

Something strange happened in that odd stretch of time between sundown and the deep of night, when most of the city's inhabitants looked in towards their dinner tables or TVs instead of out the window. Only a certain few saw the flash, burst, and trail of light in the sky, arcing down and crashing back in the forest along the city's outskirts; a meteor, the news said, after seeing the impact crater, the broken branches, the flattened trees.

An odd fog seeped out of the forest within the following hours, creeping in towards the edge of the city and wrapping around the bases of the buildings like hungry tongues. A stray dog, half-retriever mutt with mismatched blue and brown eyes showing the small bit of husky in her blood, missing half of her left ear, lifted her nose to the thickening air for the fifth time after that odd impact; the flash and noise had drawn her out from her chosen refuge in the alley between an apartment building and a coffee shop, out towards the edge of the city, through the trees, into the forest.

The fog curled and dripped around itself, seeming to stalk towards her along the ground as though it were a cloud too heavy to remain in the sky – until her sniffing drew one of those tendrils, and invited the rest to wrap itself around her head and body. Until then she had been following curiosity and interest, but once those sweet little spikes of mist slid into her mind and squeezed around her senses, it became instinct and want – *need* – that drove her forward. Forward into the fog, misting between the trunks of trees, pooling along the ground between the bushes.

A pair of eyes glimmered back in the shade, piercing through the fog and night as though lights dangled directly before the stray's muzzle. Ever since that first sniff, her first taste of the mist thick enough to dampen her unkempt fur, her maw had remained hanging open with her tongue lolling out, drinking in more. It was like – like the occasional scrap of sandwich that some of the coffee shop's patrons offered to her, and the taste of fresh, clear water from the river around the other side of the city, and the aroma of the warm, comfortable home she'd had before things had gone so wrong.

All of this, and... another breath, another swallow, a wag of her tail as the darkness of the forest closed in around her, and those eyes tilted down to watch her approach. The fog made her feel much the same way as a heat did, sweet sharp tingling throughout her entire body, the intense need to keep her tail hiked, the hot, wet *slickness*. This sensation deepened the closer she came to those eyes, until a vague shadow formed around them; and still she was drawn in towards that indistinct shape.

The fog started to wrap back in from between the trees, heavy along the ground like dry ice, enclosing the thing and the stray. It had dissipated by morning, though geologists and local enthusiasts scoured the impact site for days afterward, picking through the fallen leaves and needles around the car-sized bowl in the earth; however, they never found the meteorite itself. A comet, then, the news corrected – this is not an unheard-of phenomenon, but rather an *uncommon* one. Even more unusual was how instead of scaring the local wildlife away, this particular impact seemed to draw them in, with the site gathering more prints as the days went on.

Media coverage and attention from people showed the opposite trend, however, peaking early on and then quickly falling to a slow dribble, where it seemed it would remain. *It's just a Tunguska but smaller*, the prevailing theory became: *maybe a comet that evaporated on impact. Couldn't be larger than half a meter across, looking at the crater. Chemical traces on the nearby trees show that there was, indeed, an object, but as to its disappearance...*

Naturally, an event of this sort attracted the attention of several groups of children and troublemakers across the following days, eager to see the mysterious and spread their own rumors and superstitions. It wasn't every day that a new urban legend began, and in their very own city, too. One group in particular, a pair of weasel brothers, a rat, and a foxwolf, came across something that all of the media outlets had missed, something that none of the other superstition-seekers had seen, something that maybe they shouldn't have found.

About a ten minutes' walk from the impact site, nestled back beneath the canopy of the trees within earshot of a quietly burbling river stood the remains of an old house, crumbled brick foundation and rotted wooden supports just barely holding up the remains of what might have once been a branch-and-thatch roof. Something old and forgotten, a small house that had become part of the forest itself. An old well stood nearby, the grey of the stones long since overtaken by whitish-blue and soft orange and green of climbing, clinging lichen and moss, an odd chill floating steadily up from the mouth dropping down into smooth darkness. The kids knew this place already: sometimes they would come here to frighten themselves to laughter by peering down the well, pretending that they heard or saw something, or persuading themselves that they really did. The older of the weasel brothers had ventured down the smooth hill behind the house and found a small, calm pond at the foot there, trickling out of what seemed to be a small cave system inside the hill; the source of the well, he figured. Today was going to be the day he told the others about it so that they could explore.

Fate had different plans for the group, however, as the rat shouldered open the rusty-hinged door leading into the remains of the house. He and the foxwolf chatted amiably about their recently-released favorite video game, strolling into the comfortable refuge of the broken walls and empty ceiling – and then stopped, suddenly, as they realized they were not alone. Curled in the back corner of the house, nestled between the shattered fireplace and one of the few remaining sections of wall, lay a stray dog that they had seen around the edges of the city, mostly retriever but with mismatched eyes, and missing the upper half of one of her ears.

It wasn't unusual for her to be here: the younger of the weasel brothers often brought food for her, and she had started to recognize and welcome the four of them. Today, however, with rainclouds hinting at a coming storm closing in over the sky between the boughs of the trees, she only half-raised her head and eyed the three of them, the older brother trailing behind.

"Hey, girl," said the younger brother, placing his paws on his knees to greet her; "Look! She's got puppies!" exclaimed the rat, pointing towards the five small, hairless forms wriggling at her belly; "How cute!" echoed the foxwolf. Then, though, the older weasel strode in behind them, looked at the display, smiled – and then felt that smile melt away, the wax beneath a lit candle wick.

"What the *fuck*?"

That caught the attention of the others. At their age they enjoyed tossing around the worst curses that they heard from TV and their fathers, laughing at the imagined weight of the words, but in a situation like *this*... the younger weasel looked up at his brother, then back down at the mother and her pups, and felt that same icy chill seep into his chest.

These puppies had dry, leathery skin, bluish-grey in color like the stones of the well beneath their coating of moss. Their ears looked too tall and sharp for her breed, and it looked like their legs were all

bone and no muscle – and, peering closer, they even had a second set of arms curled close underneath their chest.

It was the rat who slid his phone out of his pocket first, the illumination from the flash reflecting off of the mother's eyes. She blinked but did not move; however, one of the pups wriggled away from her belly, moved its head a little bit, and yawned widely, causing the four of them to gasp in tandem: its lower jaw split down the middle, the skin and flesh there smooth and rounded as if it had never been coherent. The yawn it gave carried a strange buzz to it, almost hard for the rat to hear – like the electrical hum given off by the long tube lights in his dad's shed out back.

"Oh my God..." muttered the foxwolf, his thumb hovering over the *record* button of his own phone. "What-?"

The older weasel reached his arms around the kids, pulling them back towards the door. "Hey, uh, we... we shouldn't be here, I think."

"I – I got a few pictures. I'll show Mom..."

The four did not speak on their way back out of the woods, footpaws catching and stumbling over low bushes and branches in their nervousness, glancing back over their shoulders as the skeleton of the house disappeared between the trees. A thin haze had started to gather behind them, greyish-white fog trickling between the trunks and branches and seeming to physically grab and hold on to them, solidifying behind as they went.

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Amy tried her best to grab along the fenceposts beside her as her legs betrayed her yet again, expecting the ground to be a lot further away than it actually was. Maybe she *had* gone a little too hard with the drinking tonight: the world didn't spin around her, but rather, *she* spun within the world. The whiskey the otter had brought was just too damn good, though, with that good burn at the back of her throat... he'd made sure to douse that burn with a brew of his own, of course. Amy's boyfriend Tyler had encouraged the normally shy mustelid to do that, and good thing, too. If she remembered to take her phone this time – the black-and-white cat patted at her pockets, the motion causing her to stumble briefly off of the sidewalk and into the street before she regained what semblance of balance she still retained – then she'd be able to text him tomorrow or the next day for a follow-up.

Good thing she *did* have it, though: Amy pulled it out of her rear pocket and held it up, hazy eyes struggling to focus on the screen. Maybe she shouldn't have left it out at the party, though – someone had changed her background... and her password too. And the *type* of phone as well, actually; Amy had come to the party with her Android and left with some off-brand smartphone. Oh well. She had to brace her shoulder against the fence beside her again as the phone tried to jump from her paws, so she reached to slide it back into her pocket... then found that these shorts didn't even have side pockets.

The panties weren't hers, actually – wrong color, wrong style, wrong *feel* - so maybe the shorts also belonged to someone else, then. A lot of the people there she hadn't known before.

And then, tonight, she'd known just about all of them, in the biblical sense. Amy chuckled to herself, though the effort took too much focus off of her putting one foot in front of the other, and she

stumbled again. Not much farther: she could see the streetlight outside her house coming up, shimmering yellow-white in the fog that had gathered overnight. That was a bit odd: it *had* looked like rain when she'd first made her way over to the party, but any kind of fog or mist had always been unusual here.

*Unusual* didn't mean *never*, though: after all, something else 'unusual' would be for Amy to ride two dicks at once. She smirked again, pulling herself along the fence towards the gate leading to her house's backyard; it creaked beneath her weight, the cat having to rest nearly all of herself onto it to keep herself from stumbling over, and then swung partially shut behind her. Right before she tottered through the grass, in need of a mowing, and towards the sliding door at the back, her hazy eyes caught a *form* sitting in that fog around the corner, just outside the pool of wan light cast by the streetlamp.

It looked like... she had to squint to see, but doing so upset her balance again and she briefly lost her footing. It looked like one of the stray dogs that roamed the city, though this one looked a bit... large. *Too* large, yet emaciated at the same time: it must have been sitting at *just* the right angle with the light, though, since even her drunken senses easily picked out the shine and glimmer of bright eyes watching her. The fog gathered the heaviest close to the sidewalk, floating like a sea of clouds, obscuring the dog's lower body, and yet... Amy swallowed, suddenly realizing she'd made it the rest of the way to the back door.

Her sandpaper tongue flicked out over her lips, and she turned her head to catch her own reflection in the glass. The fog had seeped through the spaces between the fence boards, parting around the slightly-too-tall blades of grass and starting to crawl up along the porch and around her ankles, and... *God*, she suddenly realized, *I'm still fucking horny*. Feeling like catnip, fizzing at the back of her throat and in her chest, tingling between her legs.

With that, the too-large dog escaped her focus and her thoughts, and after a bit of effort she managed to pull the door open and slip inside, the exhaustion of the party long since settled over her head and body. She'd need what sleep she could get: this would be the last all-out party before finals season really set in at her university, and she hadn't yet started studying. Really, it would be good for her to do at least a *little* bit of reading before sliding into bed...

...but instead on her way down the hall towards the bedroom, her paw slid its way down beneath the waistband of her pants, still unbuttoned and unzipped, and beneath the dampened panties beneath. She had more pressing matters to take care of first.

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Amy winced at the sound of the cupboard slamming shut, the noise sending a spike of pain through her skull and down her spine. *Okay*, she thought for the fourth time since slogging out of bed, *I guess I did go a little too hard last night*. The regret set in now, sure, but – it *had* been a hell of a party. After pouring her cereal into her bowl, dry because she'd forgotten she'd run out of milk two days ago, she slid into the chair at the table deliberately facing away from the midday light pouring in through the window, and slipped her phone out of her pocket with her other paw. She reached up and rubbed at her shoulder with her other paw; that area was sore, too.

Then she remembered – or, rather, the *very different* phone model, background, and password reminded her – that this *wasn't* hers. *Bullshit*. Heaving yet another sigh, the cat leaned back in her chair,

then reached for the remote at the other end of the table that would turn on the TV across the counter and in the living room. A moment later the screen flicked on, showing the same slim yet busty panther gal who had been this news station's anchor as long as Amy had been going to college.

She had a nice voice, and face, and other assets, at least. The cat grumbled again, spooning a first mouthful of cereal up. Had to get this taste out of her mouth – bitter remnants of last night's alcohol and everything else she had swallowed, combined with sour morning breath and bile from the one time she'd had to get up out of bed during the night, and then a less familiar drier... *musk*, really, was the only word she could think for it. Strange that *that* part still lingered; Amy could somewhat vaguely recall that that last taste had come during the dream she'd had last night.

Apparently everything she'd done at the party, and the effort she'd put into finishing herself up at home before falling asleep halfway through, still hadn't been enough to stifle her thirst. Amy kept her eyes on the TV while she ate, though her mind drifted freely back through those hazy, disconnected images and sensations from the dream: that dog she'd seen in the mist last night, huge, *huge*, had poked its way into her sleeping head.

*Huge*. That was the part she remembered clearest, that and the beast's *weight* settling down over her entire body, the smaller cat on all fours beneath it as it settled on top of her, thrusting forward as it pulled her back, pushing, pressing... sinking up into her. She had always had a problem with procrastination, and her mind always did this kind of thing to her around exam season: pulling her back into her deepest fantasies, distracting her from what she *needed* to do, drawing her deeper and deeper into that spiral...

*God damn*, she thought, swallowing down another spoonful, *but it felt so real. At least, I think it did*. That had been one fantasy to remain in fantasy thus far, though she *had* several times before indulged in the idea of a large feral mounting her. *This*, though... she nearly shuddered with pleasure remembering the dream, the broken, individual bits and pieces flicking back and forth in her head like a webcam video that had trouble buffering.

*Strong legs grasping her hips, taut and lean muscle with firm bone beneath. Hot, wet breath huffing out across her neck and shoulder where it had set its sharp teeth, each puff sending another wave of that deep, dizzying catnip-like feeling vibrating into her brain and down her spine. A deep growl, vibrating through the barrel chest of the dog and along her back, with a stranger buzzing hum above it, close to her ear, just at the edge of her perception. Her own panting and moaning, eyes closed, jaw hanging open with the pleasure... and then every muscle in her body tightening beneath the dog as it emptied into her, pulse after pulse, rope after rope of thick seed pouring out into her, filling her up, oozing down her thighs and legs, pooling beneath her body-*

Amy shook her head, then regretted it immediately after, bringing her other paw to her forehead to cradle her muzzle against the pain. When it retreated enough for her to open her eyes again, she tried to focus on the TV across the room. It looked as though the panther had changed stories to cover that odd meteor event that happened a week or so back, the one that knocked down trees and left a crater without any impact object to be found.

That in itself wasn't so unusual; her freshman year Amy had taken an intro geology course, and they had covered all of that. The entire thing reeked of superstition, though, something that Amy herself apparently wasn't the only to catch onto: the screen flicked away from the anchor to show a couple of

pictures that made the cat nearly drop her spoon. Pictures of wrinkled, twisted little abominations of puppies, blue-skinned and big-eyed, toothpicks wrapped in leather left out to tan for too long.

It changed from there to a short video, which made Amy frown even further. Those were the voices of children – *kids found these things?* – laughing nervously, talking among themselves, before a rather clear “*We shouldn’t be here*” came through. From there it changed back to the panther, who launched into what had to be a prepared explanation for it: *these images went online at the start of the week and promptly went viral, though are widely believed to be a hoax...*

Amy shook her head again, gently this time so as not to incur the wrath of her hangover headache, then reached to turn the TV off. She used to be into urban legends as a kitten, but now they kind of just bored her. From there she finished up her breakfast in silence – or tried to, at least, before a stirring of wind outside caught her attention. It sounded a bit *too* loud, actually, and when she rose from her chair to walk around the rooms, she found that she’d left the back door open, wide enough for her to step through without having to turn to the side.

*That could’ve been bad.* She stepped forward to close it, then this time made sure to *click* the lock into place. ‘*Of course your backdoor was open*’, Tyler would say... ‘*you took Sun under your tail last night, and he’s part horse!*’ Amy smirked – she’d have to ask him to talk to the other folks at the party, see if one of *them* had her phone – and headed back towards the table.

Today she *really* had to get to studying, pulsing ache under her tail and similar yet more intense pounding in her head notwithstanding. Might be best to stay in the house today as well: as soon as she sat back down she felt a somewhat uncomfortable stirring in her lower belly, another familiar result after one of her parties. Definitely ought to take it easy these next couple of days.

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Amy certainly *tried* to do that, at least. It wasn’t so much a stomachache bothering her through the week as it was just something *not right*, an odd stirring, the occasional feeling of fullness or lack of appetite. Other times, however, she found herself eating as though her stomach didn’t have an end to it: her exam in the middle of the day Wednesday ended with her standing up out of her seat nearly before she’d finished the last question, just so she could sprint to the campus food trucks and order lunch. Then another, and another.

*Just stress*, she told herself, and left it at that: that had always given her headaches and restlessness in the past, so why not this, now? The way she’d organized her schedule this semester resulted in all of her exams falling on this single week, with the last – a departmental biology exam – falling early Saturday morning. Amy nearly failed to pull herself out of bed to attend that one, and about halfway into it, she started daydreaming about... warm, comfortable water, maybe still, maybe with little currents brushing along the fur of her bare legs and belly. Enough to doze off in.

That daydream solidified itself into a definite want to take a bath. She imagined it on her drive home, the relaxing feeling of sinking into just-hot-enough water, maybe with some soft bubbles fizzing around; resting one arm submerged across her body and the other over the edge of the tub; scent of jasmine and mint, her favorite soap from that little family-run shop at the edge of the woods, tickling at her nose; maybe she’d bring her book in and get some much-needed reading done.

*I deserve a break.*

Some forty minutes later she managed to do *just* that, a sweet shiver bouncing up her legs and back when her footpaw slid beneath the surface of the water. It had been quite a while since she'd last taken a bath – odd that the desire suddenly hit her *now* – but it felt like she'd still nailed her temperature preference. The cat had to coax her body further down into the water, that delicious shiver continuing and reverberating the further she went, until the surface of the water just barely brushed against her chin; there she lay, letting herself grow accustomed to the warmth, before slipping her arms in too and closing her eyes.

For a moment she could nearly forget about the odd almost-discomfort that had been bothering her throughout the week, this strange... *weight*, almost, this pressure down in her far lower belly. Her paw brushed over the spot she'd taken to half-consciously rubbing in attempts to alleviate the feeling, though by now she'd gotten used to the squishy firmness there, and couldn't really remember if her stomach had *always* felt like that.

*Relaxation...* after some five minutes she realized she'd forgotten her book in the other room, but Amy had already melted enough into the moment that it wouldn't be worth it to get up to grab it. For a moment she lay there, idly swaying her paws through the water with fingers spread, feeling the tongues of warmth curl and twist around, like the soft, slow eddies of wind that occasionally blew through the open window behind the drawn curtains above the tub... and then she realized she had something *else* she could due to relax.

The urge to enjoy herself had been hitting her more often lately, too, especially as the week progressed. Just today, she'd had to steer off of the course to her exam building so she could slip into one of the bathrooms, and thankfully she ended up only three minutes late once done. Amy slid a little deeper into the bathtub, resting one paw along her inner thigh while the other wandered downwards, fingers touching and sliding, circling... sinking in and pulling a soft gasp from her, then coming back out to circle again.

Before long, her eyes had drifted closed again and she let her muzzle roll to the side, lips parted for her to pant quietly, lower body thrusting and working with the deft movements of her fingers. That *goddamn* dream she'd had after the party still stuck in her mind, brought up time and time again each time she indulged in this want and need; the strange thing was, though, the more she focused on it, the stronger the images came, solidifying and filling out in her head.

She could *feel* the heat of the dog's body on her back, the pressure of its groin slapping against her rump, again and again. She could taste that rich, intoxicating catnip-like scent, the one that had clung so strongly to her nose both when she'd climbed into bed that night and when she'd rolled out of it, the fur between her thighs matted and soaked her own arousal. Amazing what the mind could do, as she had felt that same fullness when she'd woken up, beneath the thumping and haze of the hangover; she'd had that lingering, twitching soreness between her legs, too, and that twitchy unsteadiness of her knees, but *that* had obviously been from the party before. That damn dog had given her the same treatment in the dream, though, strong, long arms keeping her down, fat knot pounding against her, slick hard shaft pumping inside of her, heavy sack swinging forward, the movements of its body on hers causing her to lurch forward and back, forward and back. The *feeling* of that thick length buried in her, the heat and weight as it hilted, the slight shivering from above and the growl vibrating in its chest as it started to unload-

- and then the pulsing, pumping, throbbing, the hot *pressure* filling her... the cat swallowed and gritted her teeth in the bath, able to feel her body starting to tense up again. The water splashed around her as her knees pulled up towards her chest and she tightened around herself, teeth gritting against the rising peak, the little sighs and gasps in her throat running together into a hot, tense exhalation of breath. Amy shuddered, jerked, gasped, felt the hot wave of pleasure roll over her, then jerked again as a second came directly after it. Then, though, with every muscle in her body tensing and squeezing, she felt something pop *out* of her, soft yet firm and round pushing past her fingers; then a second, a third, a fourth.

Heart pounding both from the intense orgasm as well as the sudden shock, the cat spread her legs, splashing water over the sides of the bathtub, glanced down – and then leapt up out of the tub at the first sight of the spherical, pale translucent *orbs* that had come out of her. The door shook under her weight when she leaned back against it, having yanked it shut behind her when she went; naked and dripping wet, the cat remained there for a moment to catch her breath, then stumbled back to her bedroom to grab her phone. Her wet fingerpads wouldn't work on the screen, so she cursed, wiped them off on her body, cursed *again* as she realized that that just made it worse, reached over towards the curtain blocking the window looking out over the side of the house, tried again.

A couple seconds later she had it pressed to her ear; she waited anxiously for the sound of the other end picking up, the fur along her neck prickling with the knowledge of what still lay in the tub behind the door.

"Hey Amy! What's up? I was j-"

"Tyler!" She swallowed, breathed in, breathed out, swallowed again. "This past weekend. At the party? Did I play with any – you know, any of the toys that, like... go *inside*? Like, all the way in? Like, round, firm..."

A moment of pause. "Oh, you mean like eggs?"

*Eggs.* Amy's ears flicked back towards the door at some quiet sounds coming from the other side: gentle splashing, a bit of scratching, something that sounded like breathing. Tyler kept on talking for a bit, though the cat pulled the phone away from her ear, reached down for the knob, turned and pushed the door *just* enough to peer inside... and there saw four small *creatures*, blue-grey and leathery-skinned, like tiny malformed and malnourished dogs.

One of them looked up at her – it looked as though its eyes had *just* opened – then its tail wagged, and it barked. And its lower jaw split cleanly down the middle as it did so. Just like that one *thing* in the video she'd seen on the news earlier in the week. A shiver that had nothing to do with the chill of the water soaked through her fur rippled down her body.

"...I mean, yeah, that lioness brought some, but I don't think they ever made their way to you." Her boyfriend chuckled softly. "You did have a *lot* of toys in your various orifices, but no, I don't think you ever got her eggs up in you. Why, hon? You sound a bit-"

*Such a strangely tall creature, all legs, dry skin wrapped around bones. It looked like all the meat had gone to one part of its body in particular; Amy couldn't look away from those bright eyes, the thing's*

*muzzle tilted down so it could hold her gaze from its superior height, though she was kept strongly aware of the jiggling, swinging, swaying heft between its hind legs. As it padded slowly forward, Amy found herself stepping backwards, though not a hint of intimidation or fear vibrated throughout her – in fact, the closer it came, the more that dense fog curled around her ankles and crawled up her body, the more she wanted it to. The dog, if that was what it could be called, flicked a long, forked tongue out to lick across its chops, its lower jaw splitting down the center to allow it to do so.*

*Amy purred softly in her throat, her paw finally falling from the handle of the sliding back door as she stepped back into her house, with the thing just barely fitting in after her. The thing seemed to release her, allowing her to glance down to get an easy, level view at that heavy sack, fat sheath, and thick length protruding and bouncing with its heartbeat, already emptying jets of liquidy pre across her tile floor.*

*She'd stripped off her clothes before going to bed, of course; she preferred sleeping in the nude, or at the most with a bra on. This meant that now, after the bright eyes glowing through her bedroom window and the tendrils of fog curling in between the threshold had coaxed her awake and out back, all she had to do was reach forward, run her fingers along its tall, strong shoulders – that blue-grey skin was surprisingly smooth – then turn, lower herself to all fours, raise her tail. She reached a paw back to spread herself, watching it, waiting for it to close the distance and mount her.*

*And then it did.*

*"I'll call you back."*

She didn't even check to make sure she'd ended the call before she barged back into the bathroom, frantically searching for the freakish puppies. The water of the bath remained still and silent other than the soft fizzing of the soap bubbles, and the steady dripping of the spill over the side; the cat's eyes flicked up towards the windowsill, where the curtains hung open a little further than she'd left them. A couple small puddles of bathwater, as through tracked by tiny wandering paws, dripped down from that windowsill.

Mind blank with shock, Amy idly reached up to rub at that one spot on her shoulder. It had stopped aching within a day or two after the weekend, but... that *had* been where the dog had bitten her in the dream. Even now she imagined she could still feel the slight indentations of so-sharp teeth, the smooth arc around the front, then two disturbingly straight lines down the back from a parted lower jaw.

A dream. For a moment she wasn't sure if what floated atop the surface of the bath and curled down over the rim of the tub was steam from the hot water, or that same mind-numbing fog.

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The ferret slid her earbuds in as she pushed through the library door, making sure to wrap the little rubber arm around her tiny teacup ears. That had been a *wonderful* birthday gift – since she'd put those on, they had only fallen out a total of two times. She'd never tried them before since she always thought that they were useless... but, then, her brother *did* always say that she was too set in her ways.

And, well, maybe she was. The ferret glanced up to the sky as soon as the first breeze of cool night air slid along her fur: dark blue-black, not a hint of stars visible behind the charcoal clouds, bright yet

diffuse glow of the moon hidden off behind one of the taller buildings. This would make the fourth time this week she'd be getting home past her self-appointed bedtime, but that had never bothered her enough to make an actual change. She shifted her bag over her shoulders, hefting the weight of the new books she'd checked out tonight, and started down the carved stairs to the sidewalk.

*"Spirits In Folklore", "I Saw It With My Own Eyes", "Weird City", "Explaining The Unexplained and Knowing The Unknown"...* the recent events threading through the news channels and local forums had caught her attention and reignited a nearly-forgotten interest in the ferret. She remembered playing with her friends in school out along the playground, looking at the strangely dark house across the lot and behind the rusted chain-link fence; *the teachers don't allow us to get close, they'd always say, because kids get killed in that house.* Her first parent-teacher conference had come as a result of her writing a story in class about the house instead of working on a math quiz.

Then there had been that pair of heavy wooden doors down the music hall, the doors that no student had ever seen open, and that would earn an immediate lecture and two days of no recess if one ever tried to pull the handles. The ferret had learned that punishment herself, twice; she smiled remembering it. Now she understood that the reason for that was because those doors led to the mechanical section of the school, vibrating generators and steaming water heaters, dangerous things for a child to come close to. But the wonder, the awe, the intense *curiosity* had burned so strongly in her heart back then... and now with the news and tales of this strange meteorite impact, she could feel those flames begin anew.

The first three weeks after it happened had provided so much delicious speculation and information about the whole thing. Pictures of the crater, videos of the strange surroundings, detailed reports and theories, homemade chemical analyses on any residue that could be found. Then that video of the weird not-quite-puppies that hit the news... the ferret could usually tell a faked video, and that certainly didn't seem like one of them. It was always easier to do on cell phone footage, but that one lacked all of the tells. Of course, she hadn't been the first one to link those creatures back to the meteor, and she didn't have any solid evidence, but it just felt right.

Especially with small rumors and whisperings of similar events popping up every now and then, squashed back down into silence almost as quickly as they started. No denying that something *was* going on, something new and probably unheard of before: the story she'd found posted online, about an anonymous college student having a dream about a dog matching the description of the puppies; then a couple stills from security camera footage; and the way that steadily more people had trouble getting to sleep at night, complaining of an eerie fog that made it hard to breathe and think straight, and a soft yet persistent *sound*. Nobody could really describe it. The ferret thought she'd heard it once herself, like...

She slowed nearly to a stop as she walked, tilting her head in trying to focus more on the music she'd chosen. After a moment, though, she reached into her pocket to turn the volume down... and still that noise remained, like the electric buzzing when the cable wasn't plugged all the way in. Mumbling to herself, she pulled it out of her pocket and inspected the connection, then tugged it all the way out, shoved it back in – the popping of the electric connection being made caused her to jump – then pulled it out again. With a slight shock, she realized that the buzzing still continued.

Something caught her attention, then, in the alley between the two buildings to her right. She glanced up, phone in her paw immediately forgotten, and saw there a thick, bubbling fog seeping out of the

shadows of the alley, clinging close to the concrete as it came. Slowly, she reached up to pull the earbuds out, then flung them over her shoulder; could it be? The ferret swallowed, turned, started to make her way towards it. This certainly wasn't the season for mist at this time of night, nor was it time for the haunted houses to start testing their fog machines.

The closer she came, though, the muddier her thoughts became. Gradually she became aware of a pair of too-bright eyes back in that alley, glowing yellow-orange like sodium streetlights concentrated to two coin-sized spaces – just like some of the more lucid reports mentioned. The ferret swallowed again, her phone clattering to the cement at her feet. This was *fantastic*. If only she could...

A tendril of the fog wove around her footpaw, closed around it, crawled up along her leg. Then, suddenly, she was *inside* of it, unable to see the sides of the buildings or the road behind her: all she knew was that she *had* to come closer, *had* to meet this form in the fog. She licked her lips, swallowed yet again, shrugged her back off of her shoulders, reached down to loosen her belt – another, deeper need suddenly racked her body, making her tail twitch, her mouth water, her knees shake.

Those eyes remained on her, unblinking from above, until the form coalesced into something that just barely could be called a *dog*: mostly canine in shape but with too-tall ears, too-long muzzle, too-long hind legs ending in paws that seemed altogether too much like hands, one extra pair of smaller arms near its shoulders, a chest that looked all ribs and no meat...

...and then a heavy, *heavy* sheath and full sack between its hind legs, tip of aroused flesh showing from the supple skin there, faintly blue-grey and hairless like the rest of its body. This was what drew the ferret in; she nuzzled down between the almost-dog's hind legs, sniffing and nosing, breathing deep. It raised one of its forelegs to allow her the room to do so – and then flicked its long, forked tongue over its chops, its lower jaw splitting apart down the middle to allow it to do so.

It rose to its full height, the stray moving back from beneath it to flag her tail and invite it in; that extra pair of arms shivered to life, stretching and extending to grab onto her as it mounted. The fog poured like liquid from rows of pores along the creature's body, near the base of its tail, along its chest behind that other pair of arms... dripping down from its maw, lower jaw parted down the middle, hungry saliva drooling down from a long, forked tongue.

The ferret shivered as she came face to face with it; had she ever wanted anything in her life more than *this*? A careful paw came up to touch its shoulder, and it held her eyes for a second longer. Then something about that gaze *changed*, and again, she knew what she had to do. Her body wanted it, she wanted it – but, above all of that, the creature wanted it.

She didn't bother stripping all the way down. The ferret undid her belt, slid her jeans halfway down her thighs, looked the thing over once more, then dropped to all fours, dutifully flagging her tail for it. The fog curled around and embraced her body as it got into position over her, setting the tapered tip of that thick length against her; the cool, wet mist filled her head and put her more at ease than she already was, relaxing every muscle in her body.

Still, though, the ferret couldn't help but tense up as sharp teeth gripped her shoulder, and that length started to sink up into her. The sound continued, halfway between a buzz and a hum, close to her ear; it nearly drowned out her own panting, huffing, moaning. That second pair of arms clamped around her chest, holding her for extra support. The sound and the fog filled her head, as thoroughly as the dog

filled the rest of her. A car drove by along the street outside the alley, the noise dampened by the thick, pulsing mist, there for a time and then gone a short while later, seeming to dissipate into the ground like water through a mesh.

The ferret forgot to grab her phone and backpack on her way home. She just wasn't thinking about it at the time.