

Disaster, that's what Colby's trip was turning out to be. He'd planned so well, too. Take a couple days off, grab some gear and head into the mountains to do a bit of snowboarding before the season got into its harsher parts, with deep drifts and higher chance of avalanches, that was what he was going to do. And he'd gotten up into the mountains! The first day was even nice. But the second, a telltale gray sky had heralded the coming of big, fat snowflakes, and pretty soon, Colby was alone in a veritably blinding snowstorm.

He'd at least managed to be on a part of the slope that was easier to navigate- or he thought so, up until he shot off a bank and smacked the body of his board against a boulder. The impact sent him tumbling, and when he sat up to check himself over, he realized that it had also shot his board through with a crack that had practically killed it. Left with little choice, he unbuckled his boots and picked up his board, planning to hike back down to his campsite.

That was when it happened.

He didn't immediately hear anything, the slight whistle of wind and his crunching footsteps and padded gear rubbing together covering any other noise. Besides that, he wasn't really concentrating on other noises. So he was caught completely off guard when a hefty weight smacked into him from behind like he'd been football tackled. He face planted into the snow, scrambling to get back to his feet and try to suss out what had just hit him. But the second he stood up, a gust of wind and snow- one that wasn't from the weather- buffeted him. He raised his arms and-

They were caught, squeezed by what felt like clamps along his forearms. He fell again, this time with the weight on him, and now he could hear the flap of wings and feel the way they stirred against the icy crust. It must have been an effort for whatever was carrying him to lift off- it struggled with its wings hitting the ground and its barrel-like chest against Colby's back. He tried to call out, but his mouth was full of snow, and by the time it had melted and he'd spit it out, they were aloft.

He kicked and wiggled for all of five seconds before he realized how high they were actually going, not that he could tell by the ground, but by the way the flapping continued, beating huge wafts of air to rise into the storm. He could have tried to keep kicking, too, but there were rocks everywhere, hidden in the drifts, and Colby couldn't take a chance at landing on anything but the softest snow. So he stilled, and buried his face against his arm to keep the whipping, biting cold from turning it more red.

Eventually, the wings stopped heaving their way through the air, and instead focused on short bursts to control the glide downward. Colby was too distracted with keeping his eyes shut and his breathing shallow to notice the ground coming up beneath them.

Suddenly, rocks shot up in front of them.

One second. They zoomed closer.

Two seconds. Colby braced for hard impact.

Three-

The transition from storm to cave mouth happened instantly. The landing was just as quick, a few backwings enough to let his feet touch the rocky dirt, and then the weight of what had carried him on his back and forcing him down.

"H- hey, let me up!" he cried, squirming. What if it was a giant bird or something that wanted to feed him to its babies? What if it just wanted to eat him? What if-... he didn't know. If it *did* eat him, he just hoped it was quick.

"Oh," a deeper voice replied, the rumble of it against Colby's back. "You speak Human."

"I- what? I *am* one-" Colby twisted, trying to get a good look at his captor. What he got was a close-up view of a fuzzy muzzle, the same white as the snow outside. Blue-tinged horns raked from behind its eyes, the pupils that same blue and brilliant in contrast to the black sclera.

It yawned, showing black gums and tongue, and aching white fangs. "Mmm." Its mouth closed and it bent its head to sniff at Colby's ear, pushing his hat off with its soft nose. "Ooh. You smell like human female."

"Um- n- no." Colby caught himself. He didn't think he wanted to explain the gender binary to a- a whatever this was, let alone his own transition. "I mean I... I'm sort of... both at the moment-"

"Oh," the thing said, sitting up and finally releasing the grip on Colby's arms so it could move a few feet away. Colby did stay where he was, not wanting to risk the thing coming after him and deciding eating was better than talking. "I didn't know," it continued, "that humans were so like dragons."

That gave Colby pause. Dragon? Turning slowly over, he tried to focus, the shape of the creature mostly backlit by the cave mouth. It was horselike... doglike? Roughly the size of a horse in any case. Its muzzle was tapered gracefully, counterbalanced by its horns, and mane fell over its neck and face like a horse too, but its fur grew long, and the wings settled against its sides were feathered. The only unfurred part of it were the sharp black talons at its clawtips, and it even had a blade at the end of its long tail, partially obscured by some fluffy fur.

"Dragon-" Colby repeated, disbelieving despite the evidence perched like a cat and staring at him.

"Yes?" the dragon replied. Its tail flopped over itself like it was wagging, but once. "I thought humans came in only the two varieties. You smell female... sort of."

"I... well, yes, I mean, I *started out* female I guess but I changed that." Colby played his fingers over each other.

"Yes, see, that is the same as dragons, although we start out as neither and then whichever of us is the dominant one fertilizes another." It paused. "This of course proves difficult, most dragons disliking breeding other creatures but also disliking *being* bred."

Colby couldn't really think of anything good to say. Ungendered dragons, breeding other creatures? Having some way to be either? One very specific flower-related word came to Colby just then, and he blurted it in the silence. "Hermaphroditic?"

The dragon- Colby couldn't tell whether it was male or female, not that it could apparently tell either- tilted its head. "What?"

"You're, uh... both."

"Oh, I see, yes, is that what that means? I don't think we have a word for it, just for those that are dominant and those who are submissive."

"Yeah." Again at a loss, Colby paused. He fidgeted, still laying on his back. "Um..." he tried, "so... why exactly did you bring me here?"

"Mm," the dragon responded. It looked at him, and Colby took a chill down his spine, dreading the answer. "I thought you were something else. But if you're human, I won't eat you."

Colby blanched. "Uh... thanks?"

The dragon, now seeming to have relaxed from its flight, shook itself, then got up and moved closer. Colby, rightfully terrified of the creature that could fit its jaw fully around his head, stayed where he was, breathing hard through his nose.

"You're fine," the dragon said, stooping down to look at Colby again, its eyes searching his half-covered face. "I said I wouldn't eat you."

"Yeah, but you were *going* to," Colby said, quietly.

"My mistake. Come with me. Your body is cold and the weather is colder." And with that, the dragon turned, padding deeper into the cave.

Colby stared after it, and when he didn't immediately stand up, the dragon paused. "My den is warm. It doesn't smell but of pine."

Left little choice, Colby glanced back at the white outside, stray flakes slowly making their way into the mouth of the cave as time passed. He stood, and he followed the dragon.

The walk took a couple minutes, but the cave Colby was expecting wasn't to be. Instead of a drippy, wet mess like he thought a mountain cave would be, it stayed a rocky, dirt-covered path that narrowed and then after about ten feet reopened into a space probably as large as his apartment. The dragon breathed in, spitting like it was clearing its throat, and a smoking, gelatinous ember hit a half-burnt stack of wood, slowly growing to consume most of it with fire.

With the light, Colby could see much better. Most of the cave had been cleared of rock, leaving only a sandy consistency, save a rocky outcropping that had been lined with what looked like an abundance of moss. There were no bones scattered about, and the smoke from the fire didn't even linger- when Colby looked up, it seemed to disappear into fissures in the stone.

A few lengths of pine wood sat against one wall opposite the fire, their branches ripped from the trunks, and some woodchips scattered as well, no doubt from their cutting or tearing. Alongside them were an assortment of most likely stolen cast-iron and steel containers- a frying pan, a few smaller cooking pieces and a big stockpot all stacked inside each other.

All in all, it seemed a plain sort of lived-in, though if pressed, Colby wouldn't be able to say what sort of nick-knacks a dragon might *want* to keep around. The skulls of its enemies? In fact, the only meat that seemed to be present were the bodies of a rabbit and a fox, draped over another small length of wood. The dragon paused there briefly, with the sound of clearing its throat again, but this time, a stream of water shot from behind its teeth and immediately crystallized, showering the little bodies in frost.

Colby blinked. *Huh. Like a dragon refrigerator.* He eased his way closer into the den, noticing a few places that the walls seemed to open up, but the dipped into darkness at the edge of the firelight. The dragon, meanwhile, had settled itself on the floor near the moss-filled outcropping, and watched him.

"I... if you're not going to eat me-" That still felt weird to say aloud. Colby didn't like the implication at all. "-then what did you bring me in here for?"

"To weather the storm."

The answer seemed overly simple. Colby *could* just run back out and try to find a place to go away from the dragon, but he didn't like his chances of finding out where he currently was, let alone some sign of civilization. After all, a dragon lived here and no one even knew.

He decided to hold the dragon to its word, and tentatively moved closer to the fire so he could strip off most of his snow-soaked gear. He pulled off his boots, then shucked his coat, laying it out flat on the ground. His thick overalls came next, and finally his shirt because it was soaked down the front. The pants he'd been wearing were okay, so he kept those while he arranged the rest of his things.

When he turned around, the dragon was looking on in interest.

"Female species," it began, then altered its sentence. "Human females, they have mammarys."

Colby flushed redder than his snow-pinked skin and nearly covered the scars under his pectorals, but stopped himself, refusing to be embarrassed about them. "Some do. And I already told you, I'm not a female."

The dragon looked slightly confused- probably; Colby couldn't fully tell- but didn't continue the train of conversation. Colby, meanwhile, wasn't really sure what to do, and stood awkwardly until the dragon addressed him, its tail curled. "You can do what you like."

Not that Colby knew what he was trying to accomplish other than get dry and wait out the storm... and try not to get eaten. He hesitated. "Have you eaten any humans recently?" he asked.

"Mm, no. I like rabbit. Sometimes there are elk, but they're harder to bring down. Once, I ate a puma." The dragon bore its teeth, sticking out its tongue. Funnily, Colby noticed it wasn't serpentlike, but more wide and flat, although it did have a notch at the end that made it a bit reptilian. "They're unpleasant."

"Oh," was all Colby could offer. He stood a moment more, then slowly made his way over to sit next to the dragon, gingerly taking up a space where the mossy edge of the nest ended.

When he woke, it was to a face full of moss. He turned, noting that the fire had been rebuilt with a new few logs, but the dragon had only slightly adjusted, resting its head into its nest alongside Colby and letting its wings droop. When he moved, the dragon did too, standing and crawling up but keeping its head low. It snuffled along Colby's side, and he tensed as

the feeling moved up toward his neck and over his chin. The dragon watched him, and he watched back, breathing shallowly.

"I won't hurt you," the dragon said. It nuzzled his cheek and licked him, and the warm wet of its breath didn't smell like meat, but like woodsmoke. "You can call me Kel."

Irrationally, Colby wondered if all dragons had such succinct names, or if 'Kel' was short for something. He opened his mouth, but didn't ask.

The dragon- Kel- tilted its head, its forehead brushing Colby's chin and its mane falling into his face. He felt the same sensation of fur at his hip, but until the light touch of the claws between his clothing and his skin, he didn't register it. Kel, somehow with its back paw, eased his pants down, and only then did Colby think to try and move, but Kel clamored to pin his arms with its forepaws.

"Wait," it pleaded, head still ducked to Colby's level. "I need you."

"I- but, no-"

"I'll take care of you," it promised, swaying its hips, its tail curled over Colby's leg. And then it continued in a rush, "I've not bred for seasons. There are none of my kind here, nor any other large enough, or willing. Please."

Colby hesitated. He was already trapped, but if he cooperated, nothing worse would come of it. The dragon- Kel, he reminded himself again- could just get its rocks off, and that would be all. Colby looked down at himself and the dragon... whose cock was peeking from its sheath, and swallowed. He mentally corrected himself from saying 'it' to saying 'he,' just for the time being, that feeling less animalistic.

Kel whined deep in his throat and tucked his head against Colby's shoulder. Colby, in turn, reached to pet the dragon's foreleg, still pinning said arm.

"I'll take care of you," Kel promised again, somehow meek despite being almost three times Colby's size.

"I... Let me up." Kel sat back and Colby sat up, then got to his knees. He reached up to touch Kel's face, exploring the thick, soft fuzz and running his fingers through the coarser mane. He shuddered, and Kel opened his eyes to watch him.

Colby opened his mouth. Closed it. He opened it again, and this time managed to speak. "If I'm letting you, it's on my terms." Kel nodded into his hands. "Careful."

He let go of Kel's cheeks and reached to finish what the dragon had started. He hooked his fingers under the waist of his pants and slid them down, then sat and pulled them off to leave himself bare and naked before Kel. He shivered.

Kel leaned down and Colby accepted it, reaching to brush his hand over the dragon's neck as he crept forward. "You said you could smell me," Colby murmured, hands still shaking, and Kel nodded again beneath his fingers.

"You smell human," Kel said, dipping his head. Colby guided it downward, and Kel breathed against his scarred chest, then against his stomach. "It's strongest here," Kel continued, breathing hot against Colby's inner thighs.

"Yeah," Colby said, inching his knees wider. "That's the only female thing about me."

Kel nosed at his thigh and Colby shuddered, imagining his teeth. But Kel's soft nose was nothing like that. "L- lick," he stuttered, and the next moment he felt the warm, soft flesh, dextrous against his own, the flat fork tickling along.

He pressed his hand to the side of Kel's face, guiding him fully center, and Kel licked again, the whole of his tongue bathing Kit's slit and clit in saliva and soft heat. Colby clenched his fists. "W-wow. Do that again."

Kel, however, was already doing it. He let his tongue loll, the width of it enough to flatten fully against Colby, the tip delving into him, and then slid it between the folds and over the sensitive nub of Colby's clit.

"Can... can you put your tongue inside?" Colby breathed, leaning back and finally letting himself lay down, still hanging onto handfuls of moss.

"Yes?" Kel said it as a question, licking his lips. Colby looked up at him and he continued, "But why?"

"It's worth it. You can't just have sex without foreplay."

Kel's expression said he didn't know what 'foreplay' meant. Colby shook his head. "Never mind, just try it."

Again, Kel dipped his head, and Colby felt the tip of his tongue, and then more and more, until Kel's nose pressed against his slit and several inches of warm, damp wriggling had penetrated him. Kel licked, sticking his tongue back in a few more times, and Colby moaned. Only at that, Kel drew back, licking his lips, and eyes searching for something he'd done wrong.

"I wouldn't mind more of that," Colby murmured, adjusting his knees. Kel, on the other hand, had a different idea. His cock, twitching and hard, stood ready, the tip having leaked a few drops as he sat. He shuddered too, and Colby did hesitate. But he'd promised, and nothing more than sex would come of it. So he reached again to indicate that Kel come forward, and the dragon inched closer, legs bent to try and reach Colby's entrance.

He rutted a few times against the air, bent low against Colby, but no more than the tip rubbed against Colby's stomach, and Kel whined. When that clearly wasn't going to work, Kel too big to lay properly and Colby too antsy to come up with anything more creative, he finally sat up a little and moved. "Come here. Just... stand like that."

Colby lay back on the moss so he could prop his legs up on the edge of the outcropping, which allowed Kel to climb down and situate himself. Hind legs on the ground, his chest brushing Colby's, and Colby encompassed by his paws, Kel bucked and the tip of his cock brushed Colby's slit.

"C- careful," Colby breathed, reaching to spread himself, and feeling for Kel's cock so he could guide it in. Kel's hiss juddered as he tried to hold himself back and buck at the same time, and thankfully it was enough that he did so Colby could line him up, and Kel could sink in little by little. And once he did, he exhaled a massive breath into the moss and across Colby's skin, his wings drooping around them like a tent.

Colby clung to the long fur of Kel's forelegs, and then the dragon began to thrust, and Colby felt immediately full, Kel's entire length burying in him with each pump of his hips. He raised his knees, trying to find purchase with his heels on Kel's hips, and only sort of managed. Instead, he braced in the join of Kel's leg and body, and every time the dragon pulled out, Colby's legs followed, while every thrust opened Colby wide for him, his cock seeming thicker and deeper the more he did.

Kel's cock felt *massive*; Colby let go of the fur and grabbed his knees instead, letting Kel sink further into him, and as Colby felt Kel's fur between his legs, the thrusting shifted. The long, deep penetration became choppy, Kel's hips jerking in shallow, quick bursts, his tongue lolling and his panting matching the movement.

And then he stopped, still thick and heavy in Colby, still breathing lightly, sharp against the moss. Colby felt a warmth spread between his legs, and the heat of Kel's cock jolt inside him. He gasped, trembling, and shifted, but Kel was stuck firm.

Was... was that a *knot*?

Colby shifted again, and Kel bore his teeth, rumbling "S-stay," between them.



The sensation was odd. Odd enough that Colby didn't realize what was happening at first. But then he felt pressure, like Kel's cock was expanding, pushing his slit wider. And then it was gone for something else, a deep slide of *thickness* through the length buried in him.

Pressure, and it *hurt*, and Colby hissed in pain, bearing down against it, and-

And just like that, it was gone, with feeling of a pop and a slide under his navel, only to be replaced with the same thick sensation, the same pinch of pain, and the sudden slip deep inside him.

"Kel-" he breathed, on the edge of climax and getting closer with each new feeling.

Kel said nothing, head bowed, legs braced and his chest belling out with each breath and timed with those slipping feelings inside Colby. One last large push into him, and Colby shuddered, Kel rumbling in his chest. The dragon adjusted his hips and rocked forward just enough that the pinch returned. Colby felt so full... almost as if Kel's cock had breached his cervix. One last heave of breath, and Kel's cock twitched as he orgasmed. Colby felt the dragon's hot load shoot into him with a gurgle, filling him, and let his head fall back as he, too, came. Each throb of the heavy cock shot more thick come deep into Colby, three, then four ejaculations bursting in and left with nowhere to go thanks to the thick knot tying them together.

Colby let go of one leg, switching his grip to cling to Kel's forepaw instead, rocking onto his cock for want of anything to do and milking yet another throb of its seed. His body wracked with tremors and insanely sensitive, he tried to stay still aside from the shaking, and breathed hard, panting and dazed.

"O- oh," was all he could manage. Kel's eyes likewise looked glazed-over, and the dragon didn't move either, still fully tied to Colby by his cock.

Both of them stayed where they were for a good several moments. Colby finally managed to stop heaving great breaths and sighed. "That was... whoa."

"More than I hoped," Kel agreed. "Thank you. It's been *seasons* since I've bred and my eggs felt so heavy..."

Colby blinked, sitting up as best he could while still pierced on Kel's knot. "What? Eggs?"

Kel nodded. "You called me 'hermaphroditic.' Both male and female. So I have both."

Silence. Colby stared at him, then looked down at himself, the cock still in him and the more apparent roundness of his belly where there hadn't been before. He looked fat, like

he'd eaten a couple softballs or way, way too much spaghetti, and there was no way it was just from the knot- it wasn't even in the right place.

"...Oh no."

"You said it was alright-" Kel started, but Colby interrupted.

"I said we could have sex! I *didn't* say you could- could *lay eggs in me!*"

Kel balked, and the pull caused Colby to yelp, which immediately had Kel hunching over him again. "I'm sorry, I thought you- Humans are good hosts, and you allowed us to..."

"Nnnngh," Colby groaned, flopping onto his back and covering his face. "There's- you can't get them back out?" he asked, bleakly.

"I... I don't know how," Kel admitted. In the deep silence that followed, he offered a hesitant, "I said I would take care of you."

"I thought-" Colby started, but cut himself off. He made another little noise. What was he going to do now? What was even going to happen? "Never mind. Just... get out of me."

Kel hesitated, then leaned a little, but that only served to drag at Colby; he was still fully knotted. Colby made another noise, letting his legs ease down. Thankfully he wasn't chilly, the fire still going and the moss and Kel keeping him warm. "How long is it going to be?" he asked.

"A few minutes?" Kel said, tilting his head.

"I- well, yeah, I mean that, but after that?"

Kel paused. "Oh, you mean birth? Dragons grow quickly. It's tenth moon now, so surely they will come by late spring."

Colby did some quick mental math. Seven months? "What am I supposed to do for seven months?! I have a *job*, and my family will wonder where I am!"

The more his voice rose, the more timid Kel became. No wonder the dragon hadn't bred in ages, with or without a proper host. Colby covered his face again.

Kel said nothing, and Colby didn't look at him. They stayed in silence for another few long moments before Kel tried shifting again. Colby uncovered his face, bracing, and bore down, and Kel tugged, his cock popping free with a dribble of fluid, though not nearly as much as Colby felt pulsing inside him. He lay there, a bit of a mess, and Kel looked him over.

"I need water," Colby finally said, sitting up and trying to ignore the pooch of his belly. The dragon hesitated, then went to fetch the stockpot he had laying among the other things he'd borrowed, picking it up in his mouth and padding back out to the entrance of the cave.

Colby put his overshirt on for at least a little coverage, and by the time he'd decided to use his boxers as what amounted to a washcloth, Kel was waddling back, the stockpot held by the handle in his teeth and full of snow. He set it alongside the fire to melt, and it wasn't until it had started gently steaming that Colby pulled it aside and quietly began the work of cleaning himself up.

Kel stayed quiet as well, through most of it. It wasn't until Colby went to put his pants back on that Kel hazarded a small repeat. "I did say I would take care of you. I'll bring wood, and food, and water. I... have books." He paused, Colby still silent. "I can also take you back to the humans."

"And do what?" Colby finally snapped. "Leave me there? What am I supposed to do when *this* happens?" He gestured at his belly, then sighed. "I don't-... I never wanted to get pregnant, okay? It's enough that I *am*, now, and it's worse because it's eggs, and dragons."

He sat down against the wall, still in range of the heat of the fire. "Just... leave me alone, alright?"

Kel watched him, but at least had the sense to say nothing more. He turned, shaking out and refolding his wings, then turned and went back through the short tunnel toward the cave mouth.

Colby stayed quiet for the rest of the night. He did at least sleep in Kel's nest, huddled against the dragon's warm side and covered in his coat. The next morning was quiet, too. Kel brought more snow water and ripped up pieces of his frozen rabbit so Colby could cook them for breakfast, and then Colby got properly dressed.

In the time that took, he thought. There was no getting out of this pregnancy, as much as he hated to admit it. It wasn't as if he could just walk into a Planned Parenthood and ask their opinion on what he should do.

He had Kel take him as far down the mountain as they could go together once it got dark. As they flew- this time with Colby seated on Kel's back, just between his neck and the join of his wings- Colby described the plan. He'd go back to his job and let them know a family emergency had come up, and he was willing to stay the two weeks before he had to go. While he was still working, he'd get help packing what he could and pay a year's storage, then rent out his small house. And finally, he'd buckle down and come up with a bunch of

camping gear, because really, he couldn't stay with Kel and expect to live on just meat and five pots and pans.

Kel landed in an expansive field of dead grass, and Colby slid down from his back, giving one last instruction. The dragon needed to meet him there every three nights so he could take the supplies back with him, and then Colby would go with on the last trip. Kel nodded his agreement, ducked his head, then paused and stood straight again, before taking off.

Colby watched his snow-white body disappear into the night, and then began to walk home.



