind. He was becoming an animal, a pet, and there was little he could do about it, save for falling into deep despair over what was happening and cursing his fate. He was a little

larger and heavier than most dogs, which was something that helped make it more bearable, as much as such ever could be. At least he wasn't a small, yappy breed, though that was only a small consolation. Pitbulls didn't have the best reputation, though that mattered little with the fact he still had his human intelligence, albeit with the canine instincts necessary to operate his body as it was. Still, there was every chance that, while he was out in the world, such a reputation would proceed him and he might receive unwanted attention. Another thing on the long list of hurdles for his new life.

Eventually, with the changes done, Linda let him back upstairs, even going down to clean up after him, something that she lamented to no end. It seemed that enough information had come out to indicate people in the midst of change were no longer contagious, the illness symptoms being the only vector for anyone to change. Still, Linda was apt to treat him as a leper of sorts, not so much as touching him as she went about cleaning up his mess from months in isolation. In despair, as he was already, Pete didn't find himself bothered as he might have, a single stab in a skinful of wounds from his cruel fate in life.

Life as a dog was nothing like he could have ever prepared himself for, more bizarre and foreign than even his deepest imaginings could have conceived. It wasn't bad, from some metrics, given the variety of other animals that infected people had become as a result of the virus. Being a dog, a pet, was at least better enough that he could stay in the house he had purchased with his wife, and not be forced to live outside, in a zoo, barn, or some other form of shelter as many of his other infected brethren. Though he was not the most well-respected of breeds, he was at least a dog, a species that received a lot of sympathy. He would likely not be received as a threat, or, perhaps better, not be considered food like a cow or pig. Not that it was a likely fate for those in such bodies, but anything was possible, especially in this new world.

Still, Pete did not want to be a dog, and certainly couldn't imagine this being the rest of his life. That last part was a little daunting as well. While he was relatively younger as a dog than his human self, he only had so many years of good operation before old age started to catch up with him. And that was if he wasn't subjected to a wide variety of genetic ailments that came with his breed or canines in general. Not that life was guaranteed for anyone, but it was particularly disheartening to think he wouldn't even have a chance beyond, robbed of his life as well as his longevity.

Of course, there was the lack of autonomy that came with being an animal in a human world. No thumbs, no ability to open doors, no ability to get his own food or even use the bathroom without going outside was the norm. Obviously, he couldn't talk and was reliant on his iPad to communicate, thankful he had at least that. He had to wait for his wife to feed him, and let him out, and, worst of all, he needed her presence to take him beyond the confines of their yard without fear of repercussions. That, and his diet was largely limited as well, meats and

veggies needing to be raw or lightly cooked, and treats he enjoyed as a human all but deadly to him. Even things like alcohol were off the table for him to the point all his vices were gone with his canine life, bad for his humanity but deadly for the dog he now was.

Of course, there was another elephant in the room, one that he had never discussed with his wife but something he might have considered in the long term. They hadn't talked seriously about children, and both seemed more focused on their careers and thinking there was still time to make such serious decisions. Now, of course, they weren't even the same species, and without any siblings between the two of them, they would be the last of their legacies. Perhaps not the most immediate concern, given everything else that he had lost and all the impossible adjustments to his new life. But it was still something that lived in the back of his mind, at any rate.

Another deeply despairing fact was that, even though a vaccine was on the way, it was likely to do nothing for those already changed. There was unlikely to be anything for those already to change to change them back to the humans they had already been. Their DNA had been merged with the virus and the host animal, leaving nothing of their humanity to revert, so to speak. Even though the minds of the infected were intact and stable, there was nothing of their former bodies to be worked with. That was even if the scientific field at large could learn to understand the process the virus used to change people into animal form in the first place. Even with significant resources put forth on the topic, there was every chance understanding was beyond the human race with their level of technology.

Moving back upstairs with Linda was not the warm welcome he hoped it would be. Not that Linda had been particularly amenable to him through the door during those two months of change. And it wasn't like Pete expected to be wrapped up in her arms the moment it was confirmed to be safe for them to be in the same room together with no chance of Linda being infected from his presence. She didn't want him to starve or mistreat him, going out of her way to cook for him, let him out, clean up after him, and be his caregiver to get his affairs in order. But all that was clouded in a shroud of coldness, her demeanor standoffish and quiet. While she tended to Pete's needs, she seldom said anything to him, as though holding something against him and the disease he had contracted. Of course, Pete had no way to ask her about her true feelings, at least, at first. There was a sadness there, for sure, though she never seemed to cry or anything of the sort, save for when she thought Pete wouldn't be able to hear her. Of course, there was no way for her to know how acute canine senses were and there was no hiding her activities in the range of the house. But she seemed to keep her cards close to her chest, so to speak, the start of a distance between them that even Pete's eventual fate could not be chalked up to.

It quickly got worse in the ensuing months, especially while waiting for his disability funding to come in. Such led to frequent fights, one-sided as they were with Pete not able to

speak. She was stressed about money, mortgage payments still due, and the two of them down to one income. While many payments were halted due to government assistance from the pandemic, that was not to be the case forever. The burden of work, as well as providing for the two of them, was weighing on her mind, and though she could not fight with him, her ire was made well aware of her coldness. Smelling the tension in the air was enough that Pete opted to spend his time in other parts of the house, though that was nothing new in the scope of their relationship. Still, with their difference in species and inability to communicate, they might as well have been a million light years away.

Not all aspects of being one of the infected were grim, however. For the part of the government, programs were put in place to aid those infected rather rapidly. Perhaps they were being funded by someone wealthy who had contracted the disease, though it mattered little in the end for those who needed it. Housing and shelter were among the first things provided especially for all those species that were not in a position to stay in their human living spaces. Care for those in the facilities, as well, given their status was not infectious, was also provided, as much as anyone could have wanted such a job. All their accommodations were paid for by a generous stipend, given the cost of care for animals of their size, as well as the need for as many amenities to bridge the gap with their former humanity.

Having a usable iPad was better than nothing, he had to admit, though, in his early days, there was little for him to browse other than doom scrolling. The screen was a little hard for his eyes as well, though a setting on his device was soon enabled for his new range of eyesight. It didn't tire his eyes as much and he was finally able to use it as an escape from the trials of his new life, though only just. At first, a few forums popped up here and there for those who were infected or already changed. There weren't many full animal people on those sites, given getting devices for hands and hooves online took quite some time. But it was enough for him to connect with other people in the same situation as he was, and finally find a brief reprieve from the loneliness that had been bothering him for some time. He couldn't really talk to Linda, the text-to-speech feature was far too slow for his paws. And as much as she could, Linda was content to leave him alone, as though not wanting to be around what he had become. That was nothing new, and with this new world at the tip of his paws, Pete was soon to find something of a respite from his fate and an unexpected sense of camaraderie.

It wasn't good news at first, of course. Mostly people who were experiencing symptoms of change and wondering, with fear and confusion, what their lives would be like. Terror at the implications of being an animal were at the forefront, of course, and Pete stayed quiet, thinking there was little for him to look forward to. Other than a couple of the infected having been turned into monkeys or rats with usable fingers, there was no one who would properly articulate their experiences, and they were, by all rights, the lucky ones. The overall mood for those infected

was dire, though there was something to be said with a light at the end of the tunnel with emerging technologies to not only ease their lives but allow them to communicate more easily.

It started with a few funny interactions some people posted, slice-of-life scenarios. *My owner thought they fed me chocolate and rushed me to a vet but it was something else they didn't want to admit, or, I accidentally kicked my caretaker and gave them a brief concussion.* Maybe not funny, per se, but amusing anecdotes about their new lives as animals. Hearing the day-to-day struggles of being animals almost made it worth it to get up each day and check to see what people had posted. Everything from eating to miscommunications to even bodily functions was all hilarious to the point that Pete finally felt he had some friends in his new self, as much as his own stories were relatively bleak by comparison. Some of the more amusing ones were things like *my wife walked in on me while I was licking my nuts, or, I had to vomit a hairball and my brother thought I was dying,* though some of them felt a little too real for Pete, and he felt bad for them, thinking he might have some of his own to tell as he got used to his life as a dog.

As the months went on, more interesting and unique circumstances arose to compel Pete to look in on the forums wondering how some of the earliest of those changed were adapting to their new lives, and in a few cases, thriving. It was amazing to get feedback from not only a variety of species but also from those changed who lived all over the world. One of the regular posters had been a man changed into a panther from Germany, and since the forum was in English, his lack of speaking the language added an additional layer to his challenges. Closely following Siegmar's case, he had been taken to a relatively small big cat sanctuary, where another contributor, Sara, lived in her new tigress body. She had been lucky through her work competition as a chief engineer, still able to work from her new home in an overseer capacity. As her larger size made living in human habitation difficult, it was nice to interact with other fellow large felines and helped gather and ease their transitions into animal lives.

Part of Pete felt envious of that, his own marriage strained from his change and not finding many success stories of those in relationships before being infected. But with all Linda did to care for him in the house they lived in together, such thoughts were fleeting and Pete convinced himself lucky for what he did have. Not everyone was in such straits, of course, and many of those forced to be animals in lifestyle without their loved ones even bothering to come to their side during what was obviously one of the most stressful things a person could go through. So despite the troubles in their marriage and how they were drifting apart, Pete was in a place to count his blessings. After all, so many more had it worse than he did, and even talking a little about it on the forums made him even more thankful, given the reactions that some had who were not so lucky.

Eventually, the singular forums turned into something larger and more subsidized, a place specifically for those who had changed. It was mostly run by those who had changed, with help

from human admins, of course. But with its rise in notoriety, more and more people either changing or who had been animals for some time were signing up for the service. There were individual chat rooms for people of different species or in similar circumstances, as well as threads of advice columns, recommendations, and, of course, products that people-turned-animals could use. Capitalism at its finest, to be sure. But some, like Sara the tiger, were offering her own wares, items she had made for sharing with other changed animals. There was little in the way that an animal could create, but it was a budding industry and plenty of room for further growth.

As the months went by, the number of products and services had expanded to the point that it baffled Pete's mind. Satra's online business selling saddlebags was a crazy success, having so many online orders she was backed up for months. Of course, there were a variety of other things that could be sold to humans-turned-animals, from the obvious such as grooming and cleaning services, to the more bizarre. Toys were common as well, better quality than those sold to their animal counterparts but still desirable, if not only to indulge in their new instincts and proclivities, Hell, there was even some talk of designing some sex toys for those changed, something that made Pete a little squeamish but figured it would be needed eventually all the same.

One such service was, funnily enough, a podcast, one that started on the cusp of the pandemic. Whether or not that was to be the topic at hand, they had talked about the pandemic, and the budding infections that were turning into animals. It was a little ironic that several months into the pandemic, all three of them came down with the Zoomorphic virus, and, in fact, all started developing animalistic traits. Having been open and out as furies, the notion they were going to all be changing into animals was met with excitement rather than fear. The main host, Sam was to become a wolf, while his co-hosts were to become a lion, and what seemed like a shiba inu. Aptly, they changed the name of the podcast to Paw/Cast and made the focus on documenting their changes. That, in Pete's opinion, made for interesting listening!

However, there was an obvious problem with production, as the three hosts were soon to realize. While the idea of turning into anthro animals was powerfully attractive to them, it was soon obvious that such would not be the case. With hands becoming paws, bodies unable to stay upright, and voices soon to be forfeited, the tone of the podcast soon turned into one that had a very limited lifespan. As upbeat as they were about their changes, there was a note of sadness there, as well, that they would not be able to continue making their work in such a medium. Yet, by that time, with the likelihood of speech-to-voice technology for animals on the horizon, Sam's final message wasn't one of goodbye, but one of 'see you soon' with a genuine wolf howl to boot!

If he was honest with himself, Pete wasn't really on board with posting anything himself, wanting rather to drown himself in other people's stories to detract from his own. But the more he read about all the innovative things people were doing in light of having their lives upended the less inspiring. Not everyone was in such a circumstance that they could find some position in their new lives. But those relatively few that did serve as a beacon of hope for those that needed it. Making aspects of being an animal, food and bodily functions, and instincts, more normalized was powerful in gaining acceptance for their new lives. And even if Pete found himself waiting hours online, little to do but eat, go outside, and sleep, was exactly what he needed in those few months.

Of course, his focus was often on those who had turned into dogs, like him, or other animals that were allowed to live in houses. Not that it mattered too much, given that even someone as large as Sara the tiger was able to move in with a friend, however those arrangements worked out for her. Still, many thousands of people had been turned into dogs, and many were still living in their homes with their loved ones, part of the family. One woman, who went by the moniker 'MasterBitch27' seemed to have things rather easily, given her health benefits from her former career, as well as her stipend from being transformed. She was living with her human sister, and would often post pictures of her latest acquisitions, a spacious dog house, autofill food and water, a TV in the backyard, and things of that nature. Living her best doggy life, she would say, though not everyone was able to afford such indemnities. Still, it was a goal to reach for, and rather than jealousy, many people saw her posts as a beacon of hope, so to speak, looking forward to her posts and congratulating her for her success.

Pete, much to his dismay, was not in similar circumstances. Still being married, his own stipend was not as much as others, and Linda, as the heir to his estate in the event of death or a debilitating illness, was in charge of his money. Of course, she used it to buy him canine necessities, but there was no attempt to grant him anything to make his life easier. The more he read about other people's successes, the more he wondered about what he could ask for. A doggie door, a better bed, and a TV for his new colored vision would all be nice. But he knew with Linda's financial issues, he had no leg to stand on when it came to financial matters, and so was left to lament the things he could never have, thankful there were some others there who had it better.

A year into his tenure as a dog soon went by, and the rest of the world was changing itself, not in the way, of course, but life as humans had known it before the pandemic was starting to return, albeit forever changed. A vaccine rollout promised not only to reduce the chance of getting sick from the virus but assured that the zoomorphic aspects were negligible as well, making it possible to open public spaces once more. People were allowed to go outside again, wearing masks for now, though it was better than nothing. Shopping and recreational outlets were allowed to open again, and as spring slowly turned into summer, a feeling of hope

started to fill the minds of all those trapped inside, especially of the now-four-legged variety. And, there was every chance they could do so without the risk of infecting others or others changing, though it did little for those who were already infected.

Still, with that open freedom came a rapid expansion of amenities for those forced to change into animals against their will. That came in the form of zoos, outdoor recreation establishments, and public parks that were specially designed for former humans. Pete read about such places on the forums, the idea being that animals could run around and interact with those that had been changed. Though he hadn't been around any other former humans in person, he was under the impression that, be it a facet of the virus or some ways animals could communicate with human levels of verbalization. The idea of actually having conversations with others, without the use of type-to-speech technology was actually invigorating, though the chances of one being close enough for him to access was moot, at best.

Imagine to his surprise when he realized that his area of the US was an epicenter for those infected and began to transform. Whether or not it was a variant of the disease or something in the environment that left those more susceptible, there was no denying the correlation between location and rates of transformation, something that was observed in other parts of the world, as well. While the reasons for that were unknown, there was some consolation in the fact that places for those changed to congregate could be built within access of the majority of The Changed Community, something that was starting to stick as a moniker of sorts. And, one of the parks was scheduled to be built within Pete's own town, a little out of the way but something he could likely convince Linda to take him to if she was so inclined.

The park was advertised as somewhat of a safe space for The Changed Community, where they could be themselves and act more on their animalistic instincts, something that was awkward and even taboo for many of those as they described on the forums. With the new laws in place, all he needed was his collar as part of his identification, and Pete could technically go there himself. However, it would be much better for him to go accompanied by his wife, to avoid the stigma of being one of the Changed Community and the chance that people would come up to him to bother him for being a dog without a leash. Not that he wanted to be walked like a simple dog, but it was better than the alternative.

It seemed as though he didn't need to inquire about the park's development further, as much as it was being advertised. One day, Linda came to him with a package in the mail, a rather ornate letter that invited the two of them to a grand opening of sorts for the new park, coming up within the next few weeks. Linda, to his surprise, seemed amenable to the idea, though it was just as likely a result of her own need to get out of the house. And all that was left was for Pete to wait, excited and nervous in equal measure.

As much as a part of him wanted the chance to get out of the house to a place where he wouldn't be judged, there was another part of him that was terrified. He had seen stories of so many people online discussing their changes and how they adapted to their new lots in life. Having never encountered another changed person in the flesh, Pete found himself concerned with what such interactions would be like. So many of the threads he read discussed how much those who were able to meet in real life enjoyed acting on the instincts that left them so curious and shamed them to display around normal humans. Even if Pete ended up hanging out with other dogs, would they try to nip and chase him? Would they sniff his butt? Would he want to sniff theirs?

Ultimately, the day came far sooner than Pete was ready for, and Linda got him ready with his collar, something he hated wearing but knew was necessary. Being out of the house for the first time as a dog for any stretch of time, Pete was soon overwhelmed by the scents and sounds of the world at large. Some of them had been made aware to him from his place in the backyard, but it was one thing to hear or smell a squirrel from afar and another to see one in person, chittering and triggering some canine instinct to chase and hunt. He wasn't beholden to act on those instincts, of course, but the temptations were certainly more present the more his world was surrounded by stimuli.

The closer they got to their goal, the more the scents swirled around Pete's nose to the point he was barely able to sift through them all. There were odors of animals, one he had come to understand from his limited exposure. But it was the intricacies between them that took Pete's interest, nuances that might well have been from different species of birds and small animals, or perhaps even individuals. He had no way to know without more exposure, but it was almost maddening with the sheer information that was at his paw tips, had he had the time to really focus on them.

The sounds of the world, too, were almost deafening to the point Pete longed for his ears to be silenced. Everything from distant conversations to bird song to the digging of chipmunks under the brush. There were too many things to focus on that Pete was barely able to focus on one thing before his attention was drawn to something else. Still, like his formerly more acute eyesight, Pete found that his focus was only able to manage a few things at a time, just enough to keep him from going mad. It was animal sounds that drew the stirring instincts in his mind, for the most part, and they told him to chase and bark. Pete would never do something so degrading, though the barks of his contemporaries around gave credence to the notion of doing so more palpable.

On that note, the sounds and scents of what he was coming to understand were other dogs made Pete nervous, not wanting to come into contact with canines in general but especially ones that were born into those bodies. He certainly had the instincts, to be sure, but that was far too

insufficient for him to know how another dog would act around him. And, worse of all, he didn't want Linda to see him around another dog, a reminder that he was a different species and likely would always be. It already seemed she looked down on him, and that was only to get

Thankfully they didn't encounter any dogs en route, at least none directly in their path. Pete's nose gave him a perfect roadmap of the goings-on of any dog that had been in the area over what he assumed was the past few days. It was a little daunting, and he was thankful none of them were around. Still, Pete did his best to ignore the scents, most of them of waste and holding more information within that he was comfortable with. Surely, it was why dogs sniffed such things so often, but Pete wasn't into the idea, as much as he felt he could avoid it.

Eventually, the somewhat more mundane animal scents gave way to several more species he had never encountered and a variety of different ones. Pete found himself sniffing more intently as though trying to identify them, and it took him a moment to realize what he was doing. Still, he had some interest in them, if only to see the variety of animals that people had been turned into. Surely, they were getting close to the park, and many of the Changed Community were already there and partaking in whatever the park had to offer.

Though his eyesight wasn't as good as his humanity, Pete was still able to take in the vast expanse of land that had been set aside for the purpose of providing outside entertainment for those like him. The sheer amount of different smells excited him. Surely, the scope of different animals people had been turned into was far larger than he had been expecting. Part of him wondered if he could communicate with them all, as much as he'd gleaned from the forum posts. It was a daunting prospect, but this close, there was no denying the anticipation.

Finally settling on the different animals and people present, Pete found himself unprepared for what was present. Unlike many animal attractions, none of the structures were fenced in, with no need to keep them present. However, it was evident that separate sections were designed with different animals in mind. A race track around the perimeter seemed to mark its borders, rather extensive to the point that it might even tire a horse. But it was not simply horses there, but a variety of canines, deer, and other hooves animals, but also other things he wouldn't have expected, up to cheetahs and ostriches. Some might have been racing, though it seemed for the most part they were happy to get out and run in a place where they wouldn't be judged. Pete wasn't inclined to join them, out of shape as he was.

Another area had been constructed to remind him of a childhood jungle gym, albeit on a much larger scale. A variety of primates were swinging on it, from monkeys to gibbons to orangutans and even a gorilla. The structures were sturdy, they would have to be to support all that weight. It was clearly set up for more than those who kept their opposable thumbs, however, with large platforms for big cats and other jumping animals to explore the range of their power.

Still, others on the outside were set up for what looked like nap spaces, fluffy pillows where either couples or friends were snuggling up in the noonday sun. It was rather cute seeing one massive panther cuddled up with a much smaller housecat, seeming to have made friends despite the difference in their sizes. One of the cats, the only tiger, was even wearing a saddle bag, growling at other animals as they were invited to reach in and grab what looked to be food.

Thinking there would be a barn for the many species that had become livestock, Pete was rather surprised to see that there was an indoor area for them to congregate in, one that boasted a variety of salon-style treatments. Anything from warm showers to full body brushes to hold care to blow drying and grooming. Pete had to assume it would be nice for animals living in less-than-clean conditions being able to be pampered and treated more like the people they once were. It was only for a day, or, realistically a few hours, but getting a little dignity back was surely welcome.

And then, of course, was the dog park. Not a park per se, but rather a wide open space where humans and canine Changed Persons could run, throw frisbees, balls, and any manner of toys and things that would be fun for both humans and dogs. Pete couldn't help but think of one advantage of being a dog, that the energy one possessed was lost to adult bodies. Being able to get all that energy out by running around and actually able to enjoy one's body, one that had not been lately able in the months leading up to the changes. It was a more animalistic pleasure than perhaps Pete was prepared for, but that was the point, wasn't it? To get more in touch with his inner canine? At least to try, which was objectively better than sitting at home on his iPad and reading stories about others living their best animalistic lives.

Thinking of all the species that people had identified turning into, Pete was hard-pressed to find a group that wasn't represented here. There was literally something for everyone, save those that had become aquatic species and were confined to their new habitats. Pete felt sorry for those people lacking social connections, though he recalled there was something about a shared community for those who had aquatic forms to be able to live together and share in their new existence. All were aquatic mammals, as much as was reported, though without lack of internet access for those Changed Persons, it was hard to tell how many were condemned to those forms.

“Welcome!” Said a cheerful voice, rocking Pete from his self-reflection. Pete hadn't paid attention to seeing her coming up to them. “I'm Cynthia. Can I get your names, please? You don't need to be registered, don't worry. It's more so we can get to know future clients.”

“Oh, this is Pete,” Linda said, as though her thoughts, too, were far away. “Linda and Pete Hampton. He did get an invitation in the mail,” Linda added as an afterthought.

“Well, we're glad to see you both out here! We're trying to communicate with any members of the Changed Community who live within reason. So many aren't, and we've had so many missing people...sorry, I'm rambling! Shall I show you two around? See if anything interests you?” She asked, to which Linda simply reached down and clicked the leash line from Pete's collar before saying, “I won't be staying,”

Pete didn't bother watching her walk off, thinking it might be better without her here. As much as he felt nervous about acting like a dog, he really didn't want Linda to see it. She already seemed to have a lesser opinion of him as it was, and he didn't need to add any fuel to that fire. Still, as much as the woman smelled friendly, Pete wasn't sure he wanted to stay with her and take the guided tour. How did they treat Changed People here, anyway?

Pete soon found he needn't have worried. “Mr. Hampton, I do hope you enjoy some of the facilities we have here. Likely, for your body type, the park would be the ideal setting, but feel free to make use of any of the areas you think you might enjoy. There are lavatory areas if you need to use them at four separate locations, but we understand the unique physiologies of our clients might find their use difficult and we have staff on-site to help keep everything clean and sanitary for everyone's enjoyment. We do our best not to judge either way,” she said, and Pete found himself a little abashed at that. Some animals didn't have as much of a choice, but Pete surely hoped none of the dogs would take a dump in the middle of the park!

Only after walking around for a bit did Pete start to understand that the background noise he'd been hearing, like the sounds of people calling out in the park and the like, was actually coming from some of the Changed Persons, not their human companions. Having not been in their presence before now, he was shocked that the words were actually in English, as much as he could tell. They were mostly calls of <Throw the ball!> <Damn, this is fun> <Fuck, I can run!> and <Damn, I can't sleep with all this noise!> Snippets of conversations he would not be aware of but something that surprised him. Was it like this for animals, too? He spent so little time outside that the calls of other dogs barking, while translated to speech, were so simplistic and human-sounding that he'd just played them off as children. Damn, he really was sheltered! How he'd lasted the past few months, Pete didn't know. But now it was time to come out of his shell, so to speak, so long as Pete felt he was ready for it.

“Well, that's the tour! It's pretty short, I suppose, everything being open-air as it is. Take your time, explore around, and feel free to have fun! I know the transition isn't easy for everyone, but we hope that places like this aid in the socialization that those in the Changed Community often have lacked.”

Pete was a little reluctant to head over to the gathered canines, but biting the bullet as it were, he decided to go for it, trying to keep his tail from wagging in anticipation. There were no

less than twenty dogs with about five humans playing with them, though on closer scent and observation, some of the canines were coyotes, or even wolves, with a couple of foxes thrown in. It was a little intimidating to be with all such animals, and Pete stood there, tail between his legs now as he tried to figure out what to do next.

<Hey, nice to see you!> one of the dogs barked out, a rottweiler if Pete was correct. She was a female, as much by her smell as her lack of male genitalia, though Pete was a little worried about how easily he was able to detect by smell, and worse, what it seemed to mean to his canine senses.

<Um...Hi?> Pete tried to say, though just now realized he was barking back to her, understanding his words as much from the attempt to make them as interpreting speech.

<Oh, Hi! You seem a little confused. No worries!> Replied the dog, and with that, she wagged her tail, moving toward him and getting into what Pete considered his personal space. Pete went to back up, Yet, the smells coming from her proximity were strong enough that it gave him pause, and he found himself sniffing her, more information flooding his nose than he was ready to understand. He had never been this close to another dog before, and even as his nose touched hers, the proximity was hardly as unwanted as he had thought it would be. He was learning so much about her that it would take him some time to fully sift through it all!

Far too quick for Pete's preference, the dog pulled away, and Pete almost went to follow. Yet, he was not expecting her to move to his backside, prompting Pete to lower his tail over his backside. She was going to...sniff his butt? Gross!

<What? Oh, sorry. Too forward? I keep forgetting that not everyone is used to being a dog yet, or, even how dogs act. It's OK, you'll get used to it! How long since your changes finished?> the dog inquired, though she didn't quite move from his backside.

<Um...six months or more?> Pete guessed, though if he was being honest with himself, time and dates hadn't had much meaning for his new life.

<Oh? Oh, sorry, I didn't mean to assume...> the dog said, and Pete was only just now realizing how easy complex speech was becoming for him to understand. Whether it was his human mind working to compensate for a more complex speech pattern or if barks and growls were really able to articulate that level of human speech, Pete had no way of knowing. Still, it was convenient and rather pleasant, Pete just now realizing this was the first time he'd spoken to another individual since he'd lost his voice.

<No, it's ok. This is all really...new, still,> Pete admitted, ashamed. Sure, he'd read about how others were adapting to their own circumstances but to actually be in one himself...this was turning out to be quite the day!

<Oh, I understand! You're not the one! Isolation has been a bitch for everyone, take that as you will!> The dog replied, making Pete chuckle a little. Dog puns and butt-sniffing aside, he was glad someone had come over to meet him.

<Oh, sorry! I forgot to introduce myself! I usually do that with the butt sniffing now! I'm Amy!> She barked, Pete, forgetting he, too, hadn't introduced himself.

<Pete,> he replied, though he was a little shy at doing so. Honestly, the whole affair about being understood for the first time in months weighed on him to the point that -

<Pete! Come play!> Amy barked suddenly, running away from him at surprising speed.

Pete was left there stunned for a moment, not really sure what to do. There was no reason not to chase after her, right? That was the canine thing to do in this situation. Then, why was he still hesitating?

Amy had gotten almost halfway across the park before realizing that her new friend wasn't following. With that, she barked out <it's OK, come on!> While waiting there for Pete to follow.

If he was being honest, Pete was well out of shape, and even if his canine body was faster than his humanity, there was little chance he could keep up. But there was really no reason not to try it, right? The worst that could happen was that he would embarrass himself, and he would likely achieve that same result by doing nothing. So, with that, Pete took off, thankful his body knew how to operate and wasn't tripping over itself in an effort to catch up. In fact, he was moving rather quickly, finding being on all fours much more efficient than running as a human. Even better, he didn't seem winded, at least not yet. Though he was sure he couldn't run all out as the other dogs could, it was at least better than-

Lost in his thoughts, Pete hadn't noticed Amy had taken off again before she was near the other side of the park once more. With a goal in mind, Pete took off toward her, running as all out as he figured he could. She was far more agile than him, able to dart in and out between the structures and sometimes even people, much to their fear of being tripped by them. Pete could hardly keep up with that level, taking the longer way around and feeling himself starting to get fatigued. Still, he was determined to keep up as best as he could, until he literally fell over on his face, huffy and panting and feeling overheated.

Amy's padding paws made him look up, somewhat of a human grin on his face even though he was wagging his tail in a more canine expression of joy. Truth is this was the first time he'd had this kind of fun as a dog, or even in his adult life as much as he could recall. It almost made it...no, it was fun, but that's all it was. Something long overdue, in his defense.

<Have fun, I take it?> Amy asked, not at all worse for wear from the run. Pete felt a little embarrassed about being out of shape, but he hadn't really been off his property since the pandemic, so the idea he'd be running around the yard as a dog was far beyond his expectations.

<I'm a little out of shape...> Pete whined, though if he was being honest with himself, he wasn't that sore, and after a few minutes panting, he felt he could stand again. A small facet of his mind worried he might offend with his doggie breath, something Linda had brought up on more than one occasion. But then again, a dog wouldn't be bothered by such a thing, right?

<You'll get it back soon, trust me! It's one of the awesome things about being a dog!> Amy barked, running in a circle as though chasing her tail.

<Awesome thing about being a dog?> Pete questioned, stunned by the statement. He was a little too taken aback by it to really contradict it, though a strong part of him was hurt. He'd spent every day since his illness lamenting every facet of his life to the point it was impossible to think of things otherwise. How could anyone feel any different?

<Yeah! I wasn't sure about it at first, and the change was really hard, I haven't met a person who didn't find it rough during the transition. But now? I love it! I love my stubby little tail! All this fur? I don't need to wear clothes or put makeup on or anything. What a waste of time all that was! That's time I could use for sleeping or playing!>

Pete stared at her the entire time, feeling incredulous. Surely, she couldn't be serious. He didn't want this fur, this tail. He missed wearing clothes and taking forever to get ready. Dogs smelled! Well, maybe not, to his own nose, if he was being honest. Things didn't really smell that bad, not like it did with humans. Unappealing or uninteresting, for sure. Not bad, not in the way he was used to it.

<Oh, sorry. I know not everyone feels the same way. Most people don't, not at first. But I think it's important for people to start looking at things from a different light. Looking for the positives where you can, you know?> Amy said, and Pete found himself reflexively responding <like what?>

<Well, other than the no clothes thing? We're so fast! Being on all fours makes a lot more sense, doesn't it? And work, well, dogs don't have to worry about careers or anything! I was in a dead-end job, but now the government gives us a check, and, really, there's not much I need money-wise, other than good food. I love meat! And shelter, of course, but I have a nice bed and I live with my sister so it's all good! I have all the time in the world to explore and learn and even try out some new hobbies!> Amy said, and as much as Pete was able to tell through the language barrier, she was being enthusiastically sincere.

<What about, the, well, you know. Bathroom stuff?> Pete said, a little ashamed to talk about it. In truth, it seemed members of the Changed Community were more open about bodily functions than most but it was still a little embarrassing to bring it up in person.

<Oh, well, you get used to it! It's not so bad once you're a dog and once you're used to all the smells and what they mean, wouldn't you say?> Amy said, as though licking one's ass clean was the most common thing in the world. Pete, for his part, took to rubbing his ass on his lawn, though had to lick a few times to relieve the irritation, and wasn't particularly looking forward to having to do that on the regular. Pissing, at least, wasn't so bad when he had to clean up an accidental mess. At least he was a short-haired breed! Surely, Linda wouldn't clean up after him if he'd had an accident in his fur, or, at least, she would bitch about it endlessly.

<Hey, did you want to meet some of the others? I've been taking up too much of your time!> Amy said, and Pete felt his tail wag at that, to his surprise. He nodded, a decidedly uncanine gesture, and the awkwardness of such was enough that he wouldn't bother to try it again.

Still, it seemed that most of the dogs, of a variety of sizes and breeds, seemed annoyed with standing still and talking, as much as their bodies felt energized and wanting to run and play in a place where they wouldn't be looked down upon as mere animals. Pete felt himself a little reluctant at first, opting to sit on the sidelines and watch for now. But soon, the joyous barks and excited body language were enough to make him almost long to join them, as fun as they seemed to be having. It was jarring, feeling his dislike of his own body and the conflict over acting like a dog even when others were having so much fun doing the same. A couple of times, Amy came to him and asked if he wanted to join, but each time, she was greeted with a <no, thanks> she seemed to get the idea and leave him be, though there was no denying he was tempted.

Eventually, the day started to wane, and Pete smelled the now familiar odor of his wife's perfume. Turning to leave, Amy came up to her, bidding him a good day and <hope to see you again soon!> Pete simply thanked her, but there was a part of him that hoped she would be here the next time he came, finding talking to her oddly comforting. She was the only so-called ambassador as much as Pete had talked to, and he was sure to get to meet some of the other

Changed dogs as the days went by. But it was Amy who had his interest now, something that shouted to her that he couldn't get out of his mind. And not the fact she was a bitch now that Pete himself was a dog. Her presence didn't do it for him in that way. She was the first one he talked to in person, and more than that, she had given him a small taste of a different view of his situation, as much as he didn't want to think of any part of the change as appealing when all it had done was ruin his life so far.

Linda, for her part, didn't have anything to say to him, though such was fair, given that he couldn't talk back. He wasn't sure where she had been, his nose awash in a variety of scents he barely had an understanding of. But she didn't feel inclined to tell him, either, so he left it be. In truth, he was still focused on his first day there, and wanted, more than anything, to maybe do the day over again. Not that he was ready to go play like a dog or anything of the like. Perhaps it was more accurate to say he wished he could, but that was neither here nor there.

Unable to get his mind off the park, Pete spent his evening on his tablet, trying to see if people were posting about their experience at the park that day. Part of him wanted to put some names to faces, though it was hard when so many used online monikers, and for members of the Changed Community, it was easier to identify each other in person by scent. Still, there were a few people that had been at the park, but none of them the dogs, not Amy, for sure, if she even used the threads to post. Surely, she had internet access with her position, but for now, it seemed, he would have to wait until he could go back to the park to talk to her once more.

And for the next few days, that was not to be the case. Linda didn't mention it, focused on her work, and what she had said was overtime to make up for their unbalanced bank account. Pete understood that, of course, but there was still that longing to get out there again and maybe, this time, try those things that had been on his mind. Amy and the others had looked so free, so ecstatic running around and chasing each other, playing with toys and their human families. Maybe it wouldn't be so bad to join in? No butt sniffing, of course, but maybe it wouldn't hurt to try it. Maybe watching his fellow canines would give him the push that was weighing on his mind the more he thought about it.

About a week later, Linda declared she was going for a walk, and willing to take Pete to leave him in the park if he wanted. He wasn't sure if she knew how much it was on his mind, but he quickly said yes, allowing his leash to be clipped and trying his best to keep the place so as not to force his wife to keel over. She seemed annoyed with him, but for once, Pete did his best not to focus on it when the appeal of the park was so fresh in his mind. It was all he could do not to take off and run the moment she clinked the carabiner off the leash and let him go, telling him she would be much quicker this time and making sure he was ready. Pete, however, had nothing to say to that, even if he could. Dogs, or animals in general, didn't have much in the way of a

concept of time, save for their circadian rhythms, and Pete had no idea how to tell the time by the movement of the sun, partly cloudy that day as it was.

As soon as Linda was out of sight and sound, Pete took off, unable to wait any longer and hoping that Any, or at least someone else as friendly, was at the dog park. He didn't see any sign of any of the other staff in the immediate area, but he didn't need their guidance, knowing where he was to go by sight, sound, and scent. Some of the odors were more familiar now, especially those that were from other canines or dogs in general, some of the barn animals. Some others he couldn't identify but had to be from the more exotic species, ones that were less represented by members of the Changed Community present. He was sure he would if he kept something but figured either way, it was in his best interest to keep coming to the park.

The sight of something large and feline met his gaze around the other canines, a little shocking and taking Pete a few moments to realize it was a tiger. Her scent was strange to him, though he was soon able to get used to it, a marker for her presence that he would be able to rely on from now on. Part of him was sure he'd seen her before, with that familiar saddle bag. But it was alarming to see her down so close, interacting with the dogs as though they were friends meeting each other on the street. To his surprise, she reached in with her mouth and pulled out something small that Pete's poor eyesight couldn't make out. With the shift in the wind, he soon learned the thing she had in her mouth was a...dog treat. It certainly smelled good, not like an actual dog treat but a meaty snack made for Changed canines.

Happily, the dog in question took the treat, wagging their tail and running away as the tiger's gaze settled on Pete. padding toward him, the tiger opened her mouth with a series of growls that Pete, like with dogs, could interpret as speech. <Hi! Care for a treat? They're free! Oh, shit, sorry, don't be scared! You must be new here! I'm Sara! I'm really friendly, don't worry!> said the tiger, though, in the presence of such a large cat, Pete couldn't help but feel anxious. Not that a Changed person would act like an animal and kill him for no reason, but she was rather large, especially to his much smaller stature. Anyone would be scared to meet a tiger this close for the first time!

<I know, I know, I get that reaction sometimes. It's OK. Tell you what, I'll make the rounds and then before I go I'll come back and check on you, OK?> Sara suggested, though as she turned to go, the scent of the treats in the bag made his mouth water, and Pete couldn't help but whine out with a <No, it's OK! I'll take one if that's OK!>

<Oh, of course! I like to go around and help out! I've just got meaty treats for now, but I should be getting some sugary treats for the horses and such. But yeah, here you go!> Sara said, reaching into the saddle bag and pulling out a treat similar to the one she'd given the other dog. Not caring that it had been in the cat's mouth, Pete took it, the flavor divine as he scarfed it

down. It would have been a little embarrassing, though, at the moment, Pete was excited to be given it, an act of kindness he had not been expecting and the treat tasty besides.

<Pete? Hi! It's nice to see you back!> Came a familiar voice, and Pete looked up to see Amy walking toward them, wagging her tail in an excited doggie fashion. < I see you've met my old roommate!> She added, looking to Sara, who made a little bow.

<Oh, sorry, I'm Pete. Thank you,> Pete replied, looking back at the tiger. He wanted to ask if they were roommates before or after being infected but wondered if that might be a rude question. He had to admit it was a little amusing to think of a dog and a tiger being roommates in an apartment, the tiger obviously getting in the way of her size. Thankfully, there was a sanctuary nearby for her, right?

<Let me introduce you to some of the others I've gotten to know. Everyone's really friendly!> Amy said, though Pete found that a little hard to believe. Surely, not everyone who came out here was happy to have been changed into an animal, right? Yet, Sara didn't seem to mind, even as kind as to go around and give people snacks, something he was certainly appreciative of!

Pete eagerly followed Amy, curious to see if her words held true and if the other Changed people really were happy and friendly. Yet, it was not expecting a gray-brown form to bust out of a bush, wagging his tail as a fake rabbit flew through the air in front of him. It was likely remote-controlled, but the design of being a prey animal was rather clever, he had to admit. Part of him wondered if he heard a cry of <Hey, back off, I'm human!> as though a real rabbit that the wolf had accidentally chased. He couldn't hear or see if it was a real rabbit or a toy, hoping it to be the latter and not wanting to think what it would be like for a poor prey animal in the presence of so many predators, safe or not.

Still, Pete was taken aback by the massive wolf standing there, sitting down on his haunches and panting as though he'd just had a rather strenuous chase. <Oh, hey Sam,> Amy said, and Sam turned in greeting, panting tongue drooling as he got up and wagged his tail. Despite being rather large compared to the two domestic canines. Sam carried himself in the same way, as much a goofy dog as any others. It was almost heartwarming to know that wolves were so carefree, at least in terms of being in the presence of others.

<Hi!> Sam barked out, getting up and moving toward Pete's backside, sniffing furiously. Unlike the first time, Pete allowed it, though part of his hesitation was from fear of the wolf, something he could not fight off if Sam was so inclined. Though he hardly thought any of the Changed were savage or the like, it was still a little daunting to think about besides!

Finally figuring out what the hell, Pete moved in to start sniffing Sam as he was being sniffed, finding the action more palatable to his canine self rather than as disgusted as he might have expected. It was a little musky, thick, and carried with it nuances that Pete wanted to pull away from. But the more he sniffed, the more he came to understand the subtle hints he was getting under the surface that made him sniff with fever, wanting to identify them in a way that made sense to his human mind. There were human scents there, of course, likely a friend of the wolf who had recently eaten a sandwich. And the wolf was, of course, healthy and energetic. But there were several species there as well, ones he couldn't readily identify. It gave him a moment for his thoughts to drift just a little, wondering what sort of life the wolf led...

Recalling a wolf named Sam had been a former podcast host, Pete found himself wondering if he was identifying two of the scents being of his co-hosts, a lion and a shiba inu. He imagined them sitting at the booth and talking in animal voices, something that only members of the Changed Community could understand but fun for them to try doing nonetheless. His human friend, too, might be waiting to pick him up at the end of the day, buying them ham sandwiches for supper as they sat together. What kind of life the wolf lived was all there for Pete to discover, if only he could identify all the individual scents wafting from his backside, really getting to know someone without words...

<Nice to meet you, Pete!> Sam called out, jarring Pete back to reality. Pete shook his head a few times, not wanting to make a show of it but figuring it was a moot point regardless. <Sorry, I have to go find my friend, I'll see you later!> he said, sounding a little unfocused and ditzy, if Pete could put a moniker to it. Still, Sam took off with a speed that almost made the pitbull envious. The wolf was larger, and muscled, but lean as well, with power and grace that escaped his form. Still, something was appealing about the canine form in general, especially Amy's, something Pete found a little embarrassing as he reflected on it.

A need in his bladder soon took precedence, and Pete excused himself, not really sure where was best to pee from a canine standpoint. The scents of other canines' urine were everywhere, and he was sure there was a hierarchy there somewhere that Pete had to adhere to. Still, the need was urgent, and eventually, he found a tree nearby that seemed to settle well with his canine inclinations. Sniffing for a moment, Pete raised his leg, taking a few moments to look around and sniff a little. Yet, a cry escaped his lips as his eyes settled on a black form in the tree above, causing his leg to slip and his urine to make a little mess. Pete was remiss to care, however, coming across what he was slow to realize was his second big cat that day.

His action seemed to wake the cat, who looked down at him with what Pete could only distinguish as a look of amusement. <A miss. It happens from time to time. I'm sorry to find it so amusing. You should still clean yourself,> Chuffed the panther, his voice a little guttural and harder to understand. Pete wondered if it was a case of a cat's vocal cords to his canine ears, but

it was still different from the way Sara spoke as much as he was aware. Almost as though he wasn't speaking in a way that translated in his mind to English if that made any sense.

<It is important to be clean, yes?> the panther repeated, and Pete found himself embarrassed. He had never done such a thing, not really paying attention to the way dogs did such things, and usually just leaving things be if there was an accident. He wanted to walk away, to hide his shame if such was possible. But there was a part of him that felt it was in his best interest to act like an animal. It was expected for him to be clean rather than to lick at his piss-soaked fur. Is that how everyone here acted?

With liquid grace, the panther jumped down, right in front of Pete, barely making a sound with his flat paws as he did so. <My name is Siegmar. Sorry, my English is not so good. I learned after I became a panther. It is more useful overseas, I have found. And there are more other cats in this country, who I wish to meet,> he said, and Pete found himself reflecting on the name, recalling it to be someone whose posts he had read.

<Oh, you're Siegmar from the forums? From Germany?> Pete asked, having followed the panther's journey to the big cat sanctuary he liked still lived in.

<Yes. It is always nice to meet a fan,> Siegmar said, before reaching up with a paw and starting to lick it with a thick, barbed tongue. <It is still important to be clean, you should take care of that,> he said, and Pete was brought back to the irritation on his leg, having almost dried but still detectable with his powerful nose.

Pete took a moment to really mull over the situation, thinking that as a cat, Siegmar likely cleaned himself much more meticulously than a dog like himself. It was a little weird he would suggest Pete act more like an animal, even with something his human self found repulsive. Still, he didn't want the taste of piss on his tongue, more inclined to rub his leg on something to relieve the irritation. He was not expecting Siegmar to move over to him and lick up his back, making Pete open his mouth to bark at him to back off, but the sensation of the panther's tongue was almost pleasant, like a message.

<You should still clean yourself, especially in your crotch area. Everyone does it to be clean, and for pleasure, on occasion,> Siegmar said, with a directness that made Pete a little uncomfortable. Still, there was likely some truth in the words, as much as he didn't want to know about the hygiene habits of animals that no longer had hands to deal with them in more human ways.

As though showing him how to do it, Siegmar got down on his ass, raising his leg and taking long, thick strokes over his inner leg and crotch. As abased as Pete felt, he couldn't quite

take his eyes off the sight, Siegmar doing it so casually that he felt there should be no shame in doing such publicly. Surely, most of the other Changed did similar things casually, but could he really do such a thing?

Taking another sniff of the panther, Pete braced himself, getting down on his ass and raising his leg in an attempt to mimic him. Closing his eyes, Pete extended his tongue and started to lick the damp patches of his fur, and the areas around it for good measure. The taste was certainly present on his tongue, though far less complex than his nose would have him believe. In fact, it wasn't actually that bad, not pleasant, of course, but not as bad as he was worried about. Pete even found he did feel a little better with his fur licked clean, damp from his saliva rather than his pee. He could hardly even taste it after a while, and he looked up at the panther, barking out, <That wasn't so bad, thanks!>

Siegmar simply grinned before opening his mouth in a too-wide feline yawn. <You're welcome. Some things are hard even after so long, yes?> Pete nodded, hardly the only thing he avoided doing as a dog and figuring there would be others he would encounter before too long.

<If you'll excuse me, I must look for my tiger friend,> he said, Pete, wondering if he meant Sara. Siegmar was quick to run off, however, and looking back, Pete couldn't see her familiar shape back at the dog park. She couldn't have gone far, he reasoned and figured it wasn't surprising for two big cats to know each other.

For once not being ashamed about what he had done, Pete moved to make his way back to the park, though stopped, not smelling or seeing Amy. After the encounter with the panther, he was a little shy on the part of meeting new people, though figured there was little point in waiting too long, lest his day go by and be wasted. Hesitating as he was, Pete hadn't noticed he'd wandered off the path and toward the racing track. It was only the sound of hooves clopping toward him that made him pause before the crashing of a rather large brown quarter horse nearly ran into his stationary form. Pete backed away a little slowly, not expecting to nearly be trampled by a horse, and a little shaken up beside.

<Hey! Be careful! A track's not a great place to stand still!> The horse chastised, and Pete felt his ears pulling back in shame. Having been lost in thought as a dog was not a safe endeavor, even in a park where everyone was having fun getting used to their new bodies. As much as he didn't want to be a dog, he didn't want to hurt himself, damnit!

<Sorry, sorry, I wasn't looking,> Pete said, and the massive horse moved his muzzle down, the feeling of warm horse's breath on his face relaxing him somewhat.

<No, I'm really sorry, I should have been looking where I was going, too. You are kinda small, though,> the horse replied, and Pete felt his ears prickling at that.

<I mean, if you're so big, you should watch where you're going!> Pete retorted, and the horse seemed a little taken aback by that. Still, he seemed more apologetic, saying <Yeah, you're right. I have a responsibility not to step on anyone smaller than me!> Which sounded sincere, though Pete couldn't help but feel a little condensation from the words as well. He had to admit, it was quite the stance to take after being a big, smelly animal like a horse!

“Hey, honey! It's going to start soon!” Came a man's voice, and the horse's ears pricked up at that, before apologizing once more and taking off toward the center of a field. There was a small crowd gathered there, and Pete couldn't help but follow, albeit from a distance behind. Thankfully, he didn't need to get too close to hear what people were saying, and the fact it seemed to be a “writer's” competition of some sort left him powerfully confused. How could any of the Changed Community write without hands?

Walking over, Pete was a little surprised to see some familiar faces in the crowd, the panther from earlier having shown up there. Sara the tiger was there as well, and Pete was sure Sam was there as well, certain when he took off at a wolf's pace without saying much. His head really was all over the place, it seemed, though Pete had no idea if that was a character trait developed since the Change or the way he always was. Pete found himself looking for Amy, but it didn't seem she was present. At least if she was there, she would take over the introductions. Hell, it seemed she knew everyone there, and Pete found himself wondering how much she visited the park, with that being the case.

It seemed that the horse, whose name he overheard as being Dwayne, was using a pointer with his muzzle, something he seemed to wield with more skill than one might expect from a human-turned-animal. He was writing on a screen large enough for everyone to see, going off a series of prompts people in the crowd were calling out. It seemed to be some sort of challenge, and the horse was not the only one competing. Pete couldn't see it until he got closer, but it seemed as though a small fox was jumping over her own keypad, a smaller screen also displaying her words. It was a little slow for both of them and time-consuming, but Pete found himself interested nonetheless.

<Have him take off his clothes!> Someone called out, and it took Pete a moment to realize he was talking about the story prompt. Were they writing something of an adult nature? Pete didn't see or smell any underage people here and decided to walk close enough to read the screen. It was hard to make out behind the animals, but the words *he took his lover in a passionate embrace, pulling up his shirt and rubbing the spreading fur underneath...* gave credence to the fact he was writing something erotic, and perhaps something akin to Shape

Shifter fiction, something Pete was sure his wife read on occasion. He didn't need to read the fox's page to know they were working on the same prompt, likely a competition of sorts, one that Pete found rather interesting and unexpected, even in a place like this.

<Oh, hi Pete!> Came a familiar bark, and Pete felt his tail wagging with some excitement to see Amy coming over. <Are you enjoying the show? Those two have been coming here at least once a week to do writing prompts. It's not always adult stuff if that's not your jam. But it's funny, they seem to like writing about people turning into animals. Weird, right? But I guess they have first-hand experience!>

Pete wasn't sure what to think about it. Part of him felt he should stay and watch, an example of how others had adapted to their circumstances and literally made the best of a bad circumstance. But with Amy here...he wasn't sure if it was time for him to take the initiative, so to speak. He'd wanted to since the notion had been implanted in his head last time.

Bracing himself, Pete moved to Amy's backside, tag wagging all the while as he did so. She paused, partially in canine fashion and partly out of a human curiosity as her tail raised and Pete braced himself. Taking a deep whiff, Pete was once more hit with a barrage of information, things he had no words for but things that seemed to light up some canine facet in his brain. He could tell her age (adult, though not old) her health (good) what she'd eaten recently (one of Sara's treats?) And...wait, had she...gone down on herself? Pete backed away from that, feeling embarrassed. Sure, it was not the first time he'd done so himself, but did that mean every dog would know if he, too...

<Like what you smell?> Amy said with a bit of a chuckle, and Pete felt he would blush if he could. <I...I'm...Sam did it before, and...>

<Sorry, I didn't mean to tease! It's good! It means a lot to a dog, better than sitting down and chatting for an hour, am I right?> Amy said, and with that, she moved to sniff Pete as well. This time Pete allowed it, feeling her goose him and unable to stifle his embarrassment over it. Still, it was a rather informative moment, something Pete could not have expected to get into but something that seemed to sit well with him the more he did so.

Suddenly, Amy took off, leaving Pete confused as to what was going on. It wasn't until the sight of a disk spinning through the air caught his attention that he understood why Amy was dashing toward it with such vigor. With her running start, Amy leaped into the air, mouth open and teeth clamping on the frisbee as she landed on the ground, wagging her tail and looking as proud as a dog could for her victory.

<Rrrrou rrrhould rrry rrrhis!> Amy tried to speak with her mouth full of frisbee before she ran back to the human who had thrown it. He reached down to let her ears or paused at the last second in a show of respect to the former human. Rather than being upset by the gesture, Amy simply barked, prompting him to reach down and rub her ears, something she leaned into eagerly.

Still, as excited as she was, Amy was quick to run back toward Pete, tongue lolling out of her mouth as she did so. <Hey, did you want to take a turn? Try it, it's fun!> Amy said, and Pete looked at the man with some nervousness. It was silly, he knew, but there was something about the prospect of making himself look like a fool as he chased after a frisbee, especially if he missed. But if he was being honest with himself, there was nothing to be lost by trying, and reflexively, he wriggled his haunches, as though a sign for the man to throw it for him

As worried as he was about making the jump, Pete almost missed the man throwing it until it was already sailing through the air. Pete took off, head turned to try to spy its trajectory through the air, something that his canine brain managed quite well to hone in on. He had to admit, there was something exhilarating about the chase, likely something that triggered a canine instinct in his mind. He was hardly bothered by that, rather enjoying the feeling of wind through his hair as he watched, waiting for his moment. He wasn't sure about his ability to jump, his legs smaller than Amy's own but figuring it was enough to at least make an attempt. And the spinning disk was almost there, so close that if he jumped, then maybe, just maybe...

A gust of wind and a cloud of gray and brown fur nearly caused Pete to bowl over before he could jump, causing him to stumble and nearly faceplant. He was just in time to turn around at the snap of jaws on plastic as Sam landed on all four paws, looking proud with a frisbee in his maw. Wagging his tail, he looked around, seeing Amy move toward him, an almost angry energy to her stance. Though Sam likely thought it was all just a game, and he bolted, as though daring the two dogs to chase him for his prize. And when all was said and done, it really was all just a game, one that Pete found himself rather excited to be in on!

The two of them chased the much faster wolf all out, dashing across the grass with a speed that Pete didn't know he could match. Though he was still out of shape, the walks had been doing him wonders, and it was nice to run all out, tearing after the wolf with playful energy. What had seemed like Amy being mad at Sam for ruining Pete's jump turned into an exhilaration all on its own as the three of them ran all out, barely caring where they were going as some of the gathered animals looked on with interest.

Pete barely had time to stop before he hit his head across the metal bar of the jungle gym area, looking around a little dazed. Sam, freebie still in mouth, went to turn around when he smacked into one of the poles himself. Pete couldn't help but bark out a laugh, Sam's goofy

antics rather silly, assuming he didn't hurt himself. And given he was up shaking his head, looking a little dizzy but no worse for wear, he was soon bounding off again, forgetting the frisbee or likely that he'd even had one in the first place.

Pete went to follow before the sound of a thud up above distracted him. Looking up, a rather impressive leap from a tiger sailing over him left him pause. Scared from the sight at first, Pete was rather soon impressed by the skill at which Sara could leap, covering nearly the entirety of the gym in one go. Siegmur, the panther, was also with her, showing no less prowess as he, too, landed beside her. The liquid grace at which they moved was almost enviable, had not their forms been so massive and unruly in the human world.

The steady clipping of hooves made Pete assume the show was over by now, having only seen one horse moving from the pasture area. The smell of him was familiar to Pete as well, as strong as a horse's scent was. It wasn't a bad smell, though very distinct, and Pete found its nuances to be rather interesting to his canine senses.

<Well, they might look cool as fuck, but they can't outrun me!> Dwight boasted, flicking his mane in a show of dominance.

The fox, Caithe, jumped off his back just then. <Well, actually, Dwight, a tiger can run all out at a speed of-> Caithe started, but before she could finish, Dwight was off with a clatter of hooves. She gave him an oddly incredulous look coming from a fox, though moved to follow him, likely in the hope that he would get over himself and slow down.

<Oh hey! It was nice to see you have some fun!> Came Amy's voice, and Pete looked up to see her coming with a human in tow. The scent of her was somewhat familiar, though it took Pete a moment to recognize where he'd scented it. The woman's touch had been on Amy's fur, likely her owner or former relative and current caretaker.

<This is my sister, Cassie,> Amy started, by way of introduction. However, she was interrupted by the sound of a thud as Sara dropped from below, startling the woman. Having likely not seen the tiger up close before, it was obvious she was a little intimidated, even knowing she was once human, too.

Sara seemed to get the same sense, immediately getting down and rolling over on her belly. The sight seemed rather intriguing, and Amy's sister looked down, almost tempted to pet her. Given she was on her back, rolling over as might any other cat, Sara was likely inviting her for belly rubs. <This one's free,> Sara growled to Amy, though Pete wasn't sure what she meant by that. Still, Cassie seemed to get the message, leaning down and rubbing the tiger's belly, much to the pleasure of them both.

Seeing the other big cat getting some attention, Siegmar jumped down as well, gently rubbing against the woman's leg though not hard enough to knock her over. She giggled at that, reaching down to scratch him behind the ears. <It's good, yes?> Siegmar said, though the tone he used was not his usual gruff speech. Pete wondered if he was using a different feline intonation, not a pur exactly but likely the big cat equivalent. Either way, it seemed to make Amy's sister giggle, trying to rub both cats at the same time without falling over, a feat she was barely able to achieve.

Feeling emboldened, Pete walked over to her as well, wagging his tail in an obvious bid for attention. It took Cassie a few minutes to notice, fair enough with the unique experience of getting to pet not one but two big cats at once. Though with a bark of encouragement from Amy, Pete was able to get the attention that he found himself surprised to be craving. Cassie looked at him with a gentle expression, not with indignation as many humans who saw him as just a dog were inclined to do. And unlike most people he came across, Pete was OK to allow it, feeling a rather pleasant sensation of being scratched behind the ears. It was almost heaven, making his mind leg shake a little against his better inclinations.

It didn't last long, of course, given the sheer number of Changed Persons present. Caithe was inclined to try her hand as well, moving in and yipping in her vulpine tone, saying <me next!>. Cassie was all too happy to pet her, too, despite the overwhelming presence of so many Changed People around her. Pete felt a little put out by the attention, though if he was being honest with himself, it was nothing personal. Not everything had to do with him, after all, and each of those here had undergone some vast degree of hardship to get to where they had been.

Still, watching Caithe and even Dwight coming up with his sweaty horse body asking for rubs was a bit of a hilarious sight. All of these former people, jostling for pets like it was the most important thing in the world. And even Pete had to admit there was some truth in that, at how good it felt to be given physical affection. Linda never so much as touched him, though at first, Pete would have been angry at her for such derogatory treatment. But having experienced it now, and if it came from a place of love, then...

<At first, it was easier pretending to be my sister's pet,> Amy said, wagging her tail and moving over to rub against Pete's cheek. <She was really supportive even during the change. Didn't even care that it might affect her as well, though at that stage we aren't contagious anyway. She said she'd always look after me, even though I was the older one, and I was able to accept my new lot in life because of her. It's a little weird, I admit, to be a dog, though she doesn't treat me like one, even if she has to care for me. I couldn't ask for a better life, though I can't tell her anymore. I think she knows, though,> Amy ended, and Pete nodded his agreement.

<Better than I had it,> Sara chimed in with her gruff voice. <At least, during the change. Mine only took about a week or so. It's usually months, and save for the first few cases, people knew what was going on. I didn't. And it was a rapidly infectious strain, so imagine my surprise when I realized I was turning into a tiger, with no help or clue what was happening! Thankfully, I had some friends to take me in...there was no big cat sanctuary back then,> Sara said, and Pete found himself wishing to hear more. Surely, there was an entire story there all of its own!

<I was lucky there was a big cat sanctuary in America,> Siegmar said, chiming in. <For several months, I had only fur and a tail. I lamented the fur and tail, even though they were not so bad. I thought that the changes would be done and that I would be stuck with them. I guess not so bad, with what others have experienced. But then the changes went further. Knowing I would be a panther and there was no place for me to live here, Sara found me online and helped me move. It has been trying, but things are better now, as much as they can be,> Siegmar said, nuzzling Sara a little as he did so.

<Mine only took a few weeks,> Sam said, chiming in. <All three of us changed at about the same rate, though at least we had each other. Honestly, not bad forms for us all, really. I love being a wolf! It's awesome!> He said, running around in a circle. It seemed that, after a moment, he was chasing his tail, as though he had no idea he had one and was discovering it for the first time.

<Oh? You're talking about how long it took to change? Sorry. I forget if it was a week or a month,> Caithe chimed in, walking around as though looking bored. Dwayne snorted in her direction before Caithe wriggled her hips and jumped into his back.

<Mine was months. It was rough. Trying to type with hooves was hard. I mean, I always kinda wondered what it would be like to be an animal, you know when I was younger and that. Turns out, not so easy. And smelly,> Dwayne said, and the rest of them got a chuckle from that. <It was hard, but I had my boyfriend with me, and it helped that we bonded over transformation before it all happened. It really was nice having him too, well, I probably shouldn't say too much> Dwight said, and if a horse could blush, Pete would be sure he was blushing.

Having been the only person not to speak up so far, Pete figured he would be asked if he was silent. It was still a bit of a shock when Amy directly asked him <How about you, Pete?>

<Oh, ummm...about two months, I think. I-> Pete started, unsure of how much he should actually get into.

Thankfully, the sound of Cassie calling out stopped him from finishing. “Hey sis, I have to run some errands before we get home, and the stores are going to close soon,” Cassie said, and

Amy barked out <See you guys later!> As she ran after her sister. Pete almost breathed a sigh of relief. It seemed as though all these new faces, while he didn't know their full stories, had it easy, without some of the hardships he had gone through. Would things have been better for him if Pete had been more assertive? He didn't want to admit it to anyone out loud, though least of all to himself.

It was getting later in the day, and everyone had to get ready to go their separate ways. Sam's friend Doosker came to give him a ride, Sam happily ran around him for getting to stick his head out the car window. Dwayne's boyfriend stopped by with a saddle and bridle, Dwight allowing it to be fashioned around him before getting on and riding away, not without a gentle kiss to his horsey lips. Caithe was abruptly picked up by an unknown woman, one who gave her a kiss on the forehead before they left. Finally, Sara and Siegmar bid farewell to head back to the sanctuary, and Pete was left alone to wait for Linda, a little sad now that his friends had left for the day.

Still, after such a successful time hanging out and meeting some new friends, Pete was well inclined to visit the park as much as he could, or, at least, as much as Linda would allow him to leave. At first, it was a few times a week, and Linda would walk him there while heading off to do shopping or other errands. Being around other Changed Persons that much, he had to admit there were certain aspects that was found to like. How acute his nose was, for one, and how easily he was learning to identify certain things by smell. Hell, even things like emotion were not off the table for his abilities, be it from humans or animals. Dogs, he found, were much easier, since body language was a large part of their communication in canine form. But being about to smell the joy that friends and loved ones felt toward their now-Changed people, led Pete to feel a sense of hope for the future, that things might not be so bad for not only the world at large but for him, as well.

It was nice to get to know some of the regulars as well and match faces to online names he had been following for months. Sara, for example, went by Ember online, and she posted frequently, always trying to sell her wares. She would always have her saddle bag on, and sometimes carried a sign with her, offering pets and belly rubs for a small charge, many people curious about touching an animal they would otherwise never get to experience. Given she apparently had a stipend from work, Pete found such perplexing, but he supposed if it gave her something to do, then there was no point in questioning it any further.

Siegmar, the panther, often posted as well, using a translator app as he came from Germany and English was never a language he'd picked up fluently. He was always trying to meet up with any other changed felines, not only those locally but online as well, wanting to make a group of sorts. The panther had a story to tell, it seemed, having difficulties of his own coming to terms with being a cat hating those more repulsive aspects of animal life, and dealing

with things lacking hands. But having come to love it now, there was no reason, in his mind, that others couldn't do the same. Pete felt his ears droop at that, not sure what to think about another of the Changed that took so well to being an animal. Yet, it was such a universal constant among the park residents that there had to be something to it he was missing.

Then there was the wolf from earlier, Sam, though never seemed to stick around too long to talk about himself. Pete was excited to learn that Sam was, indeed, one of the podcasters he'd heard before their changes took them off the air. When asked about it, Sam had taken a few moments to think it over, before saying <Oh, yeah, we're coming back soon! Stay tuned!> and took off again, once more to meet with someone. Looking him up, he was a bit of a game streamer as well, though it was turned-based-strategy games, as much as they were easier to work with paws. Still, Pete was eager to follow 'Samuel Apolp Wuffo' whenever his show came back!

Dwyane the horse had an interesting story as well, being relatively newly changed and visiting with his boyfriend, who had stayed with him through the change. He had been a freelance fiction writer before, and while it was harder to type with hooves, he managed it on a larger scale, albeit at a much slower pace. Still, given his smaller fan base while he was human, it had been a boon to his infamy to not only continue writing after being turned into a horse but to have content that was enjoyed by a much wider audience for its quality as well. As much as he didn't like to read on his iPad, hurting his eyes as sometimes as it did, Pete had to admit they were pretty good, even the erotic ones. Apparently, he had an online pen name before his change but had settled back into his actual name since there was no way to hide his identity as the only writing horse on the planet. Pete wanted to look it up to read the former man's stories, but he couldn't find the man's pen name, much to his disappointment.

The fox, Caithe, was also a writer, the two of them having met over their shared career and status as writing animals. She was known for a more fantasy element to her erotic stories, though the adult nature of the stories was the draw, and hardly something she shied away from after having turned into a fox. She, too, had an online published database, and she also went by the same name online, making Pete wonder if it was a pen name she decided to take up full-time. Either way, it was impressive she would keep up such a profession, even to the point of gaining some notoriety after doing so.

And, of course, there was Amy, someone whose online name was familiar to him once he'd learned it, BitchMaster27. She, of everyone else, seemed to take to the change in a way that made it seem better than her humanity. Having a shitty desk job, being sexually harassed, and coming from an abusive marriage, life as a dog gave her a freedom she could have never otherwise known. And being here with her fellow Changed, to literally run and play all day with the freedom of being an animal...it seemed to mean more to her than anything in the world. A

stance that Pete found almost enviable. If it was that easy to get used to being a dog, even if it wasn't what he wanted, then maybe he was simply being too hard on himself.

Still, as he spent more time among other Changed persons, Pete found he was slowly starting to get into the hang of being a dog, playing and sniffing and exploring the range of his abilities. Most days were spent running after each other, playing with balls and sticks and frisbees when humans were present, or chewing and rope toys with the other canines at other times. Some games were set up for canines, a competition of sorts to sniff out a series of challenges with a food reward at the end. It was almost like training of sorts, and there were rumors that job offers would come up for sniffing out things like drugs or the like, but that was neither here nor there, as it were. It was fun, if not a little demeaning to be given treats, not dog treats, but tasty nonetheless. Pete was aware from his own meals that canines preferred things on the bland side, and was thankful he was being fed lightly cooked foods and not dog food, something he was sure he wouldn't be able to stomach. But he had to admit, it was fun playing with his new friends, competing with them and even winning a few rounds, much to the encouragement of Amy.

Given the frequent chances he had to revel in his new self, over the next few months, Pete found his hope for the future starting to rise. He still disliked some aspects of being a dog, even as much as his contemporaries seemed to enjoy it. Relieving himself outside without being able to wipe, eating without hands, and not being able to talk to humans directly were among the facets he forced himself to accept, especially knowing these would be part of him for the rest of his life. Even things he once found repulsive that most canines had come to love, like butt-sniffing, was something Pete was coming to appreciate. Even though he could talk to canines in a more human-like way through barks and whines, most of the newly changed dogs preferred to communicate with body language, evidently getting more into their canine lives than Pete was willing to admit to himself. And, if he was being honest with himself, it was starting to become more and more part of his life and as natural as anything else he was used to.

Something that still did not sit well with Pete was interactions with other humans. While he did not experience the same level of speciesism or outright hatred that other animals did, being a canine did come with its own series of troubles. The least of all was having people coming up to him constantly, for one reason or another. Often it was to check for a collar, with the threat of calling a public servant to remove him if it was missing. But even if they saw the collar marking him as human, he would be touched, petted, and played with against his will. Worse, they would often talk down to him as though he was a common pet, degrading and a constant reminder he was a dog and to stay that way for the foreseeable future. And Pete just had to let it happen, growls of protest seen as a hostile act. Still, when he knew the person petting him, especially when it was someone so good at it like Amy's sister, Pete found himself leaning

into it, making him whine and shake his leg in a way that might have embarrassed him once but no longer seemed to, watching other canines acting the same way.

Things at home were even starting to get a little better, at least at first. Linda seemed to notice the uplifted spirits of her husband and even invited him to sleep on the bed for the first time since he had changed. They did not make love or anything of the sort, Pete down to try oral at least and Linda obviously disgusted. Still, it was nice to go for walks with her, and Linda would sometimes talk about her day, movies she'd watched while he was there, and generally treating him less like an animal. Pete wasn't sure, but being out of the house and not having to see what she had lost every day might have contributed to it, the two of them finally having separate lives for the first time since the pandemic. Hell, Pete even smelled some new humans on her, both male and female and was happy for her to be making friends as much as he was. Of course, there was no way for him to know where that would lead their relationship going forward...

As the months turned into the first year, and beyond, Pete was starting to see the world changing as a result of the virus, even as the masks came off and human people went to return to their lives as they knew them. One such facet was the growls-to-speech collars that were becoming wildly available for everyone's use. The collars that used muzzle movements to translate to human speech were soon on the market, and as much as Linda lamented the cost, it was something she eventually gave in to purchase for him, and Pete was, reluctantly, able to speak to her once more. It made interactions at home more fruitful, as much time as it took for him to get used to the slower speech patterns that came with it. It also served him much better when he was out and about, not only able to talk to passersbys if needed but being able to communicate with the guides at the park was welcome as well. Still, he was more inclined to turn the collar off when with his friends, their animal speak and body language far more efficiently than using the robotic tones.

Of course, Pete still frequently visited the forums, which even after a year and a half since its inception, was still alive and well. Knowing others were going through the same thing was at least a little cathartic, but did little to remove the reality as part of his life now. There were very few cases of those being infected with the Zoomorphic virus changing, but it was not impossible, and the threads were occasionally frequented by those still scared of changing and what their lives would be like. Things were getting better for the Changed Community, however, and the stories about success and thriving among the Changed were enough to be inspiring enough that even Pete didn't assume things to be so bleak anymore.

To his surprise, with new research on the virus and how it infected and changed host cells, it was not only possible to isolate specific DNA strands from animals but to inject them into a willing host and change them into an animal of their choosing. Such a process hadn't been performed yet, save for a few volunteers and perhaps black market sources. It was a source of controversy among news outlets, with some people wanting to be an animal and opting for that technology to be purchased on the market. Naturally, even more from online communities wish for partial changes, even a tail or some sort of aesthetic alterations, like claws, teeth, or eyes. But such specific technology was still in the development stages, and irreversible, so existed a controversy about whether people should be allowed to change their lives in such a permanent way, burdening the taxpayers by using the same government-funded facilities as those who had been changed against their will. It was a developing story and something Pete couldn't keep his eyes on, no matter how much it didn't apply to him.

A new slew of TV shows and other media sporting members of the Changed Community were becoming more commonplace in recent months, and Pete found himself interested in those programs, if only for an escape from his own life. One of the most prominent personalities was a former human now goat on a popular evening news show, one that he had, naturally, been absent from during the course of his change. But once his speech collar had been acquired, he returned with his former co-host, taking to his former job with ease and greatly increased ratings, much to the excitement of the Changed Community. It was another beacon of hope, a relatively minor one, but one many held onto nonetheless.

Even with as much as was going on in the world at large, Pete was inclined to spend as much time in the park as possible. There was something to be said for living in the now, finding companionship in the other visitors and getting to know them better. After he was given his collar, Pete was able to ask to go on his own, something he didn't feel comfortable with, but not wanting to bring Linda. It was getting harder and harder for him to muster up the courage to ask, especially since there was one walk he had no choice but to relieve himself, and Linda had to pick up after it without having doggie bags or the like. She chewed him out the entire time, though Pete hardly had the ability to hold it in, canine as he was, and too excited to go in the morning as he usually did. Regardless, he felt it was better to go on his own, despite the inconveniences of being a dog and out and about. He was not obviously one of the Changed Community as much as some of the more exotic species moving through the streets. And that came with some troubles of its own. But it was worth it for the brief autonomy that he was finally being granted.

Recently, a new topic of discussion came to the forefront, one that Pete found a little uncomfortable at first but one that made him reflect on things. Sexual arousal for Changed Persons was far different for humans, not the least of which due to periods of heat that females often went through at annoyingly frequent periods without easy ways to alleviate it. Sara was, of

course, no expectation, and as she was not inclined to become pregnant, had to find other ways to alleviate her lusts. Thankfully, other big cats could do, with there being no chance of interspecies pregnancy, as something Sara mentioned in passing. Siegmur was of the right stature to fit the bill, their separate species still able to consummate things in her periods of heat, something very welcome.

Naturally, some of the other Changed Persons had found mates within their own new species, and even Dwight had met someone on the human side, who was planning on becoming an anthropomorphic horse when it was possible. They had dated over their shared love of transformation, and while Pete wasn't one to just what consenting adults got up to, he had to figure things would be much better with both of them in some sort of equine form. It was amazing that even after their lives were upended as they were, people were still able to find love and forge meaningful relationships.

Pete, however, was still married, and as much as the idea of some of the bitches in heat seemed to appeal to him, he would not cheat, even if Linda was never there to find out. Still, their scents often drew his penis to bear, and after seeing some of the other Changed people...*dealing* with their new needs, it was less embarrassing for him to get down, lifting his leg and teasing his cock. Though the taste of it was a little off-putting at first, the pleasure it gave him soon allowed him to overcome any fear of such. It was not the first time he'd tried playing with himself, of course. The first few times were more out of boredom than anything, slightly aroused as one sometimes got and figuring what the hell. The taste wasn't too bad, and what man hadn't wondered at one time or another what it was like to go down on himself? It was...OK, he supposed, to cum like that, not anything too far removed from his humanity and pleasant to have a rather capable tongue teasing him besides.

Yet, there was little chance for him to get into the habit of doing so, having been caught once by his wife. "What the hell are you doing?! You're just some stupid mutt!" She had yelled, and Pete's canine member had gone back into its sheath. He had not received his collar yet, though even if he did have the ability to speak, he wasn't sure what he'd say in his defense. He'd never been inclined to try masturbation after that, not wanting to risk being caught in the act, even when his wife went out. It was too embarrassing acting like a dog and being degraded for it, reminding him of all he had lost.

Yet, in the past few months, Pete had come to accept the various aspects of his canine side, at least while at the park where she couldn't see. Having been going alone without Linda and a leash, he didn't have to worry about being caught in the act. And as of late, there were more than a few of the regular park inhabitants giving in to their needs to mate. Even Amy was not immune, coming to the park wearing what looked like a canine diaper. <Don't ask,> She

muttered, clearly annoyed by the thing. Pete did want to ask her about it, wondering if it was the first time she'd worn such a thing. But he didn't want too close, for rather obvious reasons

The scent of her heat was having an obvious effect on his libido, Pete needed to go tend to things on his own. Sam gave him a knowing grin, canine heat getting to him as well even though they were technically different species. Pete could smell another wolf on him, making him sure Sam had some outlet with a friend, but he didn't ask. There might have been multiple scents, though Pete hadn't had a chance to ask him as of late, Sam taking off as though he always had something else to do. He was busy with his podcast but more likely, it seemed he simply forgot everything he promised to do and was always remembering something he'd agreed to.

Pete found himself wishing he had someone to talk to about the conflicting feelings in his mind. It was all the female canines, of course, especially when they came into heat. Pete had no control over how his body reacted to such stimuli, after all. But there was something about Amy, especially that was on his mind, to the point he imagined what it would be like to...but no. He wouldn't cheat on Linda as much as they were different species now. Different species with different needs...

With the knowledge of how common Changed Person's swingers parties were, Pete found himself powerfully conflicted. On the one hand, his growing friendship with Amy left him feeling...well, he didn't want to assume anything. But with his marriage still in place and his desire to keep things good with his wife, he decided it was for the best not to pursue anything. After all, she had looked after him both personally and financially, and despite their hardships, she hadn't thrown him out on the street for being infected. Not all Changed People had it so lucky, he knew.

Still, the more he thought about it, the more Pete found the idea appealing, especially since so many Changed Persons were partaking, many having not had regular sex since they were infected. And even many of those with spouses had given permission for their significant others to partake in the bodies of others. Pete wasn't sure how some couples took to bedroom endeavors, though was fine with whatever consenting adults did even if their bodies were different. But there was something more appealing about doing things with someone more...suited to his new body. Once, while drunk, Linda suggested they try something in the bedroom, with Pete eating her out. Pete was down to try, though the moment he did so, Linda cried out her disgust, so much so that Pete felt shame even broaching the subject anymore, even when his collar came in.

Yet, he had no idea how to even consider broaching the subject with his wife. Surely, she would see the merits in such, having no interest in him sexually. And there were plenty of canine women wanting to explore their sexuality, at least if what Sam said was true. <I say you should

go for it. Heat's a bitch. Pardon the pun> Sara suggested, and Pete blushed, knowing she had her own partner. Sam was quick to agree as well, taking his own pleasure. And while he wanted to ask Amy for her advice, there was something about the prospect that was unnerving, as much as she would be able to smell it on him and there was no point in hiding it.

Yet, it was obvious from the onset that Linda wouldn't be amenable to the idea. "What the hell Pete!" Linda yelled at him, as though she had been slapped in the face at the mere suggestion.

"Well. Some. of. The. others. are swingers. parties, and..."

"So you're fucking cheating on me now!" Linda said again, outraged. "Would you let me have a man? You're not the only fucking one around here with needs! I haven't been touched since..." Her voice trailed off at that, and Pete swore he detected some change in either her heart rate or scent that made him question the words. Still, with how angry she had become, there was little point in pushing it.

"If. You. Asked. Me. About. It. Maybe. Not. If. You. Act. Like. That." Pete said, hating how the mechanical voice of his collar made it impossible for him to convey emotion the way he was used to.

"Why don't you go lie down? That's all you do lately, anyway," Linda said, going to the fridge for a glass of wine. It was her go-to lately, and Pete almost lamented the fact he couldn't drink, alcohol more toxic to his canine body. Still, Pete could smell it on her so strongly that it almost made him drink. He wanted to bring it up, but thought it was best he left it there for the night. And with the guilt he felt over asking, he didn't think he had a leg to stand on, so to speak.

Things with Linda in the past few months had already been heated, to the point she seemed overly annoyed with his presence. At first, it was little things like sighs of annoyance when she had to feed him, or glares she likely assumed he didn't notice. She was starting to treat everything she had to do for him as a chore, and despite the joy he'd felt from being an animal, it all came back to everything he had put his wife, his marriage through. He as a dog, of course and despite his stipend, was barely contributing to the house. He couldn't clean, cook, or do dishes, and wasn't even providing any other income. Hell, he was spending all his time at the park or play, when Linda was slaving at home. Such returned those feelings of loathing that had come with being a dog, and Pete was left conflicted, feeling down more often than not and losing motivate to visit his friends even with Linda was willing to let him out. No wonder she was starting to drink more often!

Which led back to days like this, when it was easier to stay in the backyard miserable than to be out having fun and increasing her resentment. Given all the time he'd had to reflect on his life leading up to this point, there had been something else on his mind, something that he n From his place in the backyard, going back to sleep, he was left to think about everything that had lead him to this point, and lament that while for a brief moment, things were looking up, that was not meant to be the light at the end of the tunnel for his story.

Things were soon to get worse between them, though for entirely different reasons. Their fights over money, something that had always been a point of contention, came to a head as Pete learned of all the ways that his Changed friends were able to spend their stipends. Surely, some of the money he received would be enough for such luxuries, but any time he brought it up, Linda recused him for his selfishness. Being able to talk with the collar made things worse, even bringing it up at the start of another fight.

One other hindrance was being unable to look at their finances, something he was not privy to given she had his power of attorney for any medical ailment, for which being Changed technically qualified as a disability. And he had agreed to it at the time, before knowing about all the advantages that would be commercially available in the years after the pandemic. But it was hard for him to access an attorney without access to his funds, and any attempts to talk to Linda about such led to avoidance or outright fights. It was not something he longed to repeat, and soon, he dropped the issue altogether, leaving his ire to fester.

The more he reflected on it, the more Pete came to the conclusion that Linda was hiding something from him. She adamantly denied this, of course, assuring Pete they still had bills to pay. Pete didn't say anything, though given his improved ability to understand the scents that came with lying, as well as perceiving an increase in heart rate that came with talk about financial matters. Still, he couldn't confront her without proof and was left to lament his circumstances every time his friends discussed their own

Yet, eventually, the truth of Pete's suspensions came out, not in the way he'd preferred. His ire had been building for some time, and after being told to cut down on food, Pete's anger came to a head. "*You. Get. All. My. Money. And. You. Can't. Even. Feed. Me?*" Pete said, wishing not for the first time that the collar allowed his true intonations to come through.

"What the fuck?! You've put on a ton of weight lying around like a lazy dog!" Linda scolded, and Pete felt himself shrink back, as though her words were a hot iron.

"*I'm. Not. A. Dog. I'm. Your. Husband?*" Pete said, unable to express his hurt over the slap to the face.

Even though it was early morning, Linda went for the wine, her necessity whenever their arguments came to a head. “No, you're a dog. If you didn't have that fucking collar, no one would know the difference!” She said, spilling some of the floor.

“*You. Can't. Do. That. Legally.*” Pete said, entages though hardly enough to make it come through the collar, reminding him of all he lacked in his new body. Maybe, in some ways, Linda was right...

“FUCK!” Linda screamed, running out of the room. It wasn't the first time such had happened as of late, though Pete wasn't able to leave of his own power, as much as he wanted to. Without Linda to open the front door for him, he really was stuck inside like an invalid.

That was hardly to be the only thing the two of them would fight about, with increasing frequency. Watching the amount of Changed Person TV shows as he did, the possibilities of making money available that were even for him did not escape Linda's notice, either. Any time she saw any Changed Person doing anything remotely possible for Pete's canine form, she would, not subtly, inquire about why he should be doing the same. Things like mail carrying, guide dog, and a variety of other little jobs were possibilities, though nothing seemed to spark Pete's interest, nor was it in his skill set. That hesitation not only further pissed Linda off, but it left Pete to wonder as well, given that he had not contributed to the household in some time. Having been content to watch the world go by, his lack of purpose was starting to grate on him to the point he wasn't sure what he was doing, or why he should keep going in the first place.

“Ok, so you really need to get out there and help out. All you do is go to that fucking park. Hardly better than lying on the floor all day. You won't have the floor to lie on if we lose the house!” Linda had spat one day, turning off the TV and putting the remote high up where Pete couldn't reach it.

“*I'm. Making. Friends. And. Connections.*” Was Pete's reply, much more calmly through the collar than he felt.

“Are those connections helping to pay the bills?” Linda retorted. At least she didn't have the wine glass this time.

“*They. Could. I'll. Ask.*” Pete replied, thinking back to the various money-making schemes Sara always bragged about.

“Well, then, why haven't you done that already?!” Linda chastised, with Pete feeling hurt. It was raining that day, and as much as he didn't want to get wet and knew the park would be vacant, he longed to go, if only to get out of the house.

<Well, there's a ton of different things, really. You just have to be creative. Heck, I can probably get you to help with some of mine! People get a little antsy when they hear a tiger roaring to get their attention, but a dog barking? I have the signs and everything, but my human friends can't always make it out, and even though it's pretty well advertised there's a Changed tiger around...> Sara continued, though Pete wasn't really listening. Sure, the idea might be the solution to his problems but...would it really, though?

<Hey, how are you doing?> Amy asked, clearly able to smell his depression even if he was mopey. Pete almost thought he should answer honestly, finding it harder to hide things from them. But with the myriad of excuses he had, Pete decided all he could say was <Trouble at home. It'll all work out.>

<Hey, we can have you on the Podcast!> Sam said, having gotten it up and running in the interim. Yet, it seemed he wasn't really getting the hint that Pete was looking for paid work, and as fun as it might be, he had other struggles to contend with.

"I. Think. I. Found. Work." Pete told his wife that night, and rather than be happy for him, or thankful he could bring in some extra money, Linda simply said "OK." Pete figured it was better than nothing, and left it at that.

Having hoped the news would make things more comfortable at home, it seemed to have the opposite effect. Linda was drinking more, and would often black out, sleeping most of the day away on off days and forgetting to leave the door open. Pete was lonely, not able to go to the park as much as he wished. That left him spending more time online with his iPad, and daydreaming about the better lives many of the others there were living. Of all the things to happen to him...what was he doing with his life? Despite all the advantages that Changed Persons were granted...it felt to Pete like a gift had been presented to him, only to be washed away from his paws.

Linda's lack of motivation as of late had more negatives on Pete's life, least of all that she often missed shifts at work and was threatened with being fired. As much as she had been lax with taking care of Pete's needs as of late, things had gotten even worse. Remembering to let him out to use the backyard was a chore, something she lambasted the few times he had to wake her up. With the fenced-in backyard, Pete could not access the world beyond, much less the park. Hell, there were weeks on end when Linda forgot to open the front door, and Pete stopped asking, not wanting to piss her off and depressed.

Even when Linda forgot to prepare food for him, Pete was slow to ask for her to do it, going a day or two at a time without anything to eat. It simply added to his depression, reminding

him of all he had lost without his hands and autonomy. There were times Pete didn't think he even deserved it, being a burden on Linda these past two years and ruining her life. They hadn't had the best marriage, but with the possibility of life together, kids, and promising careers, it would at least be theirs. And even though their marriage vows called for them to care for each other in sickness and in health, how could he expect her to stick with him after he became...*this*?!

Yet, his resentment for his fate soon turned toward his wife, as much as she had been neglecting him and his needs for these past few weeks. One of the more troublesome things Linda was lax on was cleaning up after his waste in the backyard. It was akin to having to use a dirty bathroom for weeks on end, including missing a working toilet. Pete was running out of places to go, and the one day Linda was inclined to move outside, she was quick to use his bathroom habits as another barb against his canine form.

"I. Can't. Use. A. Toilet. Without. Hands." Pete said, to which Linda muttered something under her breath as she stormed off. But Pete's hearing was able to pick up "fucking tired of picking up after your shit," something that both shamed and enraged in equal measure. He hadn't asked for this, for fuck's sake! And yet...

With that exchange, Linda was happy to finally open the door for Pete thinking she wouldn't have to deal with him while he was out of the house. It was something Pete appreciated, at least having an outlet for the depression that had taken over his left. She didn't bother to feed him some mornings, and Pete was left with a growling stomach when he left for the day. Thankfully, some of the regular attendants of the park, Sara especially, brought animal-friendly snacks in her saddlebag for those days, though Pete wasn't in a place to tell them about his home life. He was sure they knew better, and Sara started bringing extra snacks, Pete accepting them without saying anything.

It was more than one day when Linda didn't bother to feed him, and eventually, Pete decided to threaten back. *You. Can. Get. Fined. If. I. Report. This.* Pete said, definitely.

"Oh, so you'd just let me get sued while we lose the house?!" Linda said, though left it there for the moment. Yet, her response was perhaps worse than anything she had done prior.

"I. Can't. Eat. This," Pete said, disgusted by what was on the plate for him the night after that fight. Not only did Linda go out of her way to buy him dog food, but it was likely one of the cheapest ones on the market, as much as he could smell. And the scent of it made his stomach roil!

“Why the fuck not?! You're a fucking dog and it's dog food! You eat me out of house and home as it is, so it's the least you can do to help!” Linda raged and left it at that.

As much as Pete didn't want to do it, he was starving, and forced it, unable to stop himself from vomiting. With the desire to remind Linda he was a dog, Pete made his way to her closet, having just enough time to find her shoes before upheaving the contents of his stomach. It disgusted him to do so, but on the other hand, if Linda was going to treat him like a dog, so be it.

Linda was, as he figured, not happy to see his mess in the morning. Rather than say anything to him, however, she simply moved to the front door, locking it and sealing his freedom. The patio door was similarly barred, and Pete sat there staring at it for some time, feeling hopeless. He was so helpless in a human world without help, though instead of the usual despair that came with his canine body, it was instead other ideas of revenge. He was not a simple dog, but if that was all he could do, then he didn't even bother asking for her to let him out. Instead, when he needed to piss, he went on the carpet by the door, not bothering to announce his intentions. She would find it, and it was an act of defiance, all he had in the face of his tormentor.

She did find it, eventually, and this time she was not inclined to keep quiet. “What the fuck is wrong with you? Do you think this is fucking funny?! How do you think I feel? I'm the one who works, manages all the spending, does dishes, laundry, cooks, and I even have to clean up after your shit!”

Though the collar had no ability to convey emotion, the speed at which it was able to emotion was at its peak. “*How. Do. You. Think. I. Feel. Feel. Feel. You. Think. I. Like. This. This. No. Friends. No. Job. No. No. Agency. No. Don't. Think. You. Are. The. Victim. Here. Here.*” Pete tried to say, body literally vibrating in rage.

“All you do is fucking sit around at that park all day! I have to spend all the money on shit like the collar! If I didn't have to pay it off...” Linda said, stopping herself for a moment.

“*What. Do. You. Mean?*” Pete asked, confused. It should have been free for him, given their income status. Unless...

“*Where. Has. The. Money. Been. Going. Linda.*” Pete demanded, the floodgates opening. He could already tell her heart rate was up, and that the scent wafting off her was a sign that she was nervous. But she had no intention of answering, standing there with a piercing gaze.

“Why do you care? You have your fucking collar! You can't even go outside without it!” Linda screamed at him, though Pete was largely undeterred. She wouldn't hurt him, though he had no evidence to take any sort of action, even if she was in the wrong about something.

“*This. Thing. Thing. Thing. Doesn't. Help. Me. Me. Me. To. Me. Me. Me. Me.*” Pete tried to say, but even as he stopped moving his jaw, the collar continued to buzz, as though broken.

“Shut that damn thing off!” Linda screamed, and Pete backed up, feeling a heat around his neck. The was starting to get painful, and Pete whined out, not really sure what to do. All he could do was try to raise his leg to turn it off, but even that was not enough, the button not responding.

Seeing her husband was in pain and likely even smelling the burning from the malfunctioning device, Linda stepped in to try and get it off. Pete relented, and the moment her fingers undid the clasp and pulled it off, Pete was relieved, panting to try to cool himself off.

Yet, his anger was at its peak, and Pete was not inclined to let the conversation go, even if it was one-sided. <See what I have to deal with Linda! I can't even talk to you without that thing! I have to wait for months till I get to go out again! And I'm stuck here with you! You don't give a damn about me anymore! You haven't since I've been changed! I've lost everything, Linda! And now that I got a taste of something back you can't even be happy for me! You can't even let me have that! And I'm stuck in here with you and your resentment! You don't even see me as human anymore! I barely see myself as human anymore! How can I feel like a man if the woman I married can't even->

“Shut the fuck up! Stop barking! I wanted a man, not a dog and you can't even be that!” Linda called out, the glass leaving her hand before either of them knew what had happened. It hit the floor, not Pete directly, but the shards of glass were enough that Pete was shocked.

<How could you do that! What's wrong with you? I'm a human being, damnit! I'm your husband! I'm not a fucking...I'm not a..not a...> Pete barked, but there was no way for her to know what he was saying. And that only cemented his disbelief for the very words he was trying to say.

“You know what? Do you want out? You've wanted out so bad! Get out. GET THE FUCK OUT!” Linda said, unlocking the door with fumbling fingers. The door slammed open, and Pete took off, tail between his legs. Part of him knew it was stupid, that he would be seen as little more than a dog without his collar. But with all that had happened, could he stand to stay there?

The air was already damp as Pete ran down the driveway, though he was not expecting the sky to open up and a downpour on him, the likes of which he had never experienced. It was impossible to see, even harder to smell with the odors all washed away. Part of him knew he should take shelter, that the rain would relent if only he waited. But while the pain in his heart could not be so easily washed away, Pete found himself holding onto the thread that anything would be then consumed by the abyss within, that he forced himself forward, not caring if he was able to stay on the sidewalk, wandering out on the street not the most unfavorable outcome he could think of. Would he do so of his own volition? No. But at the whims of the world and with no way forward obvious to him, Pete was prepared to let come what may.

Eventually, he passed out, likely under some branches on a tree that provided little cover but only just. The rain eventually relented, and the birds singing their morning check with each other were enough to rouse Pete from sleep. He was sore, frozen, and soaked through to the bone, yet he rose, without a destination in mind and unsure how to get there. Part of him was headed to the park, but without knowing in what direction it was, he was left to wander aimlessly, paws sore and body heavy, but unwilling to rest just yet. Yet, even his determination was no cure for a heavy heart, and Pete was once again prone to lie down. Just a little. A little rest, and then he could...

Pete was stirred from his nightmares by the sensation of a choke collar being fashioned to his neck. Terrified, Pete tried to pull away, the adrenaline enough to spur him to action. Yet, his body was far too weak for the hands of the man before him, and he was left at their mercy, not knowing who they were or what they had intended for him.

“Poor thing. Must be a stray. No one in their right mind would go out in a storm like that,” said the man, talking into his phone. “No collar or tags. He could be a Changed, but they all have those voice collars, right? No sign of one. I’ll bring him in,” he finished, hanging up.

<Wait...I’m not a dog. I’m human! I have rights! Let me go! Let me...I’m not a dog...> Pete tried to bark out, remembering that he didn’t have his collar. Worse, perhaps, were the doubts festering in his mind. Did it matter if he hadn’t always been a dog if he was one now? Part of him wanted to try and escape, to bark and pull away. But at this point, he was burned out beyond the breaking point. And was there any point in trying to get away, even if he could? He had no idea where he was or how to get back to his sense of smell. He was, truly, alone and at the whims of a world that treated him as a second-class citizen.

“Hey! Excuse me! That’s my dog! I’m so sorry!” Came a familiar voice, enough for Pete to raise his head. As much as he knew that voice, however, it was the next voice that truly brought his attention.

<Pete? What are you doing out here without your collar? Do you need a hand?> Barked Amy, talking to him before she turned on her collar. *“His. Name. Is. Pete. He. Is. Changed. My. Friend.”* Amy said in that awkward tone the devices used.

“Oh, is he? He shouldn't be out here without a collar,” the man said, though he was quick to take the choke collar off Pete. The penalty for treating a Changed Person like this was harsh, after all, not worth the trouble of taking him in to scan for a microchip.

Pete stumbled forward, Cassie coming to pick him up. Heavy as he was, she was able to manage it, walking a few blocks before moving up a driveway into a moderately sized house. <This is home,> Amy barked, having turned her collar off. <But what are you doing out here? You look awful. No offense, but let's get you inside,> she offered, and Pete just nodded weakly.

Cassie was kind enough to dry him with a towel and blow dryer, letting Pete rest on one of her beds while Cassie fixed them breakfast. <We were just out for our morning walk when I smelled you. Only thing I could smell after all the rain. How did you make it all the way out here? You weren't looking for me, were you?> Amy asked, confused.

<No, I was...> Pete said, then stopped. He wasn't sure what to say, all things considered. He couldn't tell her all that. Everything on his mind. And yet...

<Don't worry about it. Let's get some breakfast. My sister's a great cook. Then after some rest, we'll go to the park. You can talk there if you want. I mean, I won't force you but...you really should Pete. We're your friends. If you need some help, we can,> Amy said, nuzzling Pete a little. It was enough to give him a modicum of energy back, not much, but enough.

Breakfast was, as Amy had said, amazing. Anything would have been better than cheap dog food, of course. But Cassie was a skilled chef, and everything was prepared with canine-friendly ingredients. There was even a door for them to use to go outside of their own volition, something they didn't need to ask Cassie for, and helped with a sense of autonomy. While Pete didn't have a chance to see the whole house, what he did experience was enough for him to know it was far more canine-friendly than anything he could imagine, let alone his own house.

Cassie was nice enough to drive them to the park that day, the ground wet but the sun up making it a perfect day. Pete was still exhausted, but he made the trip nonetheless, not sure what else to do. Eventually, he had to make his way home, to deal with things there. But his desire to do so was absent, and without a clear plan, it wasn't the best idea for his mental health to try and deal with things on his own.

Pete was a little ashamed that all of his friends were present that day and made Pete's circumstances the focus of the day. Everyone was staring at him with concerned expressions, waiting for him to tell his story and not giving him no for an answer. Things had come too much to a head for him to stay quiet at this point, and Pete braced himself to tell everything, the past few days spilling out as he started to talk. Naturally, he tried to paint Linda in the best light possible, though the more he talked about the last few weeks, the harder it was for him to view her in that light, even when highlighting the good times. By the time he was done, the expression on his friend's faces was enough for him to know their thoughts, and even enough to sway the delusions he'd so carefully woven.

<She never loved you, bro,> Sam said, matter of fact. It was a little direct, and surely the reality of his situation was far more nuanced. But the fact he was standing there and not chasing his tail, faux squirrels, or anything else was sign enough that he took the idea seriously.

<Can I eat her?> Sara asked, and for a moment, Pete played it off as a joke. Yet, the longer they stood there, waiting for her to laugh, the longer Pete actually had to wonder if she was teasing or not. The situation was not helped when Siegmur came up to her, licking his lips and waving his tail like a hungry cat eyeing prey.

<She never supported you in your new life,> Dwight said, snorting his frustration. He didn't need to say anything else. Pete remembered how Dwight had said his boyfriend's support and loyalty had seen him through the change and his new life. Not having that, Pete felt his heart sink, all he could have had and all he was forced to endure otherwise. <You're not a burden, you're a human being who deserves love and attention.>

<Hell, she kept all your money, Hun,> Caithe said, jumping off the horse's back. Pete had to admit the truth in his suspicions when his friends all saw the same things without even smelling or hearing her heartbeat.

<Yeah, and I don't know what she's been spending it on. Our bills can't be that much with my stipend...> Pete pondered, though he only had his assumptions without being able to see the financial documents.

<Well, I'm not sure we can find out. And you say she's listed as your power of attorney?> Amy asked, to which Pete nodded his head. <That's annoying, but with the laws clearly giving autonomy to Changed Persons, you can circumvent that. Our cousin is a lawyer, and if you need some help, we can ask her to->

<I can't. I mean, how could I? I don't have anywhere else to go. No other relatives to take me in. I have to go back, and try to work things out with her, and hope she's at least willing to->

<Nope. No no no. You can stay with us until you get things sorted out,> Amy insisted, and as much as Pete went to protest, everyone said in unison <She's using you, dude, get out of there!>

<Fine, fine, she's abusive, OK! But I've said some things that->

<Everyone does that in an abusive relationship! That's what abuse does!>

In the end, there was no arguing with his friends, and he agreed to take Amy and Cassie up on their offer. It was a stop-gap measure, to be certain, but he was still insistent on talking with Linda that day, to let her know he was already. Since hers was about the same size as Pete's collar had been, Amy loaned it to him, and Cassie offered to drive them to Pete's home. There wasn't anything for him to pick up, save his iPad, but Pete was sure Linda would take him back, happy to see he was Ok after last night. Perhaps he was delusional, but Pete couldn't see a future that didn't involve his wife, his home, and all he had known since he'd changed. As much of a hellscape as that had been for much of it, Pete was determined, not wanting to inconvenience Amy and Cassie and get things fixed. Assuming there was anything in the fading fragments of his relationship that could be fixed...

The sight of a strange car in the driveway made Pete a little confused, though he and Amy walked up to the door, Amy asked <are you sure? We don't have to do this today.>

<No, it has to be today,> Pete said, not wanting to be a burden on his friends. And hopefully, not Linda, as much as he could work things out to their benefit.

That was until an unfamiliar smell wafted into his nose, one that made him a little concerned. There was a man he didn't know in the house, though that was hardly the thing that had him concerned. Rather, the sounds from the door, muffled cries, and whispers he couldn't make out left him confused. It was compounded by a scent he hadn't detected in his canine state, but one that made sense the more he thought about it. A very human scent of arousal, something so pronounced that he had smelled it on the man who had gone through the door...

“Are you sure your husband’s gone?” A voice said, clear to both their ears. Pete felt his heart sink at that, the implication obvious. Amy seemed to want to say something to him, though the sound of their barks might make their presence known, and interrupt the scene in play. One that broke Pete's heart but something he had to know nonetheless.

“I told you, he's a dog. I don't know if he's gone. He shouldn't be back for a while, at least, he's got that park they go to. Come on, I've been waiting for this. You have been too, haven't you?”

“You know I have, and I trust you. It's just, you could get in some trouble if...”

“Talk later,” Linda said, cutting him off and making Pete powerfully enraged. Of all the things that she could do in his absence...she would put him out on the street, only to cheat on him? Behind his back? Fuck, Pete had even offered to allow her a partner, if only she'd asked. But this...

Pete thought for a moment how to get in, knowing that if he called out Linda would try to hide what she was doing, regardless of what his nose told him about the truth. Yet, in his haste, the man had left the front door slightly ajar that he could push his way through. He had no intention of coming back here once more, going in for the last time for the thing that mattered most.

Claws padding on the floor, Pete could tell his wife was in her bedroom upstairs, and his nose told him what his ears had already implied. But rather than head up there and give her a piece of his mind, Pete's mind was only on one thing. Remembering where he had placed it last night, Pete picked up his iPad and moved back toward the door. <Are you sure?> Amy asked, but all Pete did was nod as he moved back out to the car, where Cassie was waiting for them. Sitting it down, Pete still didn't say anything, allowing Cassie to take his collar and return it to Amy before she let her know to take them home again.

The car ride was short, but in Pete's mind, it seemed to go on forever. Rather than focus on the past, however, Pete was fixated only on the future, and what might have been freed up for him now that he had his final confirmation. The chance to live somewhere new, to embrace spending time with his new friend, and perhaps even a career for the first time since he'd been changed. The chance to experience being a dog, and learn the joys of his new body in an environment that encouraged him to do so. And, as the scents in his nose were quick to remind him, get a chance to spend more time with, and get to know Amy in a way Pete could finally accept his heart was curious to do...

EPILOGUE

The lion and Shiba Inu looked a little out of place standing in the middle of a pine forest, especially surrounded by wolves as they were. Of course, all the wolves were Changed Persons,

all the wolves in the country that had congregated into a single large pack. At first, it was only those infected to join, but with their numbers increasing, Sam had to assume some of them had partaken in the newly released transformation virus, a one-way trip to an animal form of one's choosing. Wolves, of course, were a popular choice, but Sam didn't care either way. More wolves to chase and sniff and play with were always welcome in his mind!

The largest wolf had become the de facto leader, though it was more a figurehead than anything else. He had no actual power, and wolves didn't work that way, as much as packs were led by the breeding pair and followed by their children. It was more role for something to organize events, and while they were usually for wolves, Sam was able to invite his podcast hosts in, in exchange for an upcoming interview spot.

<Alright, listen up maggots! The team that brings the most rabbits back by the end of the night wins!> The alpha said, and the collection of scented baskets each team carried were sat down as the trio took off into the woods. It had to have been quite the effort for the organizers to place all the dummy rabbits around the woods, and hunting all night would be rather strenuous. As the only team to have non-lupine members, they had unique strengths compared to the rest, his co-host's noses were just as able as his own. At least, Sam thought so...

It was a long night of scrambling around the forest before the dawn's light announced the game was over. Though each basket had some number of rabbit plushies within, the twenty or so that lined the podcast trio's basket was the clear winner. They had not been told what the prize would be, but Sam was eager, his competitive streak not wanting him to lose. Tail wagging, he eagerly awaited whatever prize would be handed out, surely worth staying up and hunting through the woods all night-

<And here's a \$25 online gift card to the winners! Thanks a lot for coming out, we have something fun lined up for next month as well->

A collective groan went through the pack of wolves, which the alpha tried to play off. It was obvious they could have afforded it something better, and at their monthly pack meeting, of all things! Yet, Sam, given his wagging tail seemed eager to have won, regardless of the prize. Sam trotted up, taking it in his jaws before thanking the alpha and presenting it to the rest of his co-hosts.

<Well, at least I can afford that Scooby Plushie I've had my eyes on.>

Running late getting home to her wife, Caithe took a familiar shortcut through some neighbor's backyards, something she avoided lest she be caught and yelled at, but something that shaved a good five minutes off her run. Yet, the sounds of panicked cries hit her ears, and Caithe stopped for a moment, not caring about being seen as her eyes flicked in that direction. Used to hearing animals speak in their broken tones, this one made it obvious they were once human. <Hold the little shit, I get the first bite,> one said, and Caithe couldn't stand for it, whatever it seemed to be going on.

Moving back along the path, a familiar smell she'd come to associate with raccoons flooded her nose. She hadn't met any Changed raccoons during her time in the neighborhood, though there was a possibility they didn't subscribe to the usual channels that Changed Persons used. All the more likely as the sound of mewling hit her ears, and the likely target of their aggression was made known to her. Who the fuck in their right mind would attack such a defenseless animal like that?!

<Hey! Leave the poor thing alone!> Caithe demanded as soon as she was sure the raccoons could hear her. There were three of them, and though they outnumbered her, Caithe's larger size and speed would likely be threatening enough to make her point.

<Oi! piss off! Go back to whatever den you crawled out of,> one of them said, the fattest that was holding up the helpless animal and sniffed it hungrily. Yet, it was obvious he wasn't paying attention to the larger fox that had approached them, snarling and yipping <You're lucky I can't carry my aluminum baseball bat anymore! But if I ever see you in my garbage cans, so help me!> His cohorts were not nearly so oblivious, seeing the growling fox and deciding it was best to run for cover. Even the fattest of the three, without his backup, quickly dropped his prize, and he took off into a crawl space behind a dumpster, to where they lived after becoming Changed. It didn't matter, all things considered.

With that, Caithe was left with their victim, though without an idea what to do with him. He was lying there, mewling pathetically, though not scared of the fox as he had been with the raccoons. In fact, the sounds out of his tiny muzzle were so adorable that Caithe could not resist the urge to look down, licking his fur and feeling him squirm into it. Caithe figured for a moment she might be able to leave it be, not having thought it through before intervening. Yet, seeing it here, so helpless without her care...

Carefully taking the small creature by the nap of the neck, Caithe took off, slower this time so as not to drop it. Yet, of equal importance was what she planned to say to her wife. There were other options, of course. Adoption centers, foster care, and the like. But, in the end, Caithe found there was only one option she would settle on. And it came down to the tactic she would use to convince her wife to adopt another kitten...

“Good boy, good horsie. Let’s head back to the barn and get you hosed off,” said the anthropomorphic horse riding backpack on a large, brown stallion. They had been running around a track for some time, and his skin was frothy with sweat. Yet, it had been a worthwhile exercise, Dwight eager to show off his prowess and run all out as much as he felt he was capable. It was a little much, even for a beast of his stature, but he was determined to show off for his new husband, and his efforts were rewarded with horsie delights.

Getting him to the side of the barn, the recently changed anthro horse took a warm hose and sprayed his body. Dwight, having not bothered to don his collar, shook his body and mane, thankful to be clean. He loved how his horse boy husband took care of him, even when he largely lacked the ability to do so himself. And that was not the only thing his husband was willing to assist him with...

Feeling his maleness coming to bear, Dwight moved toward his husband, their rubbery lips touching as they kissed. Though his husband’s muzzle was much smaller than Dwight's own, the pleasurable sensations were far better than he had taken on an anthropomorphic equine form of his own. The perfect mix of both worlds, easily able to continue to care for his husband, and enjoy a variety of fun activities that his former human form was not capable of, but his new body was able to embrace...

The large panther slowly pulled out of his mate, a much larger tiger though hardly a hindrance to their mating. Sara resisted the feline urge to bat at him from the pain of the spines being pulled out. In truth, Siegmur didn't mind it, part of being a cat and something he had fully embraced by this point. A far cry from when he'd first moved to the sanctuary, but much better now to match his new form and lifestyle. Best of all, he had a loving mate to share it all with, someone who eagerly nuzzled him back as the two of them vibrated their pleasure.

The two had been given a private room at the big cat sanctuary, not that it mattered with a cat's ability to smell. Everyone in the facility knew when the pair were mating, even if they couldn't hear the persistent yowls from the act itself. Not that they were the only couple at the sanctuary, of course, but they were certainly among the most active, as much as they had come to love sex.

It had been several dozen rounds of mating, and Sara had long since lost track. In her periods of heat, it could become a game of sorts to see how many times they could copulate

before they were finally, truly done. With how many times a tiger in heat could go in one day, it was exhausting, though part of her new physiology, and something they were happy to have a mate to help with.

In the brief moments before Siegmar's penis came to bear once more, he was generous enough to move toward Sara's nipples, carefully licking them and making the tiger squirm. Her breasts were one of the few things she still missed from her human body, having otherwise come to love her tigress form. Even though they were not as sensitive as her human pair, there were at least eight of them, and Siegmar was at least helpful in tending to her lusts in more than one way that Sara could not do for herself.

Even though they were sore and tired from the exertion on their bodies, the satisfaction felt from the frequent matings was oddly romantic, something neither of them thought they would experience in their lives. Neither had been looking for romance, focused on their own jobs and endeavors. Hell, Sara was always on the lookout for the next project even now, though much of her efforts were charitable in nature. Something that Siegmar appreciated her for, among many other things. Namely giving him a new life in America, and purpose as a cat, something he loathed at first but had come to love. And that last part was something he was eager to thank her for, as much as he'd said it in the past.

< Thank you for saving me,> he whispered, hugging Sara's body while licking her cheek.

<You don't need to say that,> Sara replied, though in truth she loved hearing it as much as Siegmar was willing to tell her. She loved hearing his voice and feeling his body. And having his member inside of her, something she was eager to entertain again as she raised up, flagging her tail and presenting sex for Siegmar's aid...

It had been about one year since Pete had left Linda to move in with Cassie and Amy, and Pete couldn't be happier. It was an odd day for the trio, sunny, yet none of them seemed inclined to head to the park, a lazy day all in all. Cassie was reading a book, watching the two dogs running and playing. Without their collars on, they looked like any other pair of dogs just enjoying life to the fullest in the here and now. And, they might as well of have been, nipping and tugging on ropes and generally having a good doggy time.

<Your jaws can't win all the time!> Amy growled, though her husband's slightly larger stature was usually the winner in their games. But she was determined, and with a growl, called out <Oh, hi, Dwight!> To which Pete turned around, having not heard the horse coming.

Yet, he was too ignorant of her rouse before Amy tugged her head, pulling the rope from Pete's lips and nearly Pete with it, toppling over and looking incredulous. <Hey! No cheating!> Pete barked, though he was hardly mad. It wasn't the first time his wife had resorted to such measures, and in truth, he loved her all the more for her humor and spontaneity.

<Hey, at least I won,> Amy giggled, before moving toward Pete and giving him a brief smooch on his lips before taking off, Pete soon to follow.

The last year felt like a whirlwind of activity, Pete's life changing almost as much as it had during the virus. Of course, he was quick to divorce Linda, proof of her unfaithfulness accelerating the proceedings. That wasn't an issue, Cassie and Amy's cousin being a rather reasonable lawyer and getting him enough money to cover her expenses. The house was forfeit, but Linda didn't seem to need it, having an online love interest for many months, both of whom viewed Pete as a dog and their adultery to be valid. Much of Pete's stipend had been going toward financing the man's failed ventures, though Pete sincerely hoped she was able to find some peace in her new life. Regardless, he never wanted to see or hear from her again, working with a therapist to help close that chapter of his life.

Having earned back pay for the last few years since it was ruled to negate her power of attorney, Pete had the start of financing his new life, even though Cassie and Amy did not ask him for any compensation for his stay. He was allowed to pay for his new collar, something that seemed less necessary with Amy to translate and most of his friends in the park as it was. Still, it was a point of pride for him to carry that access to his humanity. He was human, after all, albeit in a different body now, but that did not demean his status as a human. Something he was still working to come to terms with, though it was getting better every day.

And, with that work on himself being done, Pete had the mental state to finally pursue other meaningful relationships, culminating in getting to know his new roommate. The mutual attraction had been there for some time, and though Pete was nervous at first, their friend group was quick to encourage, most of them being in loving circumstances of their own. Amy, too, was hopeful, and the moment Pete finally thought to ask her, she said yes.

Their courtship was rather short, all in all, before the two of them saw it fit to tie the knot. Pete was officially divorced by that point, and Changed Person weddings were starting to become more in fashion as of late. Pete was a little unsure about having a ceremony, given he felt his love didn't require such a declaration. But Amy insisted it was as much for their friends as it was for them, and Pete looked upon the day as the best of his life.

Naturally, the two of them made love often, Amy happy to have the relief from her periods of heat. The idea of having puppies was a little daunting, not something they entertained

and for now found non-penetrative ways to help Amy with her heat. For now, the two of them were happy to share in their new lives together, nothing really missing now that Pete had accepted his new lot in life.

And now, Pete chased Amy through the yard, barking out his sheer joy and loving his canine form as he'd come to do over the last few months and years. With a full life before him, Changes Person lifespans likely close their human span rather than the animals they had become, Pete found himself looking forward to what each day would bring. Finally catching up with his new wife, giving her a quick kiss on the lips before running off, Pete figured they would eventually bother Cassie, going to the park and enjoying the rest of the beautiful day with their friends.