

Conall At Work

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Content warning: Transformation, work violence, rude coworkers

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When Conall glanced up from his Kindle Paperwhite, the punch clock ticked 20:47. A couple of coworkers, either on break or waiting until the start of their shifts, lingered away from him. One stood around the vending machine, trying not to glance back at Conall. Another held his smartphone close to his eyes as though watching an intense movie, away from Conall.

Conall shifted his blue eyes around before sighing to himself. He knew he should be in the backroom, unloading pallets from trucks. He should be out on the floor, scouting for places to store the pallets on the overhead or floor. He should be counting their products, ensuring they were correct, and checking expiration dates if they had any.

Instead, management kept him in the breakroom until 9PM, closing time.

A full hour between clocking in and starting work, doing nothing of worth besides reading.

All because everyone feared what he could do since turning into an anthro Lycanroc.

Conall rubbed the bushy white mane around his neck, next to the front-left dark brown spikes. Four spikes extended outward from the mane on his sides, two forward and two backward. The topmost button on his green polo

shirt strained against the mane, but it held. One spike extended out from his back at the lower part of the mane, though it did not pierce through his shirt. His light brown fur lay smooth on him, almost silky. He wiggled his triangular ears, tipped with dark brown. His long, fluffy white tail remained still, poking through the space between the back and bottom of the chair.

While Conall read more of the book displayed on his Kindle, Reaper Man by Terry Pratchett, he thought of the event five days ago. At the crack of morning, after he left work, he encountered a magical shop. He found a Lycanium Z there, which transformed him into an anthro Lycanroc after picking it up. While initially annoyed, he realized how much he enjoyed his new form.

Since then, everyone has acted differently around him.

Conall expected that. After all, it was not every day that someone knew all their lives changed into an anthro Pokémon. It took hours to convince his family and work of his identity, from reciting SSN and birth certificate details to recounting past events. By the end, they acknowledged his identity.

They kept him at arm's distance, though.

He wondered if they saw him as a ticking clock, ready to explode.

“Sa, did you see him last morning?” a coworker named Alena asked. Conall lifted his eyes off his Kindle a bit. Alena sat on the other table next to Conall’s, chatting with Lawson. “I swear he looked orange instead of pale brown.”

“He explained that he shifts from one Lycanroc form to another depending on his mood,” Lawson responded. Despite his hushed tone, Conall heard every word. Lawson continued, “Just be careful around him. OK?”

Conall lowered his eyes back to the Kindle Paperback. Despite the story’s excellent humor, it cannot lift him out of his sadness. Part of him regretted not taking Luke’s offer not too long after he changed.

Luke, that strange anthro jackal and the owner of that magical shop popped into his mind. By this point, Conall admitted to himself what happened was his fault. Still, if time reset and he kept his memories, he would redo his choice. He did regret Luke’s offer of a necklace holding a glowing blue crystal. Luke explained that morning that he would return to his human form as long as he wore it. Conall rejected the offer, and he regretted it ever since.

The fact that the shop disappeared the following day only compounded his distress.

Conall hoped that, by this point, his coworkers and even family members would realize he was the same as ever. The fact that they still held unease whenever he stood in the same room, like a stray dog nobody wanted, bothered him. It did not help that he, to even his surprise, could use Pokémon moves, which made things even more awkward.

At least he used Stone Edge outside in the park.

Although, even after four days, the stones remained standing.

Conall furrowed his brow, wondering what to say and do that would allow them to accept him. While he could go around the store off the clock and chat with customers, he doubted his manager would be happy with that move. Besides, the last thing he wanted was a child tugging on his tail.

He flicked an ear and glanced at the punch clock, which displayed 20:56.

Conall pushed back from the table but paused halfway.

By the breakroom's doorway, he heard a familiar, haughty voice.

His ears flattened sideways as he frowned.

"I thought Jeromy had two weeks off," Conall said.

Lawson suppressed a flinch by pushing back his golden-red hair. "Nah. He only had one week's vacation."

Conall lowered his eyes in annoyance.

Jeromy, who was the other primary reason Conall bailed for the night shift. Jeromy boasted a career of two years of working for the store chain, though he only transferred to this one a month ago. This store's leaders should have realized someone was off when his previous workplace cheered for the transfer. For the little time Conall interacted with him, Jeromy annoyed everyone with his sense of superiority. One moment that struck Conall's memories was watching Jeromy preach about the moral superiority of being a vegan while ignoring the customer's questions. It took a bit to drag the customers away from him.

Conall narrowed his eyes, remembering the last straw that killed any possible chance of friendship. He went to the breakroom to take his lunch, only to find Jeromy digging through his lunchbox. He pulled out Conall's homemade

chicken nuggets with a disgusted expression. Before Conall could stop him, Jeromy emptied the chicken nuggets into the trash.

“Ugh. How disgusting and sickening,” Jeromy had said when he saw Conall after the deed. He held his tone like a lecturing mother. “Animals shouldn’t be used as food of any kind! Don’t you know they carry life as well? Don’t you know how degrading it is to be raised and fattened for slaughter? Animals should be free from any human!”

It took Conall all his willpower to not punch Jeromy in the face. Instead, he bottled it up, reported Jeromy and the incident, and requested a transfer to the night shift. Despite the manager at the time, Wade, calling him out and even suspending him without pay for three days, Jeromy refused to accept any sense of blame.

Conall inhaled and pushed himself deeper against the table.

Conall heard Jeromy say, “You should throw that leather jacket of yours away! I mean, don’t you know how disgusting it is to have animal skin over your own? You’re like a furry!”

“I told you several times already.” Conall leaned in an inch closer to the doorway. He recognized the voice from

another coworker, Shannon, and detected a hint of anger. "This isn't real leather. It's synthetic."

"Now, now. I know that you're angry. But I know the differences between real and fake by looking at it. And I know without a doubt that that's a—"

Jeromy paused his lecture mid-word. Conall raised his eyebrows in confusion before turning just enough to glance at him. Jeromy paused by the doorway while Shannon walked past him to her locker.

Jeromy's orange eyes glinted with surprise and horror at Conall the anthro Midday Lycanroc. Much like the rest of the employees, he wore a polo shirt with his light red. His blue-black pants looked neat despite going through a day's work. His brown hair shone in the LED lights, almost appearing white in some angles.

Jeromy pointed at Conall. "What is THAT?!"

The entire room held an awkward silence, with every person other than Conall and Jeromy freezing. Alena tugged on her long blonde hair to calm her nerves. Lawson held his breath. Shannon gripped the locker she just opened. They and the others did not want to answer right away.

Conall sighed and twisted over to Jeromy. "It's me, Jeromy. Conall."

"What in the world are you wearing?!" Jeromy strode over to Conall. Before anyone could stop him, he tugged on Conall's left ear and tail, trying to pry them off. Conall lowered his eyelids in annoyance. Jeromy grunted and said, "I-I can't pry them off!"

"Stop it, Jeromy!" Lawson stood up and pulled Jeromy off of Conall. "Those aren't fake at all!"

"That's impossible! It must be some freaky costume! A full-body suit like a freaking furry!" Jeromy broke free from Lawson and tugged on the fur tufts on Conall's cheek.

Conall rolled his eyes and pulled Jeromy's hand off. "I know. Sounds ridiculous. It's almost as ridiculous as someone prying into my stuff and throwing anything they don't like into the trash. Like my lunch." He shrugged. "But none of this is fake. It's a long story, but I've changed into an anthropomorphic Lycanroc."

The two stared at each other, eye to eye. For a moment, Conall wondered if Jeromy would grow curious about his transformation. Given how much he preached about loving animals and veganism, it seemed like a no-brainer. Conall feared that Jeromy would ask how and

where Conall changed into a Lycanroc, perhaps to find a way to do the same. Worse, he might worship him for being the ideal state that humanity should strive for.

Conall wondered which idea was worse.

He waited until Jeromy snarled out his statement.

"You're a freak."

Conall blinked. "Excuse me?"

"Yeah. That's what you are." Jeromy leaned his head closer toward Conall. "Nothing more than an impure being, a mockery of animals. Worse yet, you're a Pokémon! That series glorifies dogfighting!"

Conall flinched, startled by the stream of words Jeromy spoke. While working with Jeromy, Conall had never heard him spew such venom. To be called a mockery confused him enough to flatten his ears back. His comparison of Pokémon to dogfighting only deepened his shock, especially since he missed Pokémon's entire message.

"Yeah. Don't deny it," Jeromy continued. "You became a disgusting, insulting beast."

"Hey! Settle down!" Lawson grabbed Jeromy's shoulder. "You can't just—"

“Shut it!” Jeromy ripped Lawson’s hand off before shoving him against the vending machine. He then reached over and pressed a finger underneath Conall’s neck. “You’re nothing more than an abomination!”

Conall sat there, confused. All around, he sensed every employee within the breakroom stopping whatever they did to watch him and Jeromy. That made Conall’s cheeks blush hot. Tension built up, enough that he breathed in to calm his nerves. He turned back to the table, to his Kindle, and read again. Even if it meant going past 9PM, he would not get provoked by Jeromy.

“Hey! You listening to me, beast!?” Jeromy slammed his palms against the table. Conall suppressed the urge to jump off from his chair. Jeromy tugged his lip with his teeth before he added, “You freak! You think you can still act like a freaking human?!”

“Woah, woah, woah!” Alena stood up. “Don’t provoke him! He’s a Pokémon now! Don’t you know that—”

“I know what he is! A loser who loves dogfighting!” Jeromy snarled while glaring at Conall. “At least you picked a fitting form.”

Conall kept his eyes on his Kindle Paperwhite, trying to tune him out. Meanwhile, more employees walked in to

clock out or hear some noises. They all paused and watched the two, each stunned and scared. Shannon inched toward the doorway before rushing away.

Conall felt sweat dripping from the back of his head. The room felt hot from the pressure building up. He thought this would blow over if he kept reading and ignored him.

He hoped it would, at least.

"Aren't you even listening to me anymore, you freak?!" Jeromy screamed into Conall's ear. "You sicko! Monster!"

Conall swallowed and turned the page—

Jeromy gritted his teeth and punched Conall's left cheek.

The room grew so quiet that a fallen pen could be heard throughout. All eyes stared at the two, each horrified as though they discovered a bomb about to explode. Jeromy held a salvage expression on his face.

Conall closed his left eye while his right one twitched. He wiggled his nose and flattened his ears back. For a moment, he wondered why he should not strike back at Jeromy. After all, he did everything to provoke Conall. Why not give him what he wanted?

Conall's eyes shifted color along with his fur color. The spike on his back shrank back into nothing. Meanwhile, his mane rolled up from behind his head and bent over his face, ending with a dark brown spike.

As he changed, he wondered about one thing.

Despite everything, including the punch, why did Conall not feel angry?

The light brown shifted into an orange-gold fur color instead of red. His eyes solidified into green without glowing. The spikes around his neck remained, not shrinking a single inch. Conall opened his left eye, pointing it at a confused and horrified Jeromy. He imagined Jeromy as a sheep that removed the wool and skin, revealing his wolf body.

It was then that he realized why he did not feel angry.

"You're pathetic, you know," Conall said.

"H-how?" Jeromy asked. His body shook from head to toe. "W-what happened?"

Conall sighed. "Everything about you is pathetic. You, the self-proclaimed animal lover, saw me and decided to throw away that love immediately. You, the one who loves animals so much that you tossed away *my* food because you saw eating meat as evil, punched me for being a

human-like Lycanroc. By the way, that punch you did? I barely felt it. It's more annoying than hurtful."

Conall lifted his left arm and pushed Jeromy's fist off his face.

Conall continued. "You know, while I thought of you as an annoying holier-than-thou jerk, I still believed that you at least followed what you preached. But now I see who you really are. A self-righteous hypocrite who says and does things not because you believe you are right but because you want to feel superior. Heck, calling Pokémon 'glorifying dogfighting' showed how *little* you know about the series. It's *never* about forcing them to fight against their will; it's about bonding with them, especially since they *love* fighting. Plus, they always held back so they didn't truly hurt their opponents while growing stronger. *That's* why, when they're defeated, it's 'fainted,' not 'killed.'"

"You-you—" Jeromy sputtered. His face turned bright red from rage. "You evil—"

At that point, he glanced around and froze.

Conall blinked at his expression change, which displayed fear, and twisted around.

The breakroom held more employees than before, each with a stunned, horrified, or disgusted expression.

It took Conall a bit to realize they were not staring at him.

“OK. What’s going on here?”

Jeromy paled from fear. The night shift manager, Dina, stepped in with Shannon leading her. Dina adjusted her rectangular glasses with a thick, gray frame. She looked demandingly at Jeromy and Conall like a mother. At once, the entire room exploded with statements from witnesses.

“Jeromy struck Conall in the face!”

“That jerk treated Conall like some animal!”

“He went on a tangent on how much of a monster he is!”

“Conall tried to ignore him but got punched for it!”

“He kept getting facts about Pokémon wrong!”

“Conall didn’t fight back at all!”

“He did nothing to provoke Jeromy!”

“Settle down, everyone!” Dina shouted while waving her arms around. The entire room quieted, with everyone turned toward Dina. She pointed at Jeromy and said, “You! In my office! Now! Not you,” she added when Conall moved to stand up. “You wait here.”

Conall hesitated before settling down.

Jeromy sputtered some more. "But-but this beast here—"

Dina raised an eyebrow. "You called a loyal employee a 'beast?'"

"Yes! Look at him!" Jeromy pointed at Conall. "He's a freak of nature! Someone who makes a mockery of animals by existing! A monster based on that horrible—"

"Yes. Now, I see." Dina narrowed her eyes into a glare. "Clear out your locker. Now. You no longer work here."

"What?! B-but—"

"Do you want me to repeat that?" Dina demanded. She placed her hands against her hips. "I was considering letting you off with unemployment benefits, but this company will revoke them for discriminatory reasons. We don't want people like you working for us."

Jeromy turned red on the cheeks. "I'm not a bigot! You know how much I spent fighting actual bigots!? Way more than you!"

Dina adjusted her glasses again and pushed back her black hair. "Right. Now, get out."

Jeromy opened his mouth to protest but froze halfway. The other employees stared daggers at him like an unruly wolf discovered in a sheep pen. He huffed, tore out his nametag, and stormed toward his locker. He emptied it of his stuff and marched out from the breakroom.

At once, everyone in the room relaxed aside from Conall. Though he felt happy that Jeromy was finally gone, he still needed to deal with this incident's consequences. He never threw a punch back, true, but the store would still include him on its no tolerance for violence. Since Dina clearly already decided to fire Jeromy when demanding that he go to her office, it felt logical that he would be next.

Conall lowered his head and accepted his fate.

Dina smiled at Conall. "You can relax. You're still working for this store."

Conall lifted his head in surprise and said, "Huh?"

"Did anyone here see Conall fight Jeromy?" Dina asked the rest of the room. When no one responded, she added, "I'll need to inform HR and the store manager about what happened here and why I chose to fire only Jeromy, but I'll make sure you won't suffer any punishment."

Conall remained quiet for a few seconds in stunned disbelief. He thought he would lose his job over this, yet his

manager assured him otherwise. Though he did not know Dina for long, he felt great trust for her over this.

He still held onto his job despite everything.

Conall's fur changed from orange-gold to light brown. The mane curling over his head with its spike receded back to around his neck, with the spike disappearing. Meanwhile, a downward spike grew below the mane on his back. His eyes shifted from bright green to blue.

Conall stood up and lowered his head toward Dina in a bow. "Thank you."

Dina chuckled, walked over to Conall, and patted his shoulder. "At ease." Conall lifted his head and wiggled his ears. Dina said, "You kept your cool throughout it all. I can't ask for anything better from an employee in a high-stress situation. It's too late tonight, but starting tomorrow, you won't need to wait in the breakroom until closing once you clock in. Instead, you can join us on the floor."

Conall widened his eyes and curled his muzzle into a grin. "Thank you! I was getting sick of waiting an hour before closing anyway!"

Dina nodded and glanced around at the rest of the room. "If everything is settled, let's get back to work."

Everyone in the room nodded. Some clocked out since they reached the end of their shift, while others clocked in. Some left the breakroom while others stayed to begin or continue their break or lunch period. Several surrounded Conall with a bunch patting his back or shoulder.

"Jeez, I thought you were going to tear that jerk in half," Lawson said. "You kept your cool way better than I would've."

"Did it hurt?" Alena asked. She stared at Conall's left cheek. "I mean, you said it didn't, but were you lying or bluffing?"

Conall reached up and rubbed his cheek. "It really didn't hurt much, if at all. I hardly felt it. I felt more disappointed that it didn't hurt as much as it looked."

"Well, you're a tough Pokémon now. Even if you're an anthro one," Shannon said after she clocked in. She glanced at his mane for a second. "Er, may I?"

"Of course. Just don't tug it," Conall replied.

Shannon hesitated and patted Conall's mane. "It feels so soft. No wonder why your shirt collar still fits around it."

Conall chuckled. "It was a struggle the first time, I admit. Though I figured out a neat trick to help with that."

"Of course." Shannon smiled.

Conall and the rest of his group strolled out from the breakroom, ready for their shift. Conall smiled, with him at the group's center, which grew as more coworkers joined along, asking questions and treating him like an old friend. He felt like he belonged for the first time since he came to work after his transformation. Regardless of what this shift brought him, he knew he would no longer feel alone.

He remembered the necklace with the blue gem Luke offered and his regret of not accepting it.

He no longer regretted that decision.

About Author

Thank you so much for taking the time to read my story! I really appreciate it. If you enjoyed it, then you'll definitely want to check out my gallery accounts at:

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I'd love to hear from you and answer any questions you may have.

Thanks again for your support, and I can't wait to share more of my work with you soon!