

Creak!

Clip-clop clip-clop clip-clop clop-thp...

"Um, hey. Are you awake?" A sweet feminine voice whispered out.

Me? Am I awake? Maybe. I don't want to be. I tried to drift back to sleep but there were too many distractions. *Just a little longer please...* The TV was still on. I couldn't make it out but didn't really want to.

"I guess not." She whispered back, oblivious to my inner thoughts. "Alright."

The sound from before returned moving closer: something tapping against a wooden floor. I tried to ignore it but I was just awake enough to match the sound to hooves on wood panels. It made sense somehow. The events leading up to my loss of consciousness were creeping out again but I refused to dwell on them too much. The sound transitioned into soft steps on a carpet floor with the occasional groaning of a loose floorboard. She was walking towards me.

I could sense her standing between me and the annoying noise box above and to the right of my head. I became more aware of my position on the floor. I was lying on my right side with my back to her and all limbs but my wings pointing, more or less, towards where I remembered the couch was. I could feel my tail curled over my hind legs. My right ear was folded uncomfortably against the rough carpet. My right wing didn't bother me nearly as much being crushed against the floor, and it had the full weight of my body to deal with.

I was also still naked. I felt a shiver run through me and tried hard not to let it show, not to move. I was strange; alien; I was wrong! I felt sickened by my form in a strange way. It wasn't the inhuman feeling but also the loss of my sex! I wanted nothing more than to hide, not lay out with my fuzzy form exposed to the world. Still I didn't dare move. I couldn't let her to know I was awake and listening. I wasn't ready to deal with anyone just yet.

I felt her move behind me. My heart was beating faster but I kept my breathing slow and calm. She leaned over and I sensed two inhuman legs placed cautiously by my exposed stomach. One of them then lifted and seemed to be pawing at something. I had a good idea of *what* she was; I remembered the news.

I was more worried though about *who* she was. And *why* I was in what I assumed was her home.

After what seemed like a short struggle of *something* with *something else*, she sighed and

shifted her weight onto what I figured to be her front hooves, both again resting in the space between my own outward facing legs and stomach. I heard the sound of fabric being moved as she then stepped back over me. She had just pulled the blanket off the couch and onto me, pulling it up to my neck.

Something was strange about all that. *Did she try grabbing the blanket with her hoof, maybe? Obviously that wasn't working. Did she just grab that in her teeth or something? She must have with both her front legs on the floor.*

An ominous feeling crept through me as I considered the implications of a life without hands. I wondered how much I would be forced to resort to the same. Maybe my wings would be useful for something, like carrying things somehow. *Is walking on two legs is still an option at all?*

I heard her giggle a little under her breath. She seemed to stand there for another full minute before moving away. It sounded like she was having trouble walking in reverse though.

A door creaked in the direction I had first heard her hooves clopping in from, followed by careful footsteps. Feet not hooves. Soft steps on creaky wood. Two legs—not four. The horse girl behind me paused her clip-clopping at the sounds.

“Lizzy?” A new voice said as both sets of foot and hoof steps came together and ceased. “What are you doing up?” The voice was also female, but older and tired.

“I couldn't sleep. I still feel too... weird. I wanted to check on her too.”

Her. She meant me. The word seemed so strange being applied to me.

“Why is she on the floor? Did she roll off?”

“I don't know. I found her like that. Maybe her tail was keeping her awake too.”

“Well let's hope so. That would mean she's just sleeping normally now. I was worried when we couldn't wake her, if she got a concussion from the accident it could cause long term damage or put her in a coma or—”

Lizzy cut her off, her voice rising above the whisper they had both been speaking in. She sounded a lot younger than I had thought. “I know mom, I know. You said all this like a thousand times on the way home.”

Her mother shushed her a little halfway through so she'd go back to whispering. They paused their conversation, possibly to see if I had woken up.

The mother broke the silence, “I'm just worried, is all. They were just being stupid at the

hospital. I know they were busy and everyone wanted in, but they shouldn't have said they were letting in only people in obvious need, only for the police to turn away every car that came by, twice. We drove all that way. It's not right."

They were both silent for a minute or two. I heard what sounded like the two settling on the floor near the hallway.

The mother spoke again. "So your tail was keeping you up?"

"Yeah." Lizzy said. She paused before continuing. "It's all just so... weird. I don't know how to feel about any of this." She paused again. "None of my clothes fit. I didn't try very much, it's hard enough not... not having hands. I'm not even wearing anything under this robe, and it's hard enough walking *like this* without loose clothes to trip over."

Her voice started to break up a little. It sounded like she was crying. "I don't have hands mom. How am I supposed to do anything! I couldn't even open the door. I couldn't even get undressed. I couldn't even get my bra off, even though it was so loose, it got caught on my w-wings and pinched my hair and I broke the clasps. It doesn't even matter. I barely needed one before, but now I never will. What am I gonna do?" She sobbed.

Oh great now I feel like crying.

"It's alright." Her mother said, "It's all going to be alright. You're not alone. Just remember that. There are people all over the world right now trying to deal with the same problems you are. There's even one lying on our living room floor. What sort of panic do you think she was in to crash into us? You've been dealing with this bravely so far and I'm proud of you. Just hold on. Things will get better, it will all get easier in time. And I'll be here for you too, whatever you need."

The girl was trying to keep her sobbing under control as her mother shushed her a little.

"I love you mom." Lizzy said sniffing.

"Love you too my Lizzy-beth."

And now I'm crying too.

They went quiet again, except for the occasional sob from the little horse girl. I felt a slight ache in my chest. I felt like crying more, but more than anything though the scene tired me.

Closing my dripping eyes again I fell back to sleep.

* * * *

It seemed as though I blinked and things were different. The tv was quiet and there was a beam of light peeking through my eyelids. I hadn't noticed the window there earlier but I couldn't ignore it now. I guess it had been night when I was awake before.

Footsteps sounded past the couch with hooves clopping close behind.

"I know you were having trouble with your phone so I turned up the volume and set it to automatic speaker. I'll leave it on the end table so if you need me or you need to answer it. You can just tap the screen or press the button for the voice commands. I'll only be gone a couple hours, maybe less if all the stores are still closed. Make sure to call me if she wakes up, ok?" The older woman was talking again but sounded rushed and was not trying very hard to whisper.

"I know, I will." Lizzy answered.

"Are you sure you'll be fine?" Her mom asked with concern.

"I'm 16 mom." She said with a little laugh, "If crazy Ms. Straus can trust me babysitting, you can trust me home alone for a couple hours, even like this. Just go. I want to know how Sam and Rachel at doing too. Out, now!"

There was a quick exchange of goodbyes as a door was swung open and then slammed shut. I heard Lizzie sigh and clop back into the room. I had lifted my head to follow the sounds as they walked by and was now squinting at her through tired eyes.

She was pink. Light pink. Other transformed people on the news had been all kinds of colors but none of them exactly the same shade. Still not being used to the whole thing, it was surreal trying to match the voice I'd been hearing to the small horse-like creature standing across the room from me. She was obviously young, but never having seeing anything like 'us' before I would never have guessed her age. She had a short muzzle that carried a slightly surprised expression in her large eyes (not terribly large, but still seeming bigger than human eyes) that were an unreal shade of purple. Her hair, or mane I guess, was a sort of ridiculous cotton candy blue.

Almost the strangest thing of all was what she was wearing. She had on a simple green dress obviously not meant for her shape, or even color scheme. The straps were loose and even though it was short enough to only barely cover most of her tail it still hung down around the hind legs, likely to make her trip is she wasn't careful.

"Oh." She said, "You're awake!" She stared at me for a moment before her ears (and mine)

twitched to the sound of a car engine starting. She suddenly jumped backwards, rearing onto her hind legs and taking a few steps like that before she turned to the front door.

“Just hold on! I’ll be right back!”

I could make out her trying to twist at the doorknob with hooves, though in vain, then bashing the doorframe with one hoof in frustration. She gave a loud groan of annoyance and dropped back down and grasped it in her mouth. Still no luck. She darted back into the room and stumbled to a stop at a table by the couch. She glanced by at me staring back at her as she fumbled with a smart phone her mother had left for her. It fell onto the floor face down and she kept sliding it around on the carpet while trying to flip it back over with her hooves.

Sighing really loud and then stomping the carpet in frustration, she looked upwards at nothing in particular. She then got up and walked over to where I was laying.

I rolled over, folding my legs under me awkwardly. My forelegs were bent in such a way that I felt I was resting on my elbows. It was weird to think I was lying down but still upright given the angle and shape of my neck.

We stared at each other for a moment. I think we were both trying to hide our curiosity about the other. I hadn’t even gotten good look at me; so far this was my first real look at a horse-person. Or whatever we were.

“Um... Hi.” She finally said. How are you feeling?”

I stared at her a moment. “Hi.” half-mumbled. My voice it seemed was still asleep.

I looked away from her and around the room, eyes darting back but not wanting to make contact.

“Hi.” I said again, being reminded of my new higher voice. My voice sounded fairly mature compared to hers though. Feminine, but not girly, though it might have just sounded that way in my head. “I’m feeling ok I guess. Still tired.”

“That’s alright. If you want more sleep go ahead. We were just worried you wouldn’t wake up at all. It seemed like you hit your head really hard.”

She stared at me some more. I stared back, making her look nervous. *This is seven levels of awkward.* I hoped I wasn’t nearly as intimidating as she made me feel. She was such a small thing. The stare down I was giving her probably didn’t help either. I couldn’t help it though, she just looked so surreal.

I debated whether or not I should say anything before she broke the silence first. “I’m Elizabeth.”

I looked away and mumbled a response while fighting a yawn. "Steve." *Oops, wait. Shit. That's not a girl's name now is it.*

"Steff?" She asked, "Like, short for Stephanie?"

"Yeah, sure." *Aaaaand saved.*

The news hadn't mentioned any gender changes that I'd heard. I wasn't sure I wanted let that secret out yet, to complete strangers no less, though for all I knew there might not be any male horse people, though it didn't seem that way on the news. That would just be weird too. Or weirder. Everything was already weird enough.

And we're back to the awkward silence. Great, I have to fix it myself now don't I?

"Calm down kid I'm not gonna bite." I said.

She giggled at that making me half-smile myself.

"I'm sorry, it's just... Well you are looking a little *wild*, right now." She gestured at me with her hoof, still grinning a little.

"I what? Oh. Yeah." I still felt beat up and bruised pretty bad, and from what I'd seen I must have looked like something the cat dragged in (maybe like the half of a rabbit my old cat had left me once). This all brought up a very important question, "What happened?"

"You sort of crashed into us when we were driving home." She answered, smile failing a little.

"Oh. Is my car alright?"

"What? No, you weren't driving."

"So you hit me?"

"No." She said looking annoyed (Human expressions looked adorable to her short muzzle), "We weren't moving, you were. We stopped because the storm was so bad... Let me explain."

Elizabeth and her mom were out grocery shopping when the "event" happened. Her muscles started cramping as she was loading bags from their cart to her mom's Jeep Cherokee. She couldn't remember much of what happened before the changes stopped, and after that she was near panicking. They had left the parking lot, any remaining groceries forgotten, but traffic had come to a standstill long before they reached the hospital. After several hours of her freaking out in the backseat, only for them to be turned away from the hospital by police, they decided to

head home.

The rain picked up as soon as they started home and soon it all became too much for both of them. Elizabeth's mom had pulled them over and moved to the back seat to comfort her. The storm wasn't promising to let up that quickly.

After nearly an hour something big hit the car roof, making the whole vehicle shake. Elizabeth thought it was a large hailstone but her mom said it was probably a branch from one of the tall trees near where they parked. They both agreed they should get going and her mother was about to get out to check on the "branch" when a wing slipped and slid down the windshield and onto the hood making them both scream.

"I fell. Onto your car."

"Yeah. Scared the shit out of me. I thought a monster had jumped out of the woods or something."

"Fell from where?" I asked deadpan.

"What? I don't know, the sky? You tell me." She looked at me curiously.

None of this made sense. I assumed my kind hosts would be able to answer my questions. I now knew why I was in such bad shape, why my head hurt, and why I woke up on in a stranger's house. So why was I left even more confused than before?

Shiver again, tail flick, left ear and right wing twitch. *Wings*.

"Oh."

"Oh what?" she asked.

I shrugged off the blanket enough to spread my wings.

"Ha! I knew it!" She squealed, her own wings fidgeting under the fabric of her dress, "You were flying. People keep saying there's no way and it shouldn't work but you did it! Show me! Show me!"

"No." I interrupted. God she talked fast. "I didn't- I mean I... I don't know. Maybe I did. I don't remember."

"What do you remember?"

What did I remember. Last thing I remembered before the *first* time I woke up was watching

Pulp Fiction on my laptop before going to bed. I had a job interview in the morning... no wait I went to that interview. I remember because the manager's lack of hygiene made me very relieved when he turned me down in the end by saying they needed someone with more experience. That really ticked me off though.

More experience. Ha! You change oil and check tire pressure and almost nothing more. I've been doing that on my own since I was 16! Do I suddenly need a bachelors to be less than a mechanic now? If you're too embarrassed to say you've hired someone since calling me in for the interview then a "we'll call you," and then never calling me back would have been better than complete bullshit.

That was all on Tuesday though. I knew more had happened since then.

"What day is it?" I asked suddenly.

"Friday." She answered, "The 17th, or 18th, I'm not sure. Why? Do you remember something?"

"I don't remember anything since last Tuesday."

"Oh..."

She seemed really disappointed. Was she wanting flying lessons or something? I guess I could understand that after being turned into a freaky horse-thing and having giant wings glued to your back, that it would be really awesome for them to make up for the loss of hands somehow.

Oh god I have no hands. I should be freaking out about that more.

There was something else I had become aware of while we were talking that I needed to ask about. I was almost afraid to bring it up. My voice lost some of the presence and power I had been passively forcing into it to make up for its lost masculinity and what I said came out in an embarrassingly soft squeak. "Hey uh, do you have a bathroom I can use?"

I doubted my red face was visible behind the fur covering it but she caught on to my obvious embarrassment and giggled a little. "Sure, it's right down the hall, only door on the left." she motioned with her hoof.

It occurred to me just the sort of image I was presenting her with. She had first seen me after I had crashed into her car, possibly from the center of a storm cloud for all she knew, battling tempests while she cried in the corner. I could be a badass angel that fell from heaven, but I was too embarrassed to ask where the bathroom was. I only ever thought of first impressions in retrospect.

My wings had gradually moved from their literal spreadeagle position to almost shielding my body from sight. I was still feeling very exposed, especially since letting the blanket slip a little. I folded them back against my sides and reached back for the blanket.

I remembered how Elizabeth had fumbled with her hooves to grab the cloth (and doorknob, and phone) so I decided to follow her example and turned my head back. Again I marveled at just how far I could reach back with my neck. The blanket was barely covering my hips and I was able to bite down with my weird new front teeth and pull it up past my shoulder.

Tucking it around me I stood up.

Elizabeth seemed surprised at what I just did, maybe she had been embarrassed doing it herself. Her surprise was directed upwards though as it turned out I was much taller than her despite how much we both likely changed. *That would make me more intimidating to her now wouldn't it.* I had nothing familiar to use as a reference, but while I was much smaller than I had been before the change that meant very little when compared to this girl.

Before the change I had stood a little over six feet and four inches tall (thanks to my dad's side of the family being from some place in Eastern Europe I could never remember, but which apparently had very tall people living there according to my brother) but I wasn't exactly skinny. It seemed to me most other tall guys had a very average build but were just stretched out vertically. It was like taking a picture of an average guy on your computer and resizing it only one direction. With me though whoever resized the image made it keep the same proportions. So I ended up meeting both categories in the "big and tall" department. I've always felt small on the inside though, I guess I'm sort of a cliché like that.

I couldn't assume the same proportional size increase with my new form as my only point of reference was a teen girl who could very well have been on the small side herself before the change, but whatever the case was I must have seemed a giant to her. On all fours we were both still much closer to the ground than was comfortable, and if I stood up and stretched out my freaky neck I doubted I'd reach my original height, but I was nearly twice her size regardless. She seemed such a small thing I could easily saddle myself up and carry her on my back without strain, as strange as that thought was (alright, I did not like that mental image at all).

She must have been thinking some of the same as me (though I hoped not the saddle part) because when she had to look up to see me she said, "Wow, you're tall."

So even on all fours I still get that. Why is it people always say that like it's something to be ashamed of. It's like short people have to make you feel guilty for your height. This was going to be weird though having to look up to anyone who hadn't changed. Unless I reared up I wouldn't be seeing over crowds any time soon. In one way at least I'd learn what being *vertically challenged* was like.

"You're short." I said back.

She winced and looked down.

Oh great I hit a sore spot. A puppy bites you and when you kick it you only feel bad. "Sorry."

"It's ok." She said. It obviously wasn't. Maybe I was right about her being short before, cutting that height in half when it was already a problem would make anyone upset. I guess.

"Look," I said, "I might be taller than you but we'll both have a lot of people looking down on us from now on. Just don't let it get to you. There are more important things to worry about right now." Obviously I wasn't cut out for cheesy pep talks, and definitely shouldn't give them to random teens. "Like bathrooms. I'm terrified right now of figuring out how to sit on a toilet like this." That at least got a giggle from her.

Wrapping the blanket around me more and pinching it under my wings a little so it didn't slip, I walked passed her and around the couch. She turned and sped in front of me to lead the way down the hall.

Once or twice I nearly tripped on the blanket as it dragged behind me. I hadn't even walked this far on hooves as far as I knew but I wasn't going to mess up now. I had felt so smug at how easy my first steps had seemed and I didn't want to end up with with a "*hoof*" in my mouth (literally) for saying walking was easy.

I kept my focus ahead of me, trying to not look at the way little Lizzie's butt bounced under her dress as she walked. It wasn't out of attraction mind you, It just looked silly. I honestly did not even consider yet how my sexual orientation could have changed with the rest of me or if that change even included horse-people at all instead of just humans. I was too scared of my own sex at the moment to think about anything even close to it. As embarrassing as it is to admit I was thinking more of how my much larger posterior might be doing the same amid the complex movement of hooves required to walk that long fifteen feet. I tried to suppress any unnecessary swaying.

When we reached the door I tried to keep my face straight as she turned around in the narrow hallway. Her small size had that advantage at least. It didn't bother me realizing there was no way I could easily change direction, in what was really not too small a space, without rearing up. I had the feeling any excuse to assume a more human stance would be very welcome with the amount of looking up I was looking forward to.

Unlike the front door (or any others in the hall), the bathroom had a handle and not a doorknob, something Elizabeth was almost too happy to make use of.

"You probably want a shower right now too so feel free to use that. I'm going to try calling my

mom again to let her know you woke up. Just holler if you need anything.”

I nodded and walked through the door, tugging the blanket clear of the door awkwardly so I could close it again with my hoof. I clicked the button to lock it and let the blanket fall to the floor, kicking it into the corner by the sink.

‘Finally.’

Feel free to leave comments concerning any typos, grammatical errors, awkward phrasing, or opinions on the way I write and suggestions to improve.