

A Bad Day at Work

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Content warning: Transformation, Twist, Violence

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The timeclock ticked to 10:56 AM, and already Abrial felt this day sucked.

It should have been a great late morning to walk to work. She preferred walking since it was close and did not feel it was worth driving there, even if it would save ten minutes. It should have been like all the times she went to work since she started a year ago.

Instead, she ran into a conceited jerk.

Abrial the anthro fennec fox huffed and adjusted her white polo shirt; she did not bother buttoning since the creamy-colored chest puff of fur refused to let her. She checked the sleeves, even if they only reached her elbows. The creamy-colored fur went under her arms and over her hand-paws, with the top having a sandy color that darkened as it reached her wrists. A pair of curved stripes lay on her shoulders and three on her forearms, with the shoulders dark brown and the forearms creamy.

She then double-checked her black pants, with them wide on her hips and thighs, for any dust. Underneath, the sandy fur darkened as it reached just above her knees, with the rest of her legs a creamy color. Three more creamy-colored curved stripes lay on her thighs, with two dark brown stripes on her hips. Her paw pads on both hand- and feet-paws were bright orange, the same as her eyes.

Her fluffy, creamy-colored long tail stretched as far as her ankles.

Abrial went to her locker and opened it, spotting her green apron. She reached in and slid it over her head and gigantic ears, tying it on the back. She glanced down and nodded at the white paw logo on it. Abrial reached into her pocket and winced from her slight wrist pain as she pulled out her holophone. She hesitated before putting it in and closing the locker, locking it up. She preferred to have one on her to check for emergencies like the one from over three months ago, but the owner forbade them while on the floor.

The same owner, who also worked as a manager, banned TVs on the floor and breakroom.

The owner justified it by stating they were a distraction to her employees.

Abrial found that ridiculous, considering how busy they got, but could not convince her otherwise.

She went to the timeclock just as it turned 11:00 AM. She pressed the digital buttons, typed in her work number, and selected 'Enter.' A second of thinking later, it clocked her in. With that done, Abrial smiled despite it not reaching

her eyes and walked into the Fur Blend, the coffee shop on the second floor.

Various anthros sat within this coffee shop, some at the counter but most at the multiple tables. Each had something to read, whether from a holophone or a newspaper, so only a few chatted. Abrial went over to her coworker, Sandra, and silently stood beside her.

Sandra the anthro panther had black fur covering her body, with a paler shade on her torso. The black made her blue eyes pop out even more. She wore the same uniform and apron as Abrial, though the polo shirt had a slight brown shade to it. With an impressive seven-foot height, she made the anthro bear she was serving look small.

For someone like Abrial, Sandra made her look like a child since she only stood four and a half feet tall.

Five and a half if one included her ears.

"Bad day already?" Sandra asked. She already held a white coffee cup, pouring black coffee into it. She handed it to the anthro bear, who nodded and smiled. She turned to Abrial, who nodded. "Want to talk about it?"

"Yeah. One moment." Abrial turned to the next customer, an anthro antelope. "Anything I can get for you?"

“Sure. I would like my usual. The cappuccino, I mean,” the anthro antelope answered. Abrial nodded and imputed the details into the cash register, with it popping out the price. The anthro antelope waved his holophone against the card reader. He smiled when it accepted his payment. “You always make such wonderful stuff.”

Abrial nodded and pulled out a white coffee cup. She placed it into an espresso machine and, after checking the machine’s content, replaced the finely grounded coffee. After she did so, she turned it on and waited. High-pressure hot water poured and dripped out as espresso into the coffee cup. Once a shot of expression flowed out, she turned it off and put the cup on the counter. She added the steamed milk on top, followed by two centimeters of micro-foam, and finished it with sprinkles of chocolate.

Once completed, Abrial handed the cappuccino over to the anthro antelope. “Here you go. Enjoy your cappuccino.”

“Thank you. You’re always so sweet.” The anthro antelope bowed and left to a table.

“You’re welcome!” Abrial waved and smiled, with it reaching her eyes this time. It softened when she rubbed her knuckles, with some slight pain to the touch. She turned to Sandra. “Sorry about that.”

"It's nothing at all, my sweet Abrial." Sandra smiled while accepting an order from an anthro aardwolf. "So, what happened this time? Another guy calling you cute?"

Abrial huffed out her cheeks. "Yeah, and more. That jerk stopped me while walking along the way. He insisted that I take him to my workplace, even when I refused. Saying that he can't let a cute thing like me travel alone. It was like being treated like a child. It got worse when he said I look cuter when angry. So," Abrial shifted to the customers, searching for that jerk. When she did not see him, she finished, "So, I made my point more bluntly."

"Oh, sweet Abrial." Sandra rolled her eyes while pouring black coffee into a paper cup most of the way. She followed it up with steamed milk, making a pattern on the surface. "I know you hate being called cute, but you shouldn't get mad whenever it happens."

"You weren't there!" Abrial shook her head. "He had a massive stick up his butt."

"And?" Sandra adjusted her pouring, letting the cup's surface take on a heart-shaped pattern.

"That's the problem. Anthros don't take me seriously. Heck, you're not taking me seriously!" Abrial folded her ears back. "You would've done the same."

"Honestly, sweet Abrial, that's your problem with being called 'cute.'" Sandra closed the cup with a lid and handed it to the anthro aardwolf. "You're letting that word have power by reacting so negatively to it."

"It wasn't just being called—"

"Let me finish. You should embrace being called cute instead of letting it get under your skin. That way, those anthros won't be able to bully you with that word."

"Thanks," Abrial responded. Her tone carried a heavy sense of sarcasm.

"Anyti—HEY!" Sandra leaned over to the anthro aardwolf. He flinched, lid on one hand-paw and stirring stick on the other. "That was a lovely design I made for you! Appreciate it before stirring it, idiot!"

"S-sorry." The anthro aardwolf blushed while leaning back. "I-I prefer—"

"You know what?! Forget it! Go!" Sandra waved dismissively. The anthro aardwolf swallowed while flattening his ears back. Rather than leaving the Fur Blend, he sat at one of the tables, though a distant one from the counter. Sandra huffed and turned to Abrial. "The nerve of that idiot. As I was saying, you should take it in stride instead of losing your temper."

Abrial nodded while suppressing a laugh.

#

Abrial served several more customers as time went by. Her mood went up since she enjoyed being in a coffee shop. Sure, the owner had a stick a mile long up her butt, and Abrial had to endure the occasional rude customer, but she refused to trade this type of job for anything. Plus, she got generous tips for a job well done.

However, if another coffee shop had openings, she would jump for it. That went double if Sandra joined her.

"What can I get for you?" Abrial asked an anthro gerbil.

"I-I would like a short macchiato," the anthro gerbil responded.

"Sure thing!" Abrial went to the espresso machine with a new coffee cup and turned it on after replacing the finely ground coffee beans with fresh ones. Near boiling water flowed out under pressure, with the espresso falling into the cup. Once done, she added a dollop of steamed milk and foam. She smiled and handed the macchiato to the customer. "Enjoy your drink!"

"Thank you. Er, I don't mean to be rude. I-I think you're rather cute." The anthro gerbil blushed and shook his head. "Sorry. I-I didn't mean any offense. I'll go take my seat."

The anthro gerbil crept away before Abrial could say anything. She blinked once with a confused expression. Sandra, once she finished dealing with her customer, went to Abrial's side and laughed.

"What did I tell you?" Sandra bent down and patted Abrial's shoulder. "You let that comment in without getting angry at him."

"Only because he meant it." Abrial rolled her eyes. "He didn't intend to demean me like the others."

"Even so, you should take it as a lesson—"

The floor rumbled.

Abrial flinched, scanning the surroundings. From everyone's expressions, they all felt it too. The lamps hanging on the ceiling shook, the cups wobbled, a bit of dust sprinkled down. The room shook again, much harder than before.

A high-piercing alarm screeched out from outside and blared throughout the city.

Abrial winced, covering her ears until she got used to it. The customers' concern and confusion morphed into panic. Sandra breathed harder, grabbing onto the counter to brace herself. The shaking returned, with loads more dust falling down. That time, the customers got up and fled from the shop.

Abrial could not blame them for this. This particular alarm only screeched out when the city was under attack. To think that it was only a bit over three months since last time, though that ended well with few casualties. Nobody could guarantee that it would not happen again or go as well.

Or that they would have a still unknown hero to save them.

"What's attacking us this time?!" Sandra asked. Her voice was like a whisper to Abrial. Sandra reached into her pockets without thinking and let out a hiss. "My holophone is still in my locker."

"Mine too." Abrial winced at the sight. Larger customers shoved the smaller ones out of the way, sometimes stepping over them. If she could somehow stop them and order them to go in an orderly fashion, she would. Instead, she was a short fennec fox with no way to

grow herself. "Let's go get them. I doubt we'll get any customers."

Abrial took a couple of steps toward the back when the owner and manager, Rosaria, stepped out. Rosaria, an anthro jackrabbit, held a heavyset body an inch shorter than the door's width. Her ears stretched out longer than Abrial's but not nearly as wide. Her suit's buttons strained to contain her waist and stomach, with white fur poking through.

Rosaria turned to Abrial and demanded, "Where are you going, little girl?"

"I-I was going to check on my holophone," Abrial replied. She folded her ears back in fear. Though Rosaria was not as tall as Sandra, her six-foot-tall form was still much taller than that of Abrial. "And then—"

"You have only been here for an hour, little girl! Stay where you are and serve customers until your designated break time!" Rosaria tapped on the counter. "Do that, or else I'll fire you!"

"Are you kidding me?!" Sandra rushed over to Abrial's side with a furious expression. "The city is under attack, and all you care about is serving for an empty shop!?"

"I don't like your attitude, missy!" Rosaria's gray face turned red. "When I sent you to work, you work!"

"For who?!" Sandra's face turned just as red. She waved around at the Fur Blend with all the customers already gone. "They all went to the designated shelters! Hell, we should be heading there as well!"

"You stay here working for me!" Rosaria pressed her fat finger against Sandra's chest. "I'll have your job if you don't!"

Abrial swallowed but kept quiet. She shuffled to the side, bit by bit, going around Rosaria. The counters were not spaced for someone her size, which made Abrial sucked in to squeeze herself between the shelves and Rosaria. To her luck, Rosaria kept her focus on Sandra, never turning her green eyes at Abrial. Once she got around, she let out a hiss and snuck into the breakroom.

"Do it then! Fire me! I dare you!" The building shook much harder, but Sandra continued, "I'd rather be jobless but alive than risk my life because of your idiotic decisions!"

Abrial reached her locker and turned the lock on it. Her hand-paws shook, which caused her to take a moment to calm herself. She turned the lock until it snapped open.

"You're such a selfish employee, missy! You should do it for the team instead of—" Rosaria paused and yelled, "Where are you, little girl!?"

Abrial swung her locker open and grabbed her holophone.

She woke it up—

A fat hand-paw ripped it out from Abrial's grip.

"Hey! I told you that it's not your break time!" Rosaria screamed at Abrial. Sandra rushed behind; her anger was only matched by fear. Rosaria's face reddened as she said, "This is what you get for sneaking off!"

Rosaria tossed Abrial's holophone against the wall.

Abrial widened her eyes in horror.

Sandra picked up the two halves of the holophone with shaking hand-paws. "You idiot! She was going to find out what's going on!"

"Don't you use that tone with me, missy! I'm your boss, after all—"

"Not anymore!"

"—and this is likely just an earthquake! That happens!"

“Really?! Really!! We haven’t gotten a recorded earthquake incident since we settled on this continent over a thousand years ago!” Sandra folded her ears back. Her long black tail stiffened. “This isn’t an earthquake, and you know it! Besides, if it is one—”

“Oh, stuff it, you know-it-all!” Rosaria barred her teeth. “We’re open, which means we should serve customers regardless of any disaster!”

Part of the breakroom’s ceiling fell on top of a table, collapsing it, which Rosaria ignored.

“Either you get back on the floor and serve customers, or I’ll toss you and your ‘cute’ little girl coworker—”

Abrial felt her blood boil within her, from head to toe. She did her best to suppress it, but it only increased her wrath. She balled her hand-paws into fists, her tail fluffed out in anger, and her ears folded back. She felt her control slipping.

So, she let it loose.

“Would you SHUT UP, you stupid bitch!?”

Rosaria gasped at the sudden disrespect, raising her eyebrow to her hairline. Sandra blinked a few times, her face morphing into a surprise expression. The building shook more, enough that a ceiling lamp fell and exploded

upon contacting the floor. Abrial's eyes took on a reddish hue.

She continued, "The shaking is getting worse! We're losing parts of the ceiling! I'm surprised that a bathtub didn't crash down on us now! Heck, I bet we just lost several coffee cups already! And all you cared about was serving for an empty store! We should be following them!!"

"I don't—"

"You're a TERRIBLE boss!" Abrial could not stop herself, even if she wanted to. "You preached about 'work culture,' teamwork,' and all that jazz, but all you do is sit in your office! You gave snide judgmental criticism to us and others, both former and current, if we get a SINGLE complaint or if one of us stays home longer than a day to get over an illness! Heck, you got Rachel to quit because you attempted to get her to give up her VACATION!"

"You have no idea—"

"Plus, I don't like being called cute, especially how you said it! And you know I don't like being called cute, which is why you do it to PUT ME DOWN!" Abrial wiped her long creamy hair-fur back. "I stayed because I like everyone BUT YOU! And now you'd rather get me killed rather than evacuate! That's it! I QUIT!"

Rosaria narrowed her eyes at Abrial, her fat fingers twitching. Her disposition turned calm, with only her eyes showing her fury. She turned to Sandra for a moment, who took a step back out of startlement.

Rosaria lunged her arm at Abrial before she could react, wrapping her fat fingers around Abrial's throat.

"You selfish. Little. Girl." Rosaria's voice turned cold. She did not notice how Abrial struggled to breathe, even after lifting her off the floor. Sandra gasped in horror and rushed ahead. Rosaria spun around, putting Abrial between her and Sandra. Rosaria snarled, "You have no idea who you're working with."

Abrial gasped for breath, grabbing Rosaria's wrists with both hand-paws.

"When people work for me, they must put everything into making my coffee shop work. Even during off time, they must keep focus on the job. No vacation or sickness—"

Chunks of the wall exploded, with the rest of it falling down.

Abrial felt the grip slackened and let go, allowing her to breathe. She fell onto the ground, stumbling onto all four. Her vision was blurry for half a second. She shook her

head and glanced around as her vision cleared. Sandra and Rosaria turned away from her, glancing at the refrigerator.

Or rather, what remained of that fridge.

It caved in thanks to an anthro's impact, who struggled to remove himself from it. His green fur, which dominated much of his body, was stained by red blood. When he pushed himself off the refrigerator, he stood by gripping onto his brown staff. He panted, with sweat mixing with the blood.

He turned to the side and saw Abrial, Sandra, and Rosaria.

"Get out before he—"

Another figure came through the opening. Unlike the green anthro, this one was not covered in bruises, cuts, blood, or even sweat. His wings, blue with red at the bottom, spread out behind, making him look larger. His exposed chest and stomach were ripped with muscles, which prevented Abrial from laughing about how silly the bright red torso looked on the deep blue anthro. A purple cape fluttered behind him over his wings. He also held a staff, though this one was ash gray in color and had green gems on the top.

He looked at the ruined breakroom with his green eyes, grinned, and waved his staff. Every lightbulb, coffee machine, refrigerator, and TV exploded into sparks at once. There were more explosions on the main floor. Some lockers burst open, with various electronics coming out in shards.

Rosaria yelped, with her holophone exploding in her pocket. She patted out the flames, preventing it from spreading. Sandra still held onto the remains of Abrial's holophone, glancing at the two halves in confusion.

The green anthro gritted his teeth and pointed his staff at the blue and red one. Two steel chairs flew off, twisted, and wrapped themselves around the blue and red anthro. He only grinned before tearing the steel restraints off with his bare hand-paws. The remains of the steel chairs fell off with a loud thud.

"Oh, hell no!" Rosaria walked over between both combating anthros. "Both of you, take this fight elsewhere!"

"Lady!" The green anthro gasped between breaths.

It was there when Abrial saw five tails on the green anthro instead of one. Each had green fur tipped with white long enough to brush against his ankles. His golden hair-fur shone despite the sweat and blood on it. It took her a

moment to recognize him as one of the mayor's personal guests to the city. Someone who had magical powers and called himself a kitsune mage. What was his name again?

"Get-get out!" The green kitsune demanded. He sucked in the bottom of his lips. "He-he's too—"

"I don't give a damn about whoever you or—"

The red and blue anthro clicked his tongue. "You will. Oh, you will. For I am Fëanor, the one who will become a god! Though you won't live to see my ascension, you will feel my power."

Fëanor pointed his staff at Rosaria. She turned to face him, only to gasp in pain. She twisted far more than what her body should be capable of, even when thin. Her width also shrunk, though more as though her fat was squashed in. She screamed out in pain, with bones snapping and her body turning into a spiral pole.

She shrunk and fell onto the floor, her body untwisted. Rather than flesh and blood, she became a six-inch toy. Her plastic body had pained horror written all over it. The Rosaria toy flew over to Fëanor, who grinned ecstatically at it before squeezing it tight. At once, the limbs and head flew out, and he dropped the remains.

Abrial wanted to look away from this horrible sight but could not. Even as her stomach warped into a ball, she could not turn from the horror. From how Sandra gasped, she did not look away as well. Though Abrial did not participate in this show, she felt unclean.

The green kitsune glared at Fëanor. "She had nothing to do with us! You didn't need to kill her!"

"Oh, Glorfindel. My mirror." Fëanor's grin broadened. "Though that's a disservice to me. For I'm not as weak as you."

"Gth!" Glorfindel stumbled but remained standing. "T-that's not—"

"Strength? No. This is power and the willingness to claim and use it. Though I can tell that you're just as hungry as I am." Fëanor's green eyes glowed a bit, making the dark sclera look blacker. "We're not that different in that regard."

"I-I never—"

"If you never, why did you spend your time learning other places' magic systems?" Fëanor waited, but Glorfindel did not respond. "Fefehehe. Face it. The only reason you didn't seized more power when you have the

chance was because you let your desire to be the wise mentor override your reason."

Sandra tapped Abrial's shoulders. "We need to go. Now."

Abrial nodded but remained in place. Sandra hesitated before running out, expecting her friend to follow. Abrial knew she should escape, but her fear paralyzed her. The image of Rosaria twisting and squeezing into a toy, only to get crushed, burned into her mind. It took the idea of the same happening to her to relax her limbs. She stood up—

Fëanor turned over to Abrial. "Ah, look." His voice took on a poisonous honey tone. He pointed at her, freezing her body in place. "This cute little girl think she could escape me, the great Fëanor?"

Abrial gritted her teeth. "D-don't call me cute, you sicko!"

"Ah, you seem feisty. I like it." Fëanor held up his free hand-paw, where purple electricity emitted and sparkled. "Feisty types deserve a shocking end."

Abrial gulped, feeling like she had reached her end. To think that she expected that the worst thing today was that anthro blocking her way while calling her cute.

Perhaps that was a sign that she should have stayed home. Still, she swallowed her fear and glared at Fëanor. She would not let him take satisfaction over killing her.

Glorfindel leaped in front of her. “NO!!!”

Fëanor fired out purple lightning bolts.

Glorfindel summoned a green magical energy field.

The lightning bolts slammed against the shield, with some cracks forming. Glorfindel gritted his teeth, growled, and yelled. Abrial widened her eyes as large as the cups she served for work. From how the two talked and looked, Glorfindel appeared to be the weaker of the two. She struggled to break free from the hold, if only to grab Glorfindel from behind and save him. Instead, she remained in place, praying that the shield would hold.

To both her and Glorfindel’s surprise, the shield held, and even the cracks healed.

Fëanor stopped firing out his attack. His arrogant disposition changed into confusion. His right ear folded to the side. For a moment, he stood there.

“Impossible. You don’t have nearly as much magic to make it withstand my attack.” The corner of Fëanor’s lips twitched. “How—”

That was all Glorfindel needed.

He turned off his shield spell and applied another one on himself. He zipped on forward, slamming his body against Fëanor's chest. Glorfindel and Fëanor flew out through the same open wall within a second. Sounds of their fighting continued, but it did not return to the ruined breakroom.

Abrial gasped, feeling her body able to move again. She shook her limbs and sprinted out of the breakroom. A heavy thud of a bathtub followed by rushing water echoed in the room, landing where she once stood. Broken glass and machinery littered the floor, which she managed to avoid. Within half a minute, she escaped the Fur Blend.

The shaking continued, which made her run faster. She sprinted down the stairs, avoiding the debris on the steps and those falling around her. Upon spotting an open escape door, she went through it. She almost collided with Sandra, who caught her and picked her up.

"Oh, God. I was so worried." Sandra panted. She relaxed and set Abrial down while keeping her close. "When I realized you didn't follow, I was afraid you might've died. I would've climbed back up if you didn't come as you did."

"I almost did." Abrial's face was pale from fear. "But he, Glorfindel, saved me."

"Oh, bless him." Sandra handed Abrial's broken holophone to her. She then glanced at the empty street. "I hope he'll be alright."

"I-I'm sure he will." Abrial stuffed the two halves of the holophone into her apron. She envisioned Glorfindel stopping by, checking to see if she was alright. The thought caused her to blush, which she covered with a hand-paw. "But what's attacking the city?"

Sandra pointed at one of the many massive buildings within this grand city. It had a vast holographic screen that dominated the wall. The emergency news played there, with the screen splitting into two down the middle to show two battles. On one half, it displays a massive Ninetales and Lucario fighting each other; on the other, it shows a struggle between a huge Vulpix and Midday Lycanroc.

"Wh-what?" Abrial widened her eyes. "Did-did they have access—"

"I don't know." Sandra turned to the heart of the city. "I just don't know."

Abrial gulped and nodded, also turning to the same city's heart. One might mistake it for a tower that stretched

taller than the tallest skyscraper. At least until they realized it stretched out beyond the highest clouds. This was the greatest achievement the anthros ever made, one that powered the entire continent even as the anthros split into three nations and one massive city.

The space elevator, *The Philosopher*, of The Second Capitol.

About Author

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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!