

The Caretaker
- Fen

I don't really know what to expect with him. He's been my best friend for as long as I can remember but lately he's been off. It's like he's a different person than who I just met. He's been more impulsive, protective and he's cared for me in my darkest hours of life. Something about him has become more animalistic in nature. I only hope I don't get caught in whatever crossfire he faces with his inner demons.

I've always believed in the supernatural; talks of demons, possessions, even vampires, werewolves, and witches. I'd like to think that it's all folklore, stories you'd tell your children so they would behave, yet something keeps pulling me close to believing in it fully. That some of these people we meet in our everyday lives are beings that our minds are too weak to comprehend.

Only this night is much more stressful, getting a message from him telling me, "pick me up", "I need a caretaker for the night." Maybe he was just having an anxiety attack or trying to make sure he doesn't have one at all I complied happily. Our relationship together has been the strongest I've had in months, hell maybe years. The kind of bond any couple dating could dream of without the dating aspect.

The night was oddly warm for it being almost the winter season. The Moon shined its brightest and fullest in the sky, not even the clouds passing could keep its gaze away. It definitely made driving easier. I couldn't help but feel a sense of dread. What if he's hurt? What if he's panicking outright, how can I help him? I had to keep telling myself, "Focus, he'll be fine."

Pulling into the driveway there he stood, almost lifeless, looking to the night's sky like he was looking for an answer to something. I beckoned him over, snapping him out of that hypnotic state. Everything about his body language was just wrong. The way he walked, he wouldn't talk. He was almost zombie-like in nature. Hearing the door open and shut I looked over to the passenger seat; he wouldn't even sit straight. His posture was always off the tailbone, looking out whatever window the moon was visible at.

I would check on him periodically driving out and about at this late an hour. Questions were met with a blank stare, a low whisper, or a simple nod. Yes and No questions seemed like the only way to get through to him. Periodically I'd ask if he was ok; I was met with a nod yes but I could hear something low under his breath. Was he growling? I quickly parked in a spot and told him to turn his head over to me, something in my mind just kept yelling at me.

His eyes were not the same pure blue I had seen when I am with him; they were grey with a hint of yellow building right around the pupil. His teeth were jagged and sharp, ready to devour his next meal. I hesitate at the thought almost fearing I am the prey. He responded to his name being called warmly, nuzzling into my touch. Exploring more around the ears they were much pointer than before. His growls started up again, this time louder losing my grip as he reared back.

I couldn't believe my eyes as his body twisted, too afraid to reach out; the show was more than what I bargained for. My brain couldn't make out whether it wanted to be amazed or frightened. Seeing his teeth grow out into proper fangs, his hair growing out into fur, his mouth pushing out into a muzzle. The claws digging into the dashboard seeing him rear back into a howl toward the moon. I snapped out of my gaze and looked around to make sure no one else

was here to see the spectacle.

I kept with the Yes and No questions to see if I could get a response, albeit a little slow to respond. The best option I had was to let him stay at my house for the night; I rummaged around his pants pockets for a phone and contacted the family that he was safe with me.

Sneaking him into the house was not much of an issue thankfully living out in the middle of practically nowhere. I can't let him outside though; it would risk people seeing him. As we made our way inside I took a load off and plopping on the couch. He came up to the couch with me and kept licking my face and playfully giving bites. His eyes didn't look as craving as they once were in the car.

He's still in there, and I think he knows what is going on. Maybe this won't be as bad as I first thought.