



Pursued by the Sasquatch (Monster Bounty Hunters #2)

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Category: Fantasy

Description: I never thought I'd be on the run from a bounty hunter. I definitely didn't think I'd want him to catch me.

Fern

One second I'm living a quiet life. The next, I'm being blamed for a crime my ex committed, and on the verge of losing everything.

Then he shows up. Seven feet of muscle and fur.

He could crush me. But when he looks at me... I wonder if he's the only one who could ever make me feel safe.

Now I'm running again. But part of me hopes he catches up.

Kiy

The moment I saw her at the jail, scared and out of her depth, I knew I'd never walk away.

She's mine.

And anyone who's hurt her is about to learn what a monster really is.

But she underestimated how far I'll go to protect her. She ran.

Now the hunt begins, and its unleashing something primal in me. I hope she's ready to be caught

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Fern

I sat in the musty jail cell, shivering as the cold air clung to my bare arms. The thought of asking for a blanket kept popping into my head, but I felt embarrassed at the thought of drawing attention to myself. I hoped I wouldn't be here much longer, anyway. At least one cop had taken pity on my pathetic crying and given me the number for the local bail office. I'd spoken to the boss over there, while snivelling down the phone, and he'd talked me through what would happen and what they would do for me. I must have sounded like a real mess, as he said he would send someone asap and once I'd signed the paperwork, they'd give me a lift home.

This was all my fault. I'd let myself be led down this path. The handsome face of my ex flashed into my mind. My friend, Mabel, called it bland handsome. She'd never liked him and had constantly encouraged me to break up with him. I hadn't seen whatever she'd spotted in him and had ended up barely speaking to her. All I saw was dark hair, a strong jawline, a glint in his eyes. I was a bigger girl. Curvy and tall. When I'd asked what it was he liked about me, he'd always replied, 'There's just something about you'. I thought it was romantic.

I should have known. He was being vague because he didn't actually like me that much. Not who I was or how I looked. He liked that I was going to be easy to manipulate. And that's how I ended up being arrested for having a load of stolen jewellery and drugs in my house.

I hadn't known anything about the drugs that were tucked behind my wardrobe. Or that the jewellery had been stolen at gunpoint. But the cops sure did. A tip-off, apparently. When I grabbed my phone to call Luke in a panic, there was already a

voicemail from him. He was clear on one thing. If I mentioned him or his friends to the cops, there would be trouble. I knew in that moment, from the tone of his voice, that he meant it and he could really hurt me. So I said nothing while I was being questioned. If I spoke, I knew I'd tie myself up in knots. Lies are hard to keep track of. Now I was sitting here, alone.

My stomach roiled, and bile crept up my throat. How had I let myself get caught up in this? I'd known that Luke was a bit of a bad boy. But I'd tried to ignore all the red flags. I'd let him use my storage unit to store 'some old stuff'. Gods knew what he'd had in there. I could only hope that it was valuable enough he'd taken it somewhere else rather than leaving it to screw me over some more if the cops found it.

I lay down on the hard bed. Concrete with barely a mattress. They really had no interest in providing comfort for criminals. The word bounced around my head. I was a criminal now. Legally, if nothing else. This was a small town. Everyone would know. People would have seen the police, and me being taken away. How many people already knew? Did my boss know? Was he already planning to sack me?

My head was so full and busy I barely finished a thought before a new one had taken over. I tried to slow my breathing and stay calm. But it didn't work. There was no escape from the fact that I was in a jail cell. Even with my eyes closed, I could smell the sourness of old body odour and dampness.

I had no one else to call. There was no way I was getting back in touch with my family, and I wasn't sure Mabel would speak to me. I was alone. That hadn't seemed so bad a few days ago.

One thing was for sure. My little life was about to change and it wasn't going to be for the better. Finally, tears crept in and when I let them fall, I wasn't sure they would ever stop.

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Kiy

I stretched out, and the chair beneath me creaked. Several eyes flicked to me, waiting to see if I was going to break another piece of furniture. Gariss would have a fit if I cost him more money, so I returned to my normal sitting position carefully. I wasn't just the biggest in the office, I was the furriest and always too warm. A thermostat war is one thing. But a thermostat war in an office full of temperamental monsters? Well, let's just say it didn't end well for any of us or my desk.

A harrumph across the office distracted me from the paperwork I was half-heartedly trying to complete. Our resident Gargoyle, Eli, was staring at his phone. He'd been doing that a lot recently. I'd normally make a joke. Suggest a woman was involved. Except he was even more grumpy than usual, and I suspected a woman actually was involved. I watched him grumble as his mood darkened even more. Maybe just a little tease would cheer him up?

"Absolutely not. Leave him alone." Gariss walked up to me, seemingly having read my mind.

Eli looked up and scowled. I waved and flashed him a grin. He shook his head and began tapping thick stone fingers on his reinforced phone screen, his face a picture of concentration. I spun on my chair to face Gariss, trying not to react to the loud creak it made. His moose skull face was impassive. I was sure he had emotions. But how could you ever read what they were on a skull?

Gariss dropped a file on my desk.

“Who’s this then?” I picked up the file and moved to open it.

“Someone who needs a bit more gentle support than our usual clientele.”

“I’m gentle support?”

Gariss rubbed his forehead with large fingers. “Yes. You have a personality which some people find... friendly-ish.”

“Boss, that’s the nicest thing you ever said to me!”

“Yes, well, be that as it may, you are also huge and capable of flattening those that deserve it. And I suspect she might also need a bit of that, too.”

I looked at the file. “It’s a bit empty?” There was no backstory in here. Just the basic facts and financials.

“She wouldn’t tell me much. The cops were around and, honestly Kiy, she sounded scared. Not just ‘I’ve been arrested for the first time’, scared. But more. My gut instinct is that she needs someone to look out for her.”

I nodded. Gariss might be an impenetrable old bastard, but he had a heart. And the instincts to know when to use it. I trusted his judgement. “I’ll give her the full Kiy care package!”

“Please don’t. Just be supportive.”

“But the care package comes with soup! And massages!”

“No massaging the clients. It’s inappropriate and we’ve already lost Sable to a woman.”

Sable had found his mate and moved to Graybury to be with her. With Gariss' permission, he'd opened his own branch of Appalachian Bail and Bounties. He called often, and we were happy for him, but I suspected Gariss missed him. He'd been talking about going to Graybury for a trip soon. "When do you need me to go to the cop shop?"

"As soon as possible."

"On it boss." I tucked my phone and taser into my belt and took the most indirect route out of the office so I could pat Eli on the back. He grumbled, but said nothing. I tried to sneak a glance at the phone he was still staring at, but he twisted to cover it.

Once I was out of the building, I stood for a moment, enjoying the cool air. It smelled like snow was coming. Out here the weather could turn from mild and sunny to the whole town being snowed in within hours.

I didn't mind. I'd happily lie in the snow like a husky and enjoy the cold while everyone else hid away. Usually, I ended up ferrying supplies for people and checking on those who lived the farthest out. It made a nice change from chasing criminals.

By the time I reached the prison, I was certain. Snow was coming and maybe with it, a storm. It wasn't close yet. But it had the potential to be a big one. As a cub, I'd lived outside and I'd learned to read the weather as instinctively as I knew how to breathe. I fired off a text to our local mountain rescue to warn them.

A human cop waved me down before I stepped inside.

"You here for the girl?"

"Yep." I didn't know this guy well, but he'd always seemed decent in the past.

“There’s more to the story, but if she won’t talk, we can’t go easy on her.”

I nodded. “I’ll see what I can do.”

Inside, I filled out the paperwork and the officer on duty went to get her. As I waited, a wave of scent flowed through the dark, dank room. The honey scent of snowdrops. For a moment, it felt like the world was spinning faster than it should be. Like it had always been spinning slightly too fast, and I’d only just realised. I couldn’t stay upright. Then she walked in and everything slowed. Everything balanced out, and I’d never been so sure of my footing. I’d never been so sure of myself.

“This is Kiy,” the cop said to her, gesturing towards me.

Why was he standing so close to her? I didn’t like it. My throat tightened to form a growl before I froze in shock at my reaction. I wasn’t normally like this. I’d never been possessive. But I couldn’t stand the thought of anyone being nearer to her than I was.

“Hi.”

Her voice was breathy, like the wind. She looked up at me through her dark eyelashes. Her posture was all scrunched up, like she was trying to make herself as small as possible. I wanted her to stand tall. To take up the space she deserved. To see she was worth the room she occupied. Her eyes were ringed with red and my heart ached to soothe her. The silence was growing uncomfortable now as I realized I’d just been staring at her. All I wanted to do was stare at her. Dark hair fell to her shoulders and light brown eyes darted around the room constantly. I gave myself a mental shake.

“Hi. I’ve signed your paperwork. You are officially on bail on my dime now. So don’t make a run for it, or I’m going to have to hunt you down!” My usual half joke

somehow hit differently this time. Something flickered in her eyes. A small flash of fire. Chasing her didn't seem like that bad of a way to spend my time.

“Thank you.”

“I'll drive you home.”

“You don't have to.”

“I insist.”

She nodded, and I led her to my car. My brain screamed at me to speak. To say anything, but all I could focus on was the feeling of being next to her. Of how right it seemed for her to be there. Of how my whole life outwardly seemed the same as it had been 10 minutes ago. But it wasn't. Everything was different. Including me. And none of it made any sense.

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Fern

The gigantic, hairy monster led me to his car. I walked alongside him, feeling tiny and vulnerable. While I often felt vulnerable, I'd never felt tiny. It was nice.

"Here it is."

I gaped. It had no roof. And not like a convertible. Like he'd just cut the roof off.

"Sorry, it might be drafty." He walked to my door and opened it for me before he climbed in himself.

I could see why he'd needed to get rid of the roof. He was far too tall. But it was a bit ridiculous.

"You know they make cars that don't have roofs."

"Yeah, but this one was a gift. I just needed to adjust it slightly."

"Who gifted you a car?" It was a rude question. Intrusive. Luke had always berated me for asking too many questions. For being too nosy. I was ready to apologise, but he was already answering.

"A friend from the office. He was sick of watching me driving all hunched up because I refused to get a new car. So, when he bought a new one, he gave me this and access to all his tools, to chop it up."

“That’s sweet. He must be a good friend.” I had friends. But not willing to give me a car friends.

“We’re all tight at the office. We need to have each other’s backs. I don’t know what I’d do without them. We’re family.”

A stab of envy ran through me. I pushed it down. My family consisted of parents far too interested in drinking and partying to pay much attention to me. I’d always largely taken care of myself. And often them when they were hungover. I’d run as far away as possible as soon as I turned 18 and never heard from them since.

I stole a glance at the Sasquatch driving me, just in time to see his eyes flicking away from me. Was he judging me? A criminal? I’d only seen kindness in his eyes so far, but maybe he was just good at hiding his thoughts. Was this my life now? Wondering if everyone I met was judging me?

“It’s going to be ok, you know?”

His voice was soft, but still somehow impossibly deep. Tears pricked at my eyes again and I sniffed. I saw the large body next to me tense and pulled my feelings back inside myself. He obviously didn’t want to deal with a sad, crying client.

I glanced back at him. He was so large. Big hands turned the steering wheel, and I thought about how they would wrap around my wrists so easily. I turned away again, embarrassed about where my thoughts had taken me. I hoped the cold wind whipping against my face would cool the blush I was sure was spreading there.

When we arrived at my apartment, Kiy rushed around the car to open my door for me. It felt incredibly sweet, given that he’d just bailed me out of jail. I angled my head up to look him in the eyes. They were hazel, speckled with green. Beautiful. “Thank you for driving me home.”

“My pleasure.”

The intensity of his gaze sent a flush of heat through me. “Would you like to come in for a coffee?” I wanted to be polite, but expected him to say no.

“Yes, thank you.”

Surprised, I took him up and opened the door. I was met by chaos. My chest tightened as I surveyed the wreckage of what had once been my cozy, tidy home. The police had ripped everything apart. Furniture was all over the place. Drawers emptied. A part of my carpet had even been ripped up. I couldn’t speak. A large hand rested gently on my shoulder.

“It’s ok, we’ll sort it together.”

“No, no, it’s fine. It’s not your problem.” I took a deep breath to steady myself. I couldn’t cry again today.

“It’s not, but I want to help. Let me help you.”

I spun to look at him. My heart thudded in my chest as I met those intense eyes that seemed to bore into my soul. He meant it. A flash of pain shot through me. Weak. I was weak, needing help. That’s what I’d always been told by my parents. Grow up and deal with yourself was the constant mantra that I heard. I wouldn’t be weak.

“No. Look, let me make you that coffee.” My voice sounded stronger than I felt.

Kiy’s eyebrows lowered into a frown, but he nodded and followed me into the apartment. As I shuffled around in the kitchen, trying to find where the coffee had ended up, I glimpsed him placing himself politely on the couch that now faced the wall. I grimaced. He must have caught my expression as he laughed, stood and with

terrifying ease, picked up the whole couch and spun it around to face the rest of the room.

I couldn't help but smile as he politely sat again and raised his hands to show he wouldn't do any more. He was trying to respect my wishes. That felt nice. As he sat, once again, I couldn't help but think about how big those hands were. Those fingers. As I handed him his coffee, our hands brushed together briefly, and I could have sworn that we both let that touch linger a bit. I know I did, but it felt like he did too. A little shock of electricity ran up my spine. I didn't dare look him in the face.

I sat in a slightly off angle chair and sipped at the bitter liquid. It was almost too hot to drink, but the burn down my throat grounded me. The silence stretched out, but it wasn't uncomfortable. I was glad to have some company for the moment. Usually, having people around made me anxious. But I felt soothed?. As I looked around the room surveying the mess, a sense of calm ran over me. A feeling that it was going to be ok.

I looked up into the concerned eyes of the monster opposite me and a tingle ran down my spine. It was him. Him being here made it feel better somehow. He cleared his throat and looked awkward for a moment. "I need to ask you something."

My heart sank.

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Kiy

I don't know why, but it felt like the most difficult question I'd ever asked. "Could I take you for breakfast tomorrow?"

Fern blinked, surprise clear on her soft features. "Oh, umm yes. That would be nice."

Relief washed over me. It meant nothing. It was just breakfast. But the fact that even that small step was acceptable to her felt like I'd won a marathon. I watched her again as she sipped her coffee. Her curves were devastating. I thought if I could touch her, then it would bring me to my knees. The thought made my mouth water. Her eyes briefly met my gaze before she looked down at her coffee again.

"So, Fern, is there anywhere you like to go for breakfast around here?"

"Oh, not really. I mean, I never really go out for breakfast." She self-consciously touched her stomach. I wanted to growl, but I bit it back. If anyone had ever made her feel bad about her curves, then I'd rip them apart. Humans had weird ideals that made no sense to me and they could be viscous about them.

"Well then, you deserve it even more. I'll take you to my favorite place. The coffee is bitter, but the pancakes are sweet enough to be from heaven."

"I like pancakes."

"Then we are going to get along very well, Fern."

The blush that crept up her neck nearly made me feral. I hadn't lost control in a long time. And certainly never with lust. But this woman. She had done something to me. I felt like I was turning into the wild animal that humans expected me to be. I had to get out of here and calm down. "Well, I'll pick you up at 10. Until then, I'd better get back to work."

"Okay." She stood politely and took my coffee cup from me. Her finger brushed mine and the moment we touched, she froze. A shiver ran down my spine and our eyes met. The moment of connection was so intense that it felt like a loss when she finally moved away. Her eyes dropped, and the blush tinted her ears now. Little red ears that were begging to be nibbled.

I was going to become a danger to this woman if I didn't leave. I stood and turned for the door, resisting the urge to look back. As I reached for the handle, her scent drifted over me as she followed. I spun to find her standing close. Too close. The growl that I'd been trying to suppress slipped out.

Her eyes widened, but she didn't flinch. Didn't move a muscle other than to let her eyes drop down to my lips. Fuck. I couldn't stop myself. I reached out and grazed a finger down her neck. Her breath hitched slightly. My cock was hard and straining against my pants. But this was more than that. This meant something.

A little whisper of a gasp breezed out of her mouth as my finger found its way to her collarbone. I was teetering on the edge of losing myself. Why wasn't she running away? She shuffled even closer to me. I leaned back, trying to get some distance between us. I hit the door.

Confusion rippled across her features. "I'm sorry, did you not, err...." Her voice petered out.

"No. Yes, I mean yes." My voice was rough with desire. "I just, I'm big and

sometimes forget my own strength, and you are quite small. I don't want to risk being too rough with you." The words fell out of me, they confessed too much. They told her exactly what I was hoping would happen and the vulnerability of that shocked me.

"I don't need gentle."

"Do you know what you're asking for?"

She blinked and looked me up and down, lingering over my bulging trousers. "Honestly, no. I don't know what I'm doing. But I feel safe with you. I don't think I've ever felt that before. That means something, right?" Her eyes were wide now with hope.

"All I want is to keep you safe."

"Why?"

I couldn't answer her. Everything was moving so fast. But the fact that I wasn't already buried deep in her felt like it was moving too slowly. We stared at each other quietly for a long moment. Then her face crumpled, and she stumbled backwards. "I'm so sorry."

"It's ok, Fern. You haven't done anything wrong."

"No, no, I have. What am I doing? You were just doing your job and now I'm throwing myself at you. What must you think?"

I could see the gears spinning out of control in her mind, and I didn't know how to stop them. "I think you are beautiful and perfect. But I also think you're scared of something. I won't barrel into your life and make it more complicated. Not until I

know the full story. I'm not saying you have to tell me now. I can earn your trust with time. But I won't take advantage of what you are going through right now."

"I'm sorry. I always do this. Make a mess of things."

My heart was slowing, and I allowed myself a deep breath. She was still within touching distance, but I was in control now. Holding tight to the raging beast within. I stayed perfectly still. Worried that even a slight movement would stop her from taking the next step and opening up to me. Even a little bit.

"What happened, Fern?"

"My boyfriend, ex-boyfriend.... I shouldn't be telling you this. He's dangerous."

"He's human?"

"Yes."

"Then I'm not worried."

She smiled briefly at that, but her expression quickly turned blank. "Well, thank you for the lift and I guess I'll see you in the morning."

Back to business. Whatever moment had been blossoming between us had been shut down. At least she still seemed ok for breakfast. "Of course. I'll see you tomorrow." I left the apartment, dizzy with confusion.

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Fern

Once he was gone, I collapsed against the door and let myself slide down to the floor.

What the fuck was that?

I'd let myself get caught up in the moment. After everything that had just happened, I'd thrown myself at the first male to show me a bit of attention. I'd been telling the truth, yes, I felt safe with him. But that didn't make any sense, I barely knew him. Something about him was very attractive, but the way I'd behaved was wildly inappropriate. I felt like an alien looking at a version of myself that I didn't recognise. Confused didn't even begin to cover it.

And I'd agreed to go for breakfast with him, so I couldn't even just avoid him forever. I could ask to deal with another bondsman, but that seemed harsh. He hadn't done anything wrong. Heat radiated from my face. It also radiated from between my legs insistently. I'd seen the bulge in his pants. It was inhumanly big. My brain said that should be off-putting. But my body didn't care.

I let my hand wander down under my jeans, popping the buttons open. I was alone now. There was no harm in just imagining what could have happened was there? The feel of his finger on my neck had sent shivers down my spine. Surely, he wouldn't have done that if he hadn't wanted me too? What if I'd encouraged that thick finger to continue its journey?

As I touched myself, I wanted to imagine it was his thick finger, so I used two of mine. He'd implied that whatever could happen between us wouldn't be gentle. So I

wasn't either. I abused my clit like I was angry at it, moans falling out of me with every breath. I pressed hard and when I thought I was going to come, I pulled away and slipped both fingers inside myself.

I pumped hard, trying to imagine it was Kiy, but knowing I could never come close on my own. The thought that I'd been so close to having his fingers inside me instead of my own tipped me over the edge. My body shuddered and twitched as the sensations crescendoed and dipped again.

It was too quick. Too quick and too little. But it would see me though for now.

The next morning, I watched anxiously out of the window, my stomach roiling, until the roofless car trundled along the road. I dashed out, trying to push all the thoughts I'd had of Kiy yesterday. He was my bondsman. I was a criminal in the eyes of the law. I had to make this professional and show him I wasn't a chaotic mess of a human being.

When I arrived at the car, he was standing with the passenger door open for me. I smiled and climbed in, trying to ignore the forest scent of him that enveloped the car. I had been in too much of a mess yesterday to notice it. But the whole car smelled of him in the most calming way.

"How are you feeling, Fern?"

His voice was tentative. That was my fault. I'd made things confusing and not just for him. "I'm good, thank you. You?"

"Good. Hungry."

"Me too."

And I was. Not just for food, but I wouldn't mention that. Although I couldn't help but wonder if he was feeling the same. As we drove, I snuck glances at him. He was wearing a t-shirt with rolled up arms today. They showed off the shape of his biceps, which all the fur did nothing to hide. I'd always been a shoulder and arm girl, so it was hard not to stare.

It was a quiet drive, but I didn't mind. We pulled up at a classic 50s style diner and he ran around to open the door for me again. I wasn't sure if anyone but him had ever held a car door open for me. Probably not.

I took a moment to look over the menu inside, but I knew since he had mentioned pancakes yesterday exactly what I was going to order. When they arrived, the stack was dripping in maple syrup and taller than I'd realized they would be. A snicker across the table told me that Kiy had caught my wide eyes.

"More than you thought?"

"Yeah, just a bit."

"Don't worry, I'll help you if you can't manage it all."

Something in his voice felt like a sliver of velvet. An innuendo. And I blushed. Another snicker, but I didn't dare look at him until my face finally cooled. What was this monster doing to me?

I had my best go at eating all the pancakes. They were delicious. But I couldn't manage it. Looking around at the fellow customers, there were very few humans. I suspected I'd been given a monster sized portion. The waitress topped up my coffee, and I gulped some down to wash away a bit of the sweetness left in my mouth.

"Are you sure you're done?"

“Yes absolutely! Go ahead.”

Kiy pulled my plate across the table and dived in. He’d finished his in what felt like seconds. The rest of mine went down just as quickly. He leaned back and patted his stomach. His legs stretched out, and I felt a leg graze past one of mine. A jolt of electricity shot up my body, but I didn’t move away. The leg stayed there, and kind eyes met mine. I didn’t look away.

“Talk to me, Fern.” His voice was soft. And for some reason, I opened my mouth, and the story came tumbling out.

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Kiy

“I wasn’t really looking for a relationship. But Luke was persistent. I thought, he must genuinely like me. And if a man is willing to make that much effort to get a date with me, then he would be the sort of person who would always be willing to make an effort.”

I watched her mouth twist as she pushed down whatever emotions she was feeling.

“Well, it was good at first. He was very clear he didn’t want a relationship with someone who questioned what he was doing or made him feel bad for spending time with his friends. And that made sense. He said he’d had controlling girlfriends in the past and he didn’t want that again.”

I nodded. I could already see how this man had laid the groundwork. How he’d used things that sounded reasonable to push her to never question him.

“So, I didn’t ask. Until things got weird and he was getting money despite not working. Then he berated me for being controlling. It went on like that until I guess I became convinced that he was right, and I was just looking for problems.”

My heart was aching, and rage was burning deep inside me. A rage that I didn’t think would fade until I got my hands around Luke's neck.

“Then he fell out with a friend. Business gone wrong somehow. That friend sent me pictures of Luke with another woman. It was like a lightbulb in my head. Everything suddenly was crystal clear. He was a dick, and I was being a doormat. So, I ended it.

He didn't take it well."

I tensed. "Did he hurt you?"

"Not physically. But when I refused to give him a second chance, apparently, he broke into my apartment and left some stolen jewellery and drugs there. Then tipped off the police."

"Why didn't you tell them the truth?"

"He left a voicemail letting me know he could get to me. He has a gang of big, violent friends and it was in my best interests not to mention his name. I just had to take the 'punishment', as he called it.

She talked a bit more, filling in details she'd missed or things that only made sense now. I watched the most perfect woman I'd ever seen, trying to hold herself together as she described being taken advantage of by a scumbag. How I held myself together, I'll never know. And through it all, she seemed embarrassed. Not angry as she should have been. Or proud of having realized what he was and dumping his ass. Embarrassed. As though she thought it was her fault somehow.

"I suppose I thought I loved him. I didn't dare stop to look at the inconsistencies in what he was saying. I was dumb."

"Wanting to see the best in people isn't dumb. Giving them chances isn't dumb. It's risky and brave."

"Whatever it is, it backfired, didn't it?"

"Yes. But one day it won't. One day, someone will take that pure trust and cherish it, I promise." I didn't dare tell her that if she ever gave that sort of trust to me, I would

work hard to be deserving of it every day of my life. I didn't tell her I ached for her to give me that, and if she didn't, I thought I might carry that ache for the rest of my days.

"I'd like to believe you are right." Her eyes shone with unshed tears.

I reached across the table and took her small hand in mine, squeezing it gently. She stared at my hand for a few moments and then seemed to snap out of wherever her head had gone. Then she squeezed back tightly. Tight enough that it might have hurt a human.

"You don't have to be frightened of him. Not with me around, Fern."

"You don't know what he's capable of."

"You don't know what I'm capable of."

Surprised registered on her face, but once again she didn't flinch away from me. Did she really not understand how strong she was? I felt that maybe, for the first time, I wouldn't have to hold back with someone. Perhaps I wouldn't be too much.

"Fern, will you let me help you?"

She nodded mutely. It felt like I'd broken through a wall. An important one. But it was clear she didn't know where to go from here. She wasn't used to accepting help. I'd seen that much in her apartment yesterday.

"Did you tidy your place up yet?"

"No." Her voice was small. This was hard for her.

“Then let’s go back and get that sorted first.” It wasn’t an excuse to get her alone. It seemed like the best place to start. Getting her alone was just a bonus. I reluctantly released her hand and our fingers grazed each other as I pulled away. It sent a tingle straight down to my dick. I tried to ignore it. I had to be in my head and my heart right now. Anything else was for later.

I stood and gestured for her to go in front of me. I left money for breakfast before she got the chance to rummage in her bag. She murmured a thank you and gave me a lopsided little smile that made me want to melt into a puddle right there.

As we drove back to her apartment, I put the radio on and caught glances of her shyly swaying to the beat of whatever the song was. My heart soared. Pure contentment washed over me. Something clicked in my head and broke through the confusion about what was going on. I loved her. It hadn’t even been a day, but I loved her. And I would do anything for her.

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Fern

For possibly the first time in my life, I let someone help me with nothing to give them in return. Kiy didn't seem like the type to expect anything back, anyway. Although I hoped he wanted what I wanted.

Breakfast had been cozy and calm. A moment of peace and contentment in the mess that my life had become. There were no dramas. No passive aggressive snipes. Just two people quietly enjoying each other's company. It was strange. But I liked it.

Kiy got straight to work on putting the furniture back in place and sorting out the rugs. The police had even prised up a couple of floorboards, which he knocked back down easily. I gathered up the clutter that had been emptied from drawers into boxes for sorting later. It would take hours, and I wasn't sure I could face it yet.

"Should I, err...?"

I looked up to see Kiy standing in the doorway to my bedroom. "Oh yes, go ahead."

He walked in and then walked immediately back out.

"Maybe you should... well... sort your stuff out in there first, Fern."

I looked up from my box and could have sworn that there was something like a blush under the fur on his face. Then I remembered with horror. The police had emptied my bedside tables and left everything on the dresser. Everything. Including a vibrator. The only one I'd kept after Luke had shamed me for having sex toys, saying it was an

insult to him.

I felt myself flush and ran into the bedroom. I grabbed the toy and looked around wildly for somewhere to hide it. Suddenly Kiy was there at the door again, watching me intently. I shoved the vibrator with its little rabbit ears behind my back. Which was stupid because he'd clearly already seen it.

We locked eyes and my heart thudded in my chest like it was trying to escape. Was he judging me? I tried to think of excuses as to why I had it.

“Fern, you don’t need to be embarrassed.”

“I’m not! I just, well, it’s not like I use it.”

He quirked an eyebrow at me. “Why not?”

I scrambled around in my brain but couldn’t find an answer before he continued.

“Did Luke make you feel bad for that, too?”

My eyes hit the floor, but I heard him growl.

“There’s nothing wrong with enjoying yourself, Fern. With having pleasure.”

His words sent a thrill of excitement through me, but I still couldn’t bring myself to speak. I looked up and was met by the sight of his excitement. A huge bulge in his pants. Did he like this?

“Do you enjoy yourself when you use that?” His voice was gruff, and it would have given away his arousal if his dick hadn’t already done that.

“Yes.” It was all I could manage.

“Show me.”

I was suddenly red hot. Embarrassment, lust, and fear all warred within me. But the winning emotion was excitement. Followed quickly by shame for feeling that.

“You want to watch me? Use this?”

“Yes.”

“How?”

“Take your panties off and get on the bed.”

The slight sternness in his voice made me wet. I’d never done anything like this before. But I wanted to obey him. I wanted to do as I was told. To act and not have to think. I placed the vibrator behind me on the bed and pulled my panties down under my dress, discarding them to one side. His eyes never left me. I climbed on the bed onto my knees. “Like this?”

“Perfect. Now take your toy and show me what you like.”

The intensity of his gaze was the biggest turn on I’d ever experienced. I wanted to show him. For him to watch me in my most vulnerable moment. I switched on the purple vibrator and pushed it under my dress. “Do you want me to undress?”

“Only when you are ready for me to see all of you. For now, your face is enough.”

I pressed the vibe against my clit, and it immediately wasn’t enough. I ramped up the power and let a moan out as it sent warmth and need up through my body. Watching

him the whole time, I rocked against it.

Until then, I'd had no idea that eye contact could be so sexy. I lifted up and positioned myself above the vibrator, exaggerating the movement so he knew exactly what I was doing. Then I slid down onto it, gasping as it first entered me and then again when it was all the way in.

A groan slipped out of Kiy, and his head lolled back slightly. "Is that big enough for you, baby?"

I glanced down at the bulge in his pants. He was definitely bigger than this. "No. It's not enough." I was sure he understood my meaning. I wanted him.

"Fuck yourself for me, baby."

I just about lost it at that. As much as I wanted him, I found I was enjoying performing for him and I nearly came on the spot. I took a moment to pull myself together and then began bouncing up and down on the vibrator. Slowly at first, then faster. Then harder, grinding my clit against the long vibrating ears.

Kiy undid his pants and showed me what I'd been wondering about. A huge thickly ridged cock sprang out, and he quickly wrapped a large hand around it. As I drove myself towards a climax on my toy, he pleased himself to the sight of me. It was the hottest experience in my life. I felt like I was on fire. I came hard. My whole-body convulsing with the waves of heat. And when his name left my lips, he grunted and moaned.

"Lie down, baby."

I rolled backwards, still warm and panting from my climax. The vibrator was now too intense, and I turned it off and flung it to the side. He moved to stand over me and

positioned his cock at my now exposed entrance. This close to me, it was huge. I didn't think it would fit.

"Don't worry, not yet. We'll get you there."

Despite my fear, the thought that it wasn't going to happen right now ignited longing in me again. Without thinking, I reached down and rubbed at my clit. I felt like an animal built on nothing but instinct.

"Fuck baby, yes. Keep touching yourself for me."

I rubbed harder and harder. Once again abusing my clit.

"Oh, you like it hard and rough? Good."

"Yes. Yes, I want you." This was a new part of me. Bold and needy all at the same time.

Kiy's hand sped up and with a wicked growl he came, spurting over my clit and onto my entrance. The added lubrication made my fingers slippery, and I pressed harder, coming soon after him with a cry. My body jerked and arched through the waves of pleasure as the tension rocked me and then subsided.

"That's it baby, ride it out. There you go."

I eventually slumped down on the bed, too exhausted and happy to feel any shame about what I'd just done. Kiy had enjoyed it and that was all I cared about.

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Kiy

A part of me wanted to let her fall asleep. She looked like an angel. A slightly ruffled angel with her dress up around her waist. My dirty little angel. But I wouldn't let her fall asleep before I had cleaned her up. I fetched tissues and ran a cloth under warm water. I set about cleaning where my cum lingered on her skin. She watched me, heavy eyed, and then began to breathe more heavily when I rubbed the rough flannel over her. Her cheeks flushed pink the way they had when she was riding her toy.

I took the flannel away when I was sure she was clean and ran my finger gently over her clit. She gasped and my cock twitched at finally getting to touch her. I could feel the warmth of the blood rushing to my groin and wondered at this perfect creature who could get me hard again so quickly.

“Please.”

Her voice was like a whisper on the wind, and I couldn't refuse her. I took a thick finger and slid it down to her opening. She ground against it like a needy little creature. I pushed inside her and watched her twitch before pulling it back out. I gazed intently at her as I put my finger in her mouth and sucked her juices off it. She tasted of honey and lust.

Her moan as I sucked was enough to make my composure fray at the edges. I pushed the finger back in and then pulled out to add a second. My two fingers were bigger than her toy had been, so I pushed slowly, easing in. She stretched beautifully for me, panting and moaning with each inch. Once they were fully inside her, I bent them slightly upwards and pulled out. I could tell when I hit the exact spot inside that

would drive her insane as she twitched.

I set a slow pace and tried to ignore the desperate need in my cock. I felt like every muscle in my body was tensed and desperate, but I had to work her up to taking me, and the thought of accidentally hurting her held me together. The only thing she should ever experience from me was pleasure and joy.

“More please.”

Her plea lodged in my brain as my new favorite sound. I sped up and listened to her moans speed up, too. I wanted her wrapped around me so badly. It wasn't long before she came again, clenching around my fingers. That was going to feel so good around my cock. Her face tensed and then relaxed as her whole body seemed to melt into the bed.

“Was that nice, my sweet?”

“Yes.”

I pulled my fingers out of her and licked them clean while she watched. I climbed over her and kissed her. The moment our lips connected; the realization hit me. This was our first kiss. Her tongue flicked against my lips, so I let her in. We danced together like this for a while. Finding our own rhythm and then relaxing into it. There was no hurry, nothing to aim for. Just kissing for the sake of kissing.

When we pulled apart, I lay down and tucked her in next to me. She curled up and her head found my shoulder. Tentatively, she draped an arm across my hairy torso. I wrapped her hand in mine and listened as her breathing got slower and deeper. At some point, her body completely relaxed, and I knew she was asleep. I lay as still as I could, wondering at the feel of her against me. Had anything in my life ever been this perfect? It was like I'd found a missing puzzle piece. I should have been heading into

work. But this was more important. I'd take whatever tongue-lashing Gariss gave me. It was worth it. Anyway, he'd wanted me to figure out what was going on and I had. Now I just needed to persuade her to tell the truth. She was looking at jail time if she didn't tell the truth. I wouldn't stand by and let my mate end up in prison for years.

My mate. Was that the first time that I had truly realized what she was? I'd never allowed myself to wonder if there was a mate out there for me. And now here she was. More wonderful than I could have ever imagined, anyway. I wanted to sleep. To allow myself the comfort of falling asleep with my mate. But I couldn't. She was scared of this Luke guy. Although I was certain that I could handle him, it didn't pay to be too cocky. I had to get back to the office, find out more about him, and put him right in the path of law enforcement. Maybe I'd give him a few kicks myself along the way.

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Fern

When Kiy gently rolled me over and tucked me into bed, I barely registered it.

“Got to go and work, sweetheart. Rest for me.” I nodded and fell back asleep before I even heard the door close. I don’t know how long I slept. But I woke up feeling refreshed. I felt the cold space next to me in the bed like a sting. I wished Kiy was there. All I wanted was to wrap my body around him and snuggle. It wasn’t just the bed that was empty, I felt like a part of me was missing. As though some corner of my heart had left with him.

I turned over and my eyes latched onto a ring on the side table. My whole body went icy. It was Luke’s ring. It hadn’t been here this morning, I was certain of it. He’d been here when I was out for breakfast. He must have been watching the house and waited until I left to put it there. I’d been so caught up in Kiy I hadn’t seen it when we got back. I knew deep in my bones it was a warning. A little reminder that he could get to me at any time. I wasn’t safe here. I would never be safe here.

Panic settled in like an unwelcome old friend. He would have seen me with Kiy. I knew that he’d put the pieces together and figure out who he was. If he’d hung around and seen us arrive back, he might even realize that there was something between us. My chest tightened so much I could barely breathe. I gasped down air and wished I could somehow grab my heart and stop it from thundering.

A close inspection confirmed it was definitely his. The one he’d said he’d give to me one day when he was ready to make me an important promise. At the time, I thought it was sweet. Heartwarming. Now I realized he’d meant something else entirely.

Another example of his playing with me. He'd been playing with me the whole time. Double layers to every word he said.

I rushed to the toilet just in time to vomit into the bowl. My throat burned, and I gasped for breath. I couldn't stay here. He would always be in the background. Lurking. Watching. Threatening. Even if I kept my mouth shut, would I be safe? Would he blackmail me into doing more for him? Taking the blame for even more? Would he hurt Kiy? The thought of that was the one that was the most unacceptable to me.

My mind spun around and around until I nearly felt physically dizzy from it. As I stood my legs shook and I almost slipped back down onto the tiled floor. But I made it up and ran into my bedroom. I had a large hiking backpack, and I stuffed it with clothes and the few belongings I had that I felt like I couldn't do without. Gifts from friends. One photograph of my parents that I kept despite everything.

I allowed myself one look around my apartment. The place that had been safe and cozy and now had been ruined by Luke. Then I swallowed down my emotions and forced myself to leave. Everything after this point had to be calculated. Calm.

First stop was the bank. I withdrew a large chunk of cash. Pretty much everything I had in savings. I knew if I used my card, I'd be traced. I had to be invisible.

Carrying around a load of money added another element of anxiety to what I was doing. I thought I was going to suffocate as I climbed into my car. The air felt too thick and my throat too tight. I needed it to get some distance from the town quickly. But it was also easy to track someone travelling by car. There were cameras everywhere.

There was only one option. I would have to dump my car and hike through the mountains. I'd dye my hair. Ditch everything about my identity and emerge

somewhere else as a new person.

Part of my brain screamed that it was ridiculous to run away. A small part that I stamped down on. Running away had worked with my parents. Why couldn't it work now? I could probably make it up to the border in a couple of days. It was wild up there now. But I'd be free.

My mind briefly flashed back to Kiy. The large monster that brought up feelings in me I'd never had before. Who I'd thought could maybe mean something to me. I wouldn't drag him down with me. I couldn't subject someone else to the trouble I was in. He had a job. Friends. A life. I wasn't worth the drama.

Still, the thought of disappointing him made my heart ache like nothing else ever had. His face when he realized what I'd done. That I'd skipped out on bail. Screwed his boss out of money. Would he hate me? Could he ever forgive me for that? Would he see it as just another loss of the business he worked for, or would he see me as someone who'd betrayed him personally? It didn't really matter. If he was safe from Luke and his gang, then that was all that mattered. I could live with him hating me. Maybe.

My resolve hardened as I drove out of town. I wasn't sure exactly where I was going. I could check maps later. Make plans when I stopped to rest. For now, I just had to get going before anyone realized I was gone.

I looked at the clock. It was still early afternoon. Kiy would be working for hours yet. I knew deep down in my heart that he would follow me. I had to become impossible to find. Light snowfall began to drift down around me. It was pretty. I loved looking out the window on snowy days. Staying warm while white coated everything. But now, it just made me drive faster. I couldn't afford to get snowed in. Not now. I pushed the car as hard as I dared, my eyes darting to the mountains in the distance. To my escape. As I drove the empty corner of my heart seemed to grow bigger and

bigger.

Kiy

I drove my car to the nearby forest before. I needed space to breathe before I could contemplate the office. To process what I'd realized about her. She was my mate. To get cool air in my lungs. Once I was there, I walked for a while. Every single second, the image of her was in my mind. Like a beautiful torture. The memory of her coming around my fingers. I was hard again already. Once I was in a secluded spot, I unzipped my trousers and let my cock spring out. I let myself lean back against a tree and began stroking myself.

I started slowly and let the thought of her mouth tease me. Those plump lips that formed a little pout at every moment. I imagined how they would stretch around me. The warmth of her mouth, easing up and down. I nearly came there and then, and I'd barely gotten started. My hips rocked as I imagined fucking her mouth. Hitting the back of her throat. Could she take all of me? I hoped she'd try. My hand sped up, and I let myself think about sliding inside her. Feeling her part for me. Of hearing her little noises again. When I fucked her, would they get louder and more feral? I came with a jolt and spilled myself into the grass. Not where I wanted it to go. I wanted to fill her up with me.

Once my breathing had calmed, I zipped back up and gave myself a mental shake. I had to go to the office and report in. I dragged myself back to my car, thinking the least sexy thoughts I could.

Donkeys. Rocks. Mud. Fern covered in mud.... No. Washing dishes. Fern all wet.

I gave myself a hard punch in the dick. Pain shot through me, crunching me forward

at the waist. It helped. A bit. I just had to make it through the rest of my workday.

I couldn't help driving back past her apartment. There was no sign of her, but why would there be? She wasn't likely to be standing at the windows the exact moment I went past. I still itched to help her. To ravish her. But I had to think about this Luke guy first.

When I arrived back at the office, one look at Gariss's scowling face poured cold water on the remnants of my desire.

"Where the fuck have you been all day and when are you making up the hours?"

I sighed. He was in one of those moods. "Sorry boss. I'll make them up later in the week. I just needed a bit of a walk."

His skull angled to the side, and he looked me up and down. I winced under his scrutiny.

"What is it, boss?"

"I knew you were going to make this complicated." He turned and stalked off, body tense and his feet impacting the floor just a little harder than they normally would. I'd pissed him off. How did he even know?

I sat at my desk and pushed the thoughts to one side. It didn't matter. All that mattered was keeping my mate safe. I'd even brave Gariss' moods for that. My big fingers tapped at my oversized keyboard as I pulled up all the information I could find on Luke. I didn't know his surname, but he wasn't hard to find. This town wasn't huge, and I knew he'd already have a record. I wasn't technically supposed to be poking around in the police records like this, but we'd all taken liberties from time to time.

Luke, of course, had been arrested several times across different states. Drug dealing. Theft. Aggravated assault. Assault. Assault. On and on with the assaults. He was violent, and I wondered with a building rage if he'd ever laid a finger on Fern. If he had, I'd rip it off. I'd rip every finger off and then his dick for good measure.

After a few hours of digging, I could see exactly what had happened. He was out of chances. One more arrest and he'd be in for a long time. His known associates list was even more annoying. Two other women who had been his girlfriends in the past now had records. All for the same drugs and theft stuff. They'd never mentioned his name. Refused to talk about any of it, other than to plead guilty.

Every time the police had been sniffing around him for something, suddenly a tip off led them to a woman instead. He'd lined Fern up for this. It wasn't just about pettiness because she'd dumped him. This was his plan for her all along if things got too much.

I typed up a quick brief and emailed it to Gariss. He'd want to know what I'd found. But he didn't check his emails often, and I didn't want to give him a chance to lecture me on doing something stupid. Not before I'd done the something stupid. Which in this case involved going around to have a chat with Luke.

I found him at a local bar. His uncle owned it and the local police records said that they usually found him there. He clocked me the moment I walked in and smirked. He knew who I was. I'd thought I might catch him off guard. But he walked straight over and held out a hand. I glanced at it and then ignored it.

"Be like that if you like. I don't know what she's said to you, but it's all lies."

"I'm not sure who or what you are talking about."

"Bro, don't be like that. Us guys gotta stick together. I bet she's already got you

wrapped around her little finger with that doe-eyed innocent schtick. She's manipulative."

I glanced around as he talked. 5 guys were paying attention too closely to be casual observers. I looked back at Luke.

"So, this is your game? Charm? Lying? Seeding doubt? Well, I have a game too."

"Oh yeah, what's that?"

His smirk aggravated me. I thought of Fern. He'd set out to use and destroy my mate. I pulled my arm back and swung right into his gut.

Fern

The red dye hadn't made as much difference to my hair as I'd hoped. But bleaching it in the bathroom of a diner would have been ridiculous. And I'd gotten enough weird looks as it was. I pulled the hood of my cardigan back over my head and scuttled back out of the diner and into my car. Hopefully, the cameras in there wouldn't pick up the change. It had been a few hours, and I'd gunned it as fast as I dared the whole time. Another hour and I'd be at a good stopping point to abandon the car according to the map I'd pulled up on my phone.

Once I got there, the snow began again. I'd hoped I could outrun it. I needed to move fast. To keep warm, if nothing else. I wrapped my large scarf around my neck and hoped that the completely inadequate coat I was wearing would somehow help. I dropped the car keys into the open window and wondered if I should leave a note. To let Kiy know I was ok and not to come looking for me.

No. I'd come this far trying not to be tracked. The time for leaving notes was long gone. A man leant against his car talking into his phone. Had I seen him at the diner? No, I was being paranoid. I didn't recognise him. The stress was getting to me.

I waited until the man was facing away from me and headed for the mountain trail. It led all the way up north. I knew little about the north other than it was a wilderness now. Full of monsters with nowhere else to go. That didn't scare me as much as the thought of Kiy getting dragged into my mess any more than he already had been.

My hand instinctively reached for my phone, and I pulled out the chunky burner I'd bought. I'd dropped mine out of the car window the moment I left town. The trail

map seemed pretty easy to follow. Just don't wander off the path. I tucked the phone away and picked up speed. Once I felt a bit more confident, I'd switch it off to save the battery. But for now, I left it on. A safety blanket.

I wondered if Kiy knew I was gone by now. I wondered if Luke knew. Would he try to hunt me down? Or would he accept that I wasn't going to be a problem and leave me alone? I had no way of knowing, and I hated that. I knew the uncertainty would eat away at me for a long time. All I could hope was that he would leave Kiy alone.

As I walked, my thoughts kept flitting back to him. To the feel of his fingers inside me. The intense connection I felt with him. The lazy kissing that felt like bliss as his warm body pressed against mine. Snow drifted down harder now, but the thoughts of him kept me warm.

My core heated as I let my mind wander to all the things we might have done together. I wasn't sure if letting myself daydream was a good idea. Maybe it would be easier on myself if I pushed him out of my head. Never thought of him again. But I just didn't think I could do that. As painful as it was to never see him again, I couldn't remove what he meant to me, and I didn't want to. I could only hope that I would find comfort in the thoughts of him. Of building a delusion in my head, of us reuniting and being together again.

I had to keep moving, but the friction of my tight jeans as I walked quickly in combination with my filthy thoughts was causing a distraction. These were the wrong pants for this escape for so many reasons, and this was just making it worse. But I didn't stop. If anything, I pressed my legs together more as I walked, tensing my thighs occasionally. It wasn't enough to bring me to an orgasm. I was just teasing myself relentlessly. It was ridiculous, but the distraction stopped me from thinking too much about what I was doing.

When my legs were aching, and the dark drew in, I finally stopped walking. I moved

slightly off the trail to a patch of grass and pulled out the small one person tent I'd optimistically bought years ago and then never used. I'd never even tested it. Luckily, I figured it out quickly and crawled inside. I stayed dressed and even kept my coat on, wrapping a blanket around me.

My mind instantly drifted back to Kiy. The feel of him touching me. How right it had been. How hot. Once again, I warred with myself. The same argument that I suspected I'd be having a lot. Should I try to forget him? No, I couldn't.

I reached down and touched myself. Reasoning that at least it would keep me warm. I remembered how hot it had felt to have him watching me. See him getting hard for me. To feel his fingers inside me. It didn't take long to come, so I kept going. After a few orgasms, I still wasn't sated. But I was tired.

I curled up as best as I could and finally let my mind do what it had wanted to all along. Imagine what a future with me and Kiy together could have been like. It made my chest ache, but I wanted to at least experience it in my head, even if I could never have it in real life.

Kiy

With the first impact of my fist into Luke's gut, he flew backwards across the room. A feeling of shock hit me. I hadn't meant to hit him quite that hard, he was human after all. But I didn't feel bad about it. He'd bad mouthed my mate to my face.

As expected, the 5 guys who I'd clocked as being his friends all rushed at me. Fists pounded into me from various angles. I stood and took it for a few moments before I let out a deep, guttural laugh. Yes, it hurt a bit, but I wasn't going to let them see that.

They exchanged glances and backed up. The biggest kicked out at my knee. It was a good tactic. I stumbled but didn't go down and it certainly didn't break anything. Luke was somehow pulling himself back up now. Maybe I should have hit him harder.

For a moment, I thought they were backing off as they ran to the bar. But the bartender handed over some nasty-looking bats. Some metal, one wood with nails driven into them. Getting hit with these would be harder to ignore. Proving they weren't as stupid as I'd have liked, they all came at me at the same time. I managed to reach out and grab a metal bat as it swung down towards my head. I yanked it out of the man's hands and threw it back at the bartender as a thank you present. He ducked, and it smashed into the rows of bottles behind him, sending alcohol splattering everywhere.

Impacts across my torso and legs knocked me off balance, but not enough to take me down. There was a sting where the nails from the wooden bat had driven into the thick flesh across my side. I kicked out at the now unarmed man, sending him flying

back straight into Luke. The two of them tumbling down to the ground in a pile.

As more blows pummelled into me, I swung out my long, thick arms and sent 3 more men to the ground. One stamp on the knee of one sent him howling and scrambling away from me. There might be some permanent damage, but he'd kicked me in the knee first, so it seemed fair.

I let out a deep roar that shook the windows, and any remaining patrons of the bar and the bartender all fled. I was a monster, and they knew it. The men who had attacked me were looking wary now. I felt blood dripping down my fur from the multiple puncture wounds. But it wasn't enough to stop me.

I looked directly at Luke, whose eyes were wide now. I flashed him a wicked grin. He turned and ran.

"Not so fast!" I yelled, before giving chase. He wasn't going to get away. I wasn't done with him yet. I followed him out of the bar and watched him stumble down the street. He was hunched over, his stomach obviously still hurting. He was moving fast, terror propelling him forward. I'm a big monster, but I have strong legs. I powered after him. Eating into the distance between us within seconds.

I threw myself through the air, rolling to the side as I grabbed him so I wouldn't squash him to death. We hit the sidewalk with a thud, and I heard him groan with pain. Good. We had an audience now. Which included a police car. Luckily, the officers that got out were ones I knew well, so they didn't rush at me. I stood, pulling Luke up by his t-shirt.

"What's going on, Kiy?" Officer Park waved at Luke.

"Luke here would like to make a confession."

Officer Park raised an eyebrow. I let go of Luke, and he slid back down to the ground with a grunt.

“Is that true, Luke?”

Luke looked at me. I snarled back.

“Yeah, yeah, I would like to make a confession.” He glanced at me. “You’re too late, though. She’s already gone.”

My stomach lurched. “Gone?”

“She fled town earlier. After you left. Guess whatever you were doing in there wasn’t that good.”

His barb didn’t even make a dent. She had left town. Because of this man. I felt all the fur across my body stand up.

“Kiy, pal,” Officer Park held up his hand. “Don’t do anything silly.”

Ripping his head off didn’t feel silly right now. It felt like the least he deserved. But I reigned in the growing heat that threatened to consume me. “Where did she go?”

Luke flinched when I spoke, before trying to look cool again. “My guy last tracked her to Flint’s Diner at the Montrene trailhead.”

I turned and walked away before I completely lost it. A few flakes of snow fell as I stormed to my car.

“Kiy?”

“I’ll send you everything I have and give a statement later,” I shouted behind me. There wasn't time to deal with this. I had to trust that I’d made my point to Luke about what I was capable of and willing to do if he didn’t confess. The only thing that mattered now was finding my mate. Before she got herself into deeper trouble than simply being arrested.

I jumped in the car and drove straight to Flint’s. I didn’t know exactly how far behind her I was. But if the weather was turning, and she was out on the trail, I had to catch up to her quickly. There was no time to spare, and the sky was already getting dark.

Fern

By the time morning arrived, I couldn't stop shivering. Packing up the tent and my belongings took far longer than it should have, but I got it all stuffed into my bag eventually. I pulled out the small burner phone and switched it on as I started walking. Snow was falling heavily now. Already a few inches thick, and the wind was picking up. I had to move quickly and generate some heat.

The phone beeped, and I saw a notification for a new message. I froze. No one had this number. It was a burner. I clicked into it.

Keep running little bird. That monster is trailing you and he's mad you skipped bail. If he catches you and brings you back, I'll have to deal with you both.

The message hit me like a kick to the stomach. Luke and his friends were the only people who called me little bird. And Kiy was coming after me? Was he really angry with me? I'd skipped bail. Left without saying goodbye and probably cost his boss a lot of money. It was his job to come after me. I couldn't imagine him being mad at me. But did I really know him?

None of that mattered. I couldn't let him be hurt by Luke. Even if he hated me now. I pushed forwards, tears pricking at my eyes. I had to keep moving as quickly as possible. My bag was too heavy to run. My shoulders and back ached, and I was still shivering. The faster I moved, the warmer I'd be, though.

I managed a brisk pace at first and even felt warm for a while. But the snow fell heavier and heavier and the wind began lashing against my face. Stinging like a

dozen bitter little slaps with each gust. It slowed me down more and more. Soon the snow was halfway up my calves. My legs hurt more now as I had to take huge, high steps.

That sense of pulling in my chest tightened slightly. Like the hole that had been there was filling back up. Kiy. I knew it meant he wasn't that far away. How had he caught up to me so quickly? He was big; I supposed it made sense that he could cover a lot of ground quickly. There was no way to hide my tracks, either. The surrounding snow was pristine, and in this weather, I was probably the only person walking this trail for miles.

Adrenaline spiked inside me, and I found fresh energy to move. I had to get away. But he'd catch me on the trail. Without thinking it through, I swerved into the trees. Doing the one thing you should never do. Leave the trail. I kept going until the trees were so dense that there was barely any snow.

It was a ridiculous idea, but my brain was roiling with fog and panic. I couldn't let him catch me. I couldn't let him get dragged into this. And my stomach sank as I realized that I also wasn't sure I could face him if he hated me now. If that affection in his eyes had changed to disdain.

Tears fell from my eyes as the bond between us tightened again. I didn't know why I could sense him like this, but it sent a shot of adrenaline through me. I pushed again and? started to run. I hadn't run in years, and my lungs immediately felt like they were burning. Every sound made me jump. Was it him? What would he do when he caught me? A vision ran through my mind of him grabbing me and throwing me to the ground. It made me feel strangely turned on. Now definitely wasn't the time for that.

The thought kept pushing itself into my head. Him grabbing me. Pushing me into the mud. Taking me angrily. Wetness spilled into my panties and heat flushed through

my body. I imagined his hands grabbing my waist and my skin tingled as though he were really touching me. Something in the strange bond between us changed. It snapped quickly back into place. He was here. Moments later, I heard branches breaking behind me and the thud of large footprints. I stopped and turned. Maybe I could hide. I spotted a large shrub and moved behind it. It wasn't enough.

More crashing and thudding. I pulled at the shrub and tried to climb inside it. The branches scratched me, but I forced myself into the middle of it. Within moments the heat I'd generated from running began to leave me and cold nipped at my hands. I slowed my breathing and closed my eyes. I had to be quiet now and hope he couldn't find me. Hope that I hadn't dragged him too deep into my mess.

Source Creation Date: July 26, 2025, 2:57 pm

Kiy

Following her had been easy. I was raised in the forests, and I'd honed my tracking skills over years of working as a bounty hunter. I'd tracked far stealthier humans than Fern. Even with the snowfall covering her steps, there were signs everywhere.

But after a few hours of loping along, I realised she had left the trail. What was she thinking? I felt along our bond. She wasn't that far now. I could find her and get us back safely. Although the snow was a problem. But everyone knew not to leave a trail. It was too easy to end up wandering in circles or not be going in as straight a line as you thought you were. She must have been panicking.

I turned off the trail and followed her path, the scent of her filling my nostrils as I got closer and closer to her. I rehearsed all the things I was going to say to her. How she was safe now. She never had to run. I'd dealt with Luke, and I would take care of her. The charges against her would be dropped. We'd live our life together. I jogged along now. I had to let her know it would be ok.

My cock twitched before I even consciously recognised it. A slight whiff of arousal in her scent. I kept moving. The bond between us tensed. I was getting closer to her, and she could probably feel it. Was that making her aroused? I sped up. The scent of her desire got stronger and stronger. But after a few minutes I still hadn't caught her.

If she was that keen to see me, wouldn't she have stopped to wait for me? Why was she still running? I imagined catching up to her. Chasing her down. My cock was rock hard at the image. Was this why she was aroused? The thought of me chasing her down?

The realization made my whole-body tingle with need. Any part of my brain that was sensible or coherent shut down. I was like a wild animal, running as fast as I could with one focus. I wasn't just a monster; I was a predator now. Fern was my prey, and I would have her.

My senses honed in on her scent. Her arousal was only getting stronger. And then it intensified in one area and didn't go anywhere else. I skidded to a halt and looked at the surrounding forest. She was here somewhere. A part of my brain tried to access all that tracking knowledge. To look for visual signs, but my animal brain had overwhelmed that part of me.

I inhaled deeply. She was slightly to the left of me. There was nothing but a shrub there. A shrub between me and my mate. I grabbed at it and began ripping branches away from it like a feral beast, only stopping when a squeal of shock rang out.

"Fern?" My voice ground out, thick with need. Silence. I pulled at the shrub again with a roar, tearing it apart. Fern looked up at me, from where she had been hiding. Her eyes were wide with fear. But I could smell the juices dripping from her.

She scrambled back, falling on her ass. I reached down, but she rolled away. I grunted and stepped back away from the remains of the shrub while she pulled herself to her feet. Her eyes met mine, and I thought my cock might burst out of my pants. Her gaze trailed down to it. Another intense burst of her smell. I wondered just how wet she was.

"Kiy?" Her voice was shaking.

It took a strength I had never known I possessed, to hold myself back for a moment. "Do you want this?"

"Yes."

“Then keep running.”

I clenched my fists as she turned and ran again. The way her ass moved as she sprinted off should have been illegal. It was barely a minute before I resumed my chase. I'd never been so consumed with the need for another person. There was no way I'd be able to hold myself back once I had her in my arms. I could only hope she could take it.

Fern

I moved with a speed I didn't think my legs could give me. There was just enough fear from the chase to propel me forward. But the excitement was winning out. Soon I heard the thuds of Kiy running after me. Another spike of fear ran up my body. My lungs were burning, and I gasped, trying to drag air into my body. I wasn't sure I could keep going, but somehow, I did. Adrenaline is a hell of a drug.

A hand wrapped around my waist, sending tingles across my skin. Kiy pulled at me and I toppled sideways, rolling across the ground. I knew I'd be scratched and bruised later, but I didn't care. I landed face down. Before I could move, large hands ripped at my pants, pulling them off along with my underwear and shoes. Bitingly cold air ran over the skin of my ass right before a hard slap stung it.

I yelped out loud at the shock of it more than anything. The sound of tearing followed, and I knew Kiy was ripping his off to match mine. I tried to crawl away, but a hand on my ankle pulled me back to where I had started. He roughly pulled my top over my head and pinged my bra off.

Now naked in the mud, I felt small snowflakes hitting my back as they found their way through the tree canopy. I tried to turn over to look at Kiy, but strong hands pressed down on my shoulders, holding me in place. He shoved my legs apart as he knelt between them. A shiver ran down my spine and I didn't know if it was the cold, fear, or excitement.

The pressure on my shoulders disappeared a moment before another spank made me jump. Rough hands wrapped around my hips and pulled them up in the air. I flailed,

trying to adjust to the change in angle, and finally got my knees underneath me. Warm breath washed over the back of my thighs, sending a tingle through my body. The hands tightened on my hips, almost painfully, before a hot tongue ran over my clit and to my opening.

I moaned, and the tongue ran over me again. The heat of it contrasting with the cold all around me.

“You taste good.”

The compliment made me feel almost shy, but I liked it. The tongue returned and pushed inside me. Kiy sighed as though he was enjoying the most delicious meal of his life and it almost made me come there and then. The thought of him enjoying me. I rolled my hips to meet the movements of his tongue. He moaned shakily. Like he was barely holding onto control. I immediately wanted to make him lose that control. I pushed myself back onto his tongue hungrily. It was wide and thick.

He groaned, and that broke the last pieces of my own self-control. I rocked back and forwards fucking his tongue like a crazed woman. He pulled at my hips, encouraging me and sliding in deeper and deeper. It was the hottest experience of my life and I came in a frenzy, grunting his name.

He slid his tongue out of me, leaving me feeling cold and empty. “Kiy please?” I begged, now even sure what I was asking for. I just needed more of him.

“Don’t beg. I’m not sure I can hold back if you beg, and I’m not sure you are ready for me.”

I didn’t care. I was beyond caring. I needed every inch of him.

“Please? Please fuck me.”

His response was a roar that echoed around the forest. But still I was empty. I was desperate now. “If you don’t take me now, I’m going to run away again.” When he was chasing me down was the closest I’d seen him to being a wild, uncontrollable monster.

He let out a long shaky breath, like he was trying to calm himself. I braced myself against the ground and tried to crawl forward, away from him. It must have surprised him, because I slipped out of his grasp. I crawled as quickly as I could.

“No you don’t.”

Hand wrapped around my hips again and pulled me back. I squirmed against him, trying to kick him off. He growled a deep feral rumble and pushed the tip of his cock against me. It felt so big I should have doubted my plan, but I didn’t. I needed it. I needed him filling me.

He didn’t hesitate now and pushed roughly into me. I was instantly stretched to what felt like breaking point. There was a rush of pain, but I didn’t care. I was so wet there was no resistance, and he pulled back before thrusting back into me. It wasn’t gentle, and I didn’t want it to be. One more pull back and thrust and he pushed all the way inside me, hard. I screamed and quickly followed it by crying out for more.

He had lost control, and I was at his mercy now. He slammed into me over and over again, groaning and grunting. I was out of my mind and screaming like I was being murdered. Throwing the occasional yes in there, so he knew I was ok.

“Is that enough for you, Fern?”

“No, more.” I wasn’t even sure what more there was to have, but he increased his pace, going faster and faster. There was nothing but sensation now. I’d never experienced anything that even came close to this. I came spitting out incoherent

sounds. He didn't stop or even slow down. He kept pummelling me until I came again.

My whole body was hot and the cold snowflakes falling harder on me were little bursts of sensation.

"I need to look at you." Kiy's voice was animalistic as he withdrew from me and flipped me over onto my back. Cold air hit my chest. I looked Kiy in the face for the first time since he caught me. His pupils were so large, his normally brown eyes were black. His gaze roamed up and down me before he pushed his cock back inside me.

The feel of him sliding back into me combined with the look of pleasure on his face as he did so sent me tumbling over the edge into another orgasm. His eyes widened as he watched me twitch and moan. Just as the orgasm was receding, he resumed thrusting into me hard.

Perhaps one day we would make love gently, but it wasn't going to be today. I wrapped my legs around his thick body and pulled at him with each thrust inside me. His lips fell onto mine and he kissed me hard, leaving me breathless. I opened my mouth, and his tongue pushed in, warring with mine. We were as intertwined with each other as it was possible to be, and it felt perfect.

One of his hands grazed up my side to find a breast. He pinched my nipple, sending a shot of pain and electricity through me. I moaned into his mouth and felt him laugh. I wrapped my arms around him tightly, needing as much of him in contact with me as I could get. As the pleasure overtook me again, I dug my nails into him. He let out a yelp which turned into a shuddering groan as his thrusts became more erratic. His breath was ragged, and he moved his face away to look at me as he finally came. Shuddering cries rocked him as he came inside me. I could feel the thick, hot cum filling me.

It felt like he was coming inside me for an eternity, before his thrusts slowed and he sagged slightly. His eyes fluttered closed for a moment, his face a picture of bliss. I placed a gentle kiss on his lips, and he smiled.

“Are you OK, Fern?”

“Never better.” It was true. I felt whole in a way I never had before.

“Let's get you dressed and get back to the car.”

I pouted a bit at the thought of no longer having our naked bodies pressed together. But he was right. I would freeze to death out here. But going back? All the problems from before were still the same. I couldn't do that to him. I had to leave. But I wasn't sure I had the strength to walk away from him again.

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Kiy

I could see what she was thinking. It was written all over her face. “Luke will be in jail by now. I’ve dealt with it.”

Her face twitched, a micro-expression of hope that she quickly dashed. It hurt to see that her life had never let her truly hold on to hope before and be rewarded by it. “How?” Her voice was cautious.

“I convinced him it was in his best interests to be honest. I had to leave to come and find you. But if he’s changed his mind, then I’ll convince him again.”

“Convinced?”

“A small bar fight with him and five of his friends.”

Her face contorted with shock and she looked me up and down to see if there were injuries she had missed.

“I’m fine. They came off worse?”

“All five of them?”

“Yes. Honey, I’m a very large, thick-skinned monster. They are just humans. You underestimated me. Don’t do it again.”

The sternness in his voice sent a tingle through me. “Won’t you get in trouble? From

your boss?”

“Hmmmmmm. Maybe. Probably. Yes. But nothing too bad. A bit of a scuffle now and again is expected in my life of work.” I stood and found her clothes. They were a bit of a mess now. Muddy and damp and torn in places. I handed them over with an apology.

“It’s alright, I have a change of clothes in my bag.”

I nodded before looking at the remnants of my own pants. They were torn up the legs, but they’d cover what needed to be covered.

We dressed and walked in comfortable silence, stopping occasionally when she got cold so I could wrap my arms around her and warm her up. When we got back to the diner, I kissed her thoroughly before we drove back separately. I had to work hard to focus on the road, as the thoughts of us in the forest kept wandering back into my head.

We stopped once at a remote gas station. We grabbed some food and then I pulled Fern into my car desperately. Neither of us cared who was around and she rode me slowly until we came, our mouths locked together. She was absolute perfection.

When we got back, I resisted the temptation to fuck her senseless again. Or to go and apologise to Gariss for running off. I went straight to the police station and checked on Luke. He had done as I had suggested and decided to do time but keep his dick intact. A quick conversation with him in his cell with no officers around revealed that he’d gotten one of his friends to send the text to Fern. Since he admitted it, I didn’t hurt him too badly. Just enough to never want to mess with her again.

After I’d apologised to Gariss and he’d torn me a new one, he gave me a few days off. Which was just as well, because I knew I was going to struggle to do anything

other than bury myself in my mate as often as possible. I wasn't sure what I'd done to deserve such perfection in my life. But I knew I would cherish it every day and never stop making sure she felt loved and adored. She deserved everything I could give and more. My beautiful love.

Fern

I leaned down and sniffed the warm muffins that were fresh from the oven.

“Wait until they have cooled a bit!” Kiy said, booping me on the nose as I stood up straight.

Once I’d told him about my muffin obsession, he hadn’t stopped making them. Trying each time to find the ideal muffin. I told him that all muffins were ideal. But that hadn’t stopped him from trying different recipes to find the perfect one. He’d even insisted on there being muffins at our wedding.

“Are you taking some into work?” I asked him, eyes still locked on the muffins.

“Yes, I’ve told Sable to stop by and grab one since he is in town.”

“It’ll be so nice to see them.”

Sable and Clarissa were visiting with their new baby, who was absolutely adorable. A boisterous little boy who loved hugs from everyone. I wrapped my arm around Kiy’s large waist and squeezed him tight. As I buried my head into his furry chest, he wrapped a large hand around the back of my neck, running his thumb down the side.

Tingles crept over my skin. We didn’t have time for what my body wanted. But I knew the thoughts were going to be distracting me for the rest of the day. And if I was going to be tormented, then I wanted him to suffer, too. I pulled away, leaning against the counter. He must have sensed what sort of mood I was in, as he got a

wicked glint in his eye. “Fern, I have to go to work.”

“I know I just want to send you off with a repayment for the muffins I’m going to eat today.”

“A repayment?”

“Something you like the taste of.” I pulled up my flowy dress and reached into my underwear. I held eye contact with Kiy as I slid a finger inside myself and then pulled it out. His hands clenched tightly as I walked over to him as seductively as I could and then wiped my finger across his bottom lip. He sucked his lip in, and his eyes flicked closed as he tasted me.

“Have a good day at work, Kiy.”

His eyes shot open. His pupils were so big I could barely see the normal brown. I’d gone too far. There was no way he was heading into work right now. I turned around and ran out of the kitchen.

“Come back, wife.”

“Catch me first, husband.” His heavy footsteps thundered behind me as I turned and headed for the stairs. I made it to the bed just in time for him to leap after me. I squealed as he landed over me, arms outstretched to make sure he didn’t crush me. Unexpectedly, he then rolled over onto his back with a grin.

“What’s this?” I said, looking at him being smug on his back.

“You started this. You can put the work in.”

“Work? Isn’t that where you are meant to be right now?”

“I’m not going until you’ve ridden me to within an inch of my life, sweet wife.”

I pretended to think. “Well, it would be terrible for you to miss an entire day of work.”

“Exactly.”

I pulled off my underwear and climbed on top of him before unzipping his pants. I lowered myself until the tip of his cock pressed against my entrance. “Although, maybe I should go and eat a muffin for energy first.” I began raising back up, but his hands clamped around my waist.

“If you leave now, I’ll never make another muffin for the rest of my life.”

I laughed. It was a lie, and we both knew it. I lowered down again, playing along. “Well, in that case, I’d better get on with it. For the muffins.” I let my weight slide me onto him and he let out a rough groan. “Yes, For the muffins.”

The End.

Thank you for reading! It means the world to me that you gave my story a chance and I hope you enjoyed it.