

Donkey Days (Couple to Anthro-Donkeys TFTG)

By FoxFaceStories

A Commission for AI

When a newlywed couple are waylaid by a storm during a cross country honeymoon road trip they decide to seek shelter at a rundown farm. Revolted by the local donkeys, the grindset-minded husband Mike and his influencer wife Janet are hit by karma when a strange entity whisks them off to another world of anthro-creatures. Soon, both find themselves changing not only genders, but species as well!

Donkey Days

'The grindset is everything. You have to have your hustle, and your hustle's hustle, and your hustle's hustle hustle, baby, and each of them hustles have got to have grift too, you know what I'm saying? It's not enough to just invest in crypto, everyone. That's old news. Keep your investments, stay on the bitcoin bro train, I'm not sayin' ditch it! But just as those of us at the cutting edge made a straight killing off the NFT craze, now you gotta get in on the ground floor of the AI revolution, baby!'

Mike listened intently as he drove down the long highway, nodding his head at each word spoken. He almost wished he could pull over and take notes. AI, that was the next big thing. Those artists types were complaining, but Luddites always did when money was to be made. Yeah, he had to get in on the ground floor of this; the democratisation of art and all that.

"I think I've got a new hustle, honey," he said to his wife Janet, situated in the seat beside him and currently listening to her own podcast. "This AI train is really getting going and we can shift some investments there, maybe sell some of that cheap digital art online, flood the market with it so that no one can tell the difference. I think this'll go way bigger than NFT's. We can totally alpha our way to the top of the market and then move up in our social class, yeah."

"Uh huh, that's lovely honey. Really nice. Sure. Do the money thing."

Janet was barely listening to her husband, too busy invested in her own world of influencer tips and tricks. She opened the mirror flap and adjusted her makeup for the umpteenth time as her husband drove them down the long road, carefully teasing her eyelashes and applying yet another colour to her plumpened, fake lips.

"I think this is the one," she said in an overdone vocal fry. "I'm going to debut this look on my Insta, and then roll it out to TikTok and Youtube. Did we bring that blue dress of mine?"

What about the pantsuit with the deep V? You did pack it, right? My fans want to see me in the best things and I can't keep my social numbers up if I disappoint, Mike!"

"Yeah, sure I packed it. Uh-huh. Totally."

Janet scowled, but returned quickly to her makeup. She quickly filmed a short video to upload to her socials. It was all very generic, the kind of generic that made her fans and money, especially with the hints of cleavage she displayed with her recently surgically-enhanced bustline.

"Hey everyone, just heading on my honeymoon with my absolute sweetie pie! I'm so, so blessed with everything in my life, and want to share it with you all. Your love and comments and donations have helped us both through dark times. And to reward you, tonight I'm going to show you round the five-star suite we've booked, and you might even get to see my latest bikini wears! Exciting! Loves and kisses to you all, bye!"

She turned the phone off and chuckled.

"Morons," she said.

"Rubes," Mike added, listening to his own podcast. The two continued to drive in silence, both trapped in their own little worlds of social media and investment obsession.

"Don't forget to turn left, honey," Janet suddenly said. "I don't want to be late for my own honeymoon."

Indeed, the pair had only just recently married, and were on a grand interstate road trip that would take them to all the finest locations, paid for by the fans (rubes) and investors (marks) who had donated very generously to their schemes. Mike Langford and the new Mrs Janet Langford had been together for a very long time, all the way back to when they were nine years old and met in elementary school. They had been very different people back then, and even as young adults, too. Mike was often called a 'sweet boy' due to his kindly, cheerful demeanour and his tousled, Clark Kent hair. He needed glasses and had loved dinosaurs and wanted to be an astronaut. Janet, on the other hand, had been an incredibly nerdy girl, fascinated by maths and physics, and wanting to be a scientist like her hero Marie Curie when she grew up. Her ginger hair was constantly frazzled, her own glasses thick, and her teeth required constant braces. The two had formed a firm friendship due to their academic interests and passionate personalities, and slowly that had evolved into a romance when they were in their late teens. For a time, even, they were genuinely happy together.

But their feelings weren't the only things that evolved. Puberty, high school, the cliquy nature of college and the financial demands of the modern world had implacably moulded the pair into something borderline unrecognisable from their former selves. In his desperate to make a quick buck, Mike had set aside his interests and his collecting and instead focused his mind upon the stock market. From there, the rabbit hole had opened: the Sigma Male pipeline, the crypto bro coalition, the allure of investments and scams that

filtered everything through the great pyramid: that division between Those Who Had the Will and Those Who Did Not. And, being an obsessive personality, the appeal of that easy prism through which to view the world had engulfed him. Now, that once sweet boy wore expensive white button shirts and expensive sunglasses, always intent on being the slickest and smartest in any room.

Perhaps this would have destroyed the relationship, had Janet not taken a parallel path in her own obsessions. Frustrated by the bullying of her appearance, she took great pains to improve upon it. Puberty hit her late but kindly, and when she had corrective laser surgery on her eyes and got her braces removed, she was startled to find herself actually attractive. But it wasn't enough, especially not when she found she could make money off of her newfound desire for style. In the span of just a few months she set aside her academic interests, her nerdy maths-loving self, and instead adopted a sexy high-fashion persona online, one that marketed a 'renovation of the self' to young, impressionable women everywhere, usually by hawking supplements and pills and makeups that she was paid well to advertise. It wasn't enough, of course. It was never enough. Just as her boyfriend went down the rabbit hole, so did Janet. She didn't just want to be mildly successful, but *wildly* successful. And that meant further bodily improvements. It meant getting lip fillers, buccal fat removal, butt lifts, breast expansion surgery, and, of course, a whole new wardrobe to show off how much her body had changed.

By the time they were finally married, the leadup and event were no longer dominated by a shared sense of connection and love, but rather an opportunity to market and network for Mike, and an opportunity to make her socials really blow up for Janet. Even now, on their honeymoon, they were barely speaking to one another: Janet was too busy selling this wonderful period of her life online, while Mike was using their honeymoon schedule to meet up and contact potential investors across the country, all to make a quick, big buck.

What they didn't know was that this was all about to change. Two storms were approaching on the horizon, one literal and the other figurative. Soon the pair would undergo an even more intense transformation than they had ever done or could ever imagine. And it would begin at a beaten down old farmstead.

For now though, the storm was just a brewing of dark clouds upon the horizon.

"What do you mean, you can't drive faster than it!? This is a Lexus, Mike! A good one!"

Mike scowled, hitting the accelerator. The car was already doing over a hundred miles per hour, but with the racing winds and powerful electrical blasts coursing across the distant landscape, he didn't want to push it too much.

"I can't go too fast in this wind!" he cried over the roaring noise. "We'll lift straight off the road."

"Ugh! This is going to ruin our plans! The only good thing about this will be the Instagram stories I can make about it."

"Well, I'm glad your silly little social media gig will be salvageable, but I was trying to meet with an entire investor team to get on the ground floor of this AI buzz, Janet, so this is a disaster if we can't beat the storm!"

"My thing is not silly! At least ordinary people can understand it!"

"Oh please, it's just whoring yourself about!"

Janet's eyes widened. "You take that back! What was that NFT nonsense then? That folded fast! Sounded like investment *whoring* to me the way you chased after people!"

"It was a sound investment, damn it!" Mike replied. "I just - holy shit!"

The storm was picking up. A bolt of lightning fell upon the road just ahead of them, blinding him momentarily. The boom that followed was ear-splitting.

"Drive faster!"

"I'm telling you, it's a bad idea!"

"Well at least - oh God, now it's raining!"

But this was hardly rain. It was *sleet*. It fell from the sky as if the entire chorus of heaven were openly weeping. The land was open and flat, and yet it felt like it was flooding from the sheer excess of water making their visibility almost nil. Mike turned up the windshield wipers to their fastest setting, but it did almost no good. He could scarcely see a thing, and Janet whining in his ear didn't help.

"Shut up, will you! I'm trying to see!"

"Those are two different senses, jackass. And don't tell your new bride to shut up!"

"Please, as if you didn't just marry me for that online clout. I swear, you'll divorce me for the likes as well."

She folded her arms. "Maybe I will, if you don't keep your eyes on the road."

Mike sneered, then looked back, just in time to see the headlights of what seemed to be an eighteen wheeler truck heading right his way.

"SHIT!" he cried. Janet screamed as he turned the wheel to get back onto his side of the road. The truck's air horn roared, but even that was drowned out by another mighty peel of thunder. The car shook, passing the truck but scraping against part of it, and soon it was out of control. Janet clutched his arm, but this only made matters worse as the car spun and turned, threatening to careen over. Mike overcorrected, and they ploughed through a fence

and onto a dirt road, the front of the car taking a heavy smack. Both yelled again, even as the car finally righted itself. It ambled forward just a little and then died.

A long moment passed as the two took time to catch their breath and process that near-death experience.

“Look what you made me do,” Mike said.

“Oh please, you weren’t looking!”

“You were distracting me!”

“And you still had that crypto bro bullshit on the radio. You were focusing on that when we could have had the weather channel up! Now the car is broke!”

“It’s not,” Mike said. He turned the keys, but nothing happened. “Shit! It is broke. Fuck. Get out with me, we’ll see if there’s-”

“In a storm? With my *hair*? Get out yourself and be a man for once.”

Mike huffed. He got out, and was instantly hit by the rain and the wind and the elements in general. It was frigid and inhospitable, but he did manage to see something only a couple of hundred feet away. A farmstead of sorts. It was good enough to find shelter in until he could sort out what to do.

“Put it in neutral!” he screamed into the car. “I’m going to push it. Ready?”

Janet, huffing a little but otherwise recognising necessity, moved seats and took up position.

“Ready!” she replied.

Pete pushed. It was an awful experience. He hoped he wouldn’t get hypothermia. The car was even more banged up than he thought, but it could be rolled forward at least.

“Turn a little to the right!” he cried. “We’re coming up on a carport of sorts!”

“Will they help?” Janet yelled out the window, aghast at how wet she was already. “These farmer types . . . you never know!”

She said this despite her own father being a farmer. But that was an origin she refused to recognise these days.

“I’m not sure anyone lives here! It’s all dark. But it can be a respite. You can brake now!”

She did so, but it was only when Mike was willing to ditch his jacket in the horrible weather and use it to shelter her hair that was willing to abandon the car. The two raced over to the farmstead entrance. The door was shut, but after banging on its wooden surface, it opened to allow them entrance. They stumbled in, Mike quickly returning to the car just to grab their suitcases. When he shut the door, he found a cinder block he could use to prop it closed.

“Jesus, that’s one crazy storm,” he muttered. It was hard to even hear him across the room. The wind howled, screaming and screeching through the old windows. Some were

closed by hammered boards, but others were still intact, and needed closing. The interior of the farmstead indeed spoke to a lack of human ownership in some time. The walls were bereft of anything but some old, faded photographs, and the carpets - the few there were - were covered in dust. There was no electricity here at all, and any appliances had long been excavated from the property.

“Seriously, what in the hell is this place?” Janet said, her voice dripping with entitlement. “This is the best you can do, Mike?”

“Excuse me? I was the one that saved us by getting here!”

“And you are the one that trashed the car!”

“Because you distracted me! And there was a massive fucking storm! Ugh, I can’t believe I’m going to miss out on my meeting with Techno-Darling! They are seriously on the-”

“Ground floor of this AI thing, I know, honey! You keep saying that!”

“No more than you talk about that same fucking skin product that doesn’t work.”

She jabbed a finger out. “Hey, it got us this vacation, didn’t it?”

“You mean a honeymoon? I would have liked a post-wedding celebration *without* your ten thousand followers spying on us every step of the way!”

Janet screwed up her face. “Ten million, excuse me! And besides, not like you don’t have all your *boyfriends* with us.”

Mike balled his fists. “My boyfriends!?”

“All those crypto losers you listen to and hang on every word of! You call yourself a clever grifter, but they’re grifting you, moron!”

Mike growled and stepped into another room, slamming the door and ending the conversation right there. He tried to call for help, to get some kind of repair service or something to help them - or just him - but there was not only no reception, but no internet reception either. He couldn’t get any bars of anything! He swore under his breath. This was all going wrong, being stuck in this shitty farm in the middle of bumfuck nowhere, when serious money could be made.

“I’m not getting any bars,” he said, entering the room as if no argument had occurred.

“Me either,” Janet said, embracing the same attitude. Their relationship was practically more of a business than a genuine relationship by this point, so it was easy to do a ‘work reset’ like this without resolving any underlying issues between them.

“Can’t we, like, call in the coast guard or something?” Janet asked.

“C’mon, Janet, you know how ridiculous that sounds, right? Besides, it’s not like they’d help us. Now, if we had a smooth-running libertarian economy we’d-”

“Be fucking starving to death, I say.”

“Hey, don’t pretend you know anything about libertarianism!”

Janet rolled her eyes. “Whatever. Let’s just get unpacked and find the best place to sleep. Once this storm passes, we’ll get our reception back and then get the hell out of here. No way am I hitchhiking like some gross hobo. I’m *better* than that.”

“Not the best look for a major up and coming investor either,” Mike admitted.

“Good.”

“Fine.”

“Agreed.”

There was a silence between them that was interrupted only by the heavy rain and gale force winds of the enormous storm.

“Separate rooms?” Mike asked.

“Obviously. As usual.”

Mike winced a little. “The storm isn’t getting you going, huh?”

Janet crossed her arms, emphasising her lovely but certainly quite plastic breasts.

“This place is gross and unhygienic. There is no way you’re getting near my hoo-ha, tonight, Mike, even if I *wasn’t* angry with you. This is a marriage of convenience, remember. We can fuck if you ever man up and are ready to leak some nudes for subscriber content.”

Mike snorted. “Only if you start posing on rich yachts I own.”

“Get a yacht first.”

That seemed the end of the conversation, but both caught something else in the wind as well. A strange, almost bestial sound.

“BRAAAAHHHH!! BRAAAAHHHH!!!”

It was getting louder, and quite repetitive.

“What the fuck is that?” Janet said. “I do not believe in haunting!”

Mike tried to see through one of the windows, whose shutters were banging and banging from the heavy winds. But the rain was too thick.

“I have no idea. There’s lots of dark shapes out there, but I can’t make heads nor tail of it.

“BRAAAAHHH!!! BRAAAAHHHH!!!”

It was loud though, and freaky.

“Go and check it out, Mike!”

“Oh no, no way, hon. It’s just some weird whistle effect of the wind through a tunnel or something. Maybe a cow herd.”

“Gross, cows are disgusting.”

Mike smirked, about to make a comment about how at least their udders were ‘real,’ but he decided against it. Instead, he retreated to ‘his’ room where he lay out enough things to try and get comfy on the carpeted floor, and continued to play with his phone in the hopes of getting a signal. Janet did the same, utterly infuriated with her circumstances, angry at her

not-so-loving or loved husband, and desperate for a non-cracked mirror to adjust her features. She checked her phone battery, then recorded a quick video.

'So, this is the woooooorst thing ever. I'm stuck in this revolting farmhouse and I'm seriously freaking out! I'm soooooo lucky my dashing husband thought quickly to save me . . .'

And on it went. When she was done rescripting reality, she too found a comfortable nook to try and sleep.

Unfortunately for the pair of them, that horrible braying and screeching carried on through the evening and into the night, so long as the horrible storm reigned. The herd of whatever it was outside did not let up, and so the sleep was as interrupted as it was discomforting. Both tossed and turned in their respective rooms, angry at the world, angry at how their businesses had been interrupted, angry at the sound, but more of all, angry at each other.

When sleep came, it was short and pitiful.

When Janet emerged from 'her' room, Mike actually laughed. Her hair was a total mess, her makeup all smudged from tossing and turning the previous night, and there were wood shavings plastered to her face.

"Don't even fucking dare," she snapped. "Not after the sleep I had last night! I swear, I am going to need a whole new beauty routine after all of that!"

"I might even join you for once," Mike said, cracking his neck yet again. "I feel like I've been fucked sideways. At least the storm has passed. Oh, and we have our culprits."

He handed her a bag of snacks from the car and pushed over their honeymoon basket, the one filled with breads and cheeses. It had basically been all either had to eat, and so Janet began wolfing them down as she followed Mike outside. The weather had cleared up brilliantly, leading to a beautiful morning. She held up her phone and still got no bars though, leaving her to sneer at the bad luck. That was when the smell hit her: the smell of fur in the air. It was enough to make her sneeze.

"ACHOO! What the hell is making that - oh."

"Yep," Mike said. "Meet our most hated enemy. The destroyer of sleep. The inimitable *donkey*. Or more accurately, a whole herd of them."

"A drove," Janet corrected, drawing up some knowledge from her far more curious youth. "They're called a drove, usually."

"Whatever. Just look at them."

There were at least half a dozen donkeys in the field just behind the property. Clearly, they were now ownerless, though exactly how they were taking care of themselves was

anybody's guess. Perhaps they were simply living off of the land at this point, having gotten used to their particular lot. They were all fairly interchangeable: dark grey with light streaks across their bellies, though one was all grey and another had a more speckled pattern across his fur. Their large, tall-eared heads raised to stare at the human pair. Curious, they ventured forward to meet them.

"Oh no!" Janet said, sneezing again. "I've got allergies! And there is no way I'm going to be around such disgusting, slow, stupid creatures! Especially ones who ruined my damn beauty sleep!"

She reached down to the ground and quickly grabbed a rotten piece of wood that had come free from a gate or fence that had once run through here.

"Go on!" she cried, in an imitation of her own farmer father's voice. "Get!"

She tossed the piece of wood and it landed square on the nose of the nearest donkey. Startled, its large nostrils pushed out air loudly. The creature let out a brief bray and then jolted backwards.

"Revolted! Dad had one on the farm, I recall. I used to love them, can you believe it. Dirty, gross creatures."

"Stupid investment too," Mike remarked. "Hey! This suit cost more than your entire herd - drove, or whatever - is worth! Get back, damn it!"

He pulled off his shoe and waved it at them.

"Go eat grass somewhere else! We've got important places to be! Fucking braying all night and ruining our sleep! Goddamn animals."

"Revolted," Janet said, throwing a stone. This one missed the donkeys, but they moved back a little, clearly alarmed by the newcomers. "I can't believe we have to stay here until help arrives. Tell me you've got bars now."

Mike was holding up the phone while his wife continued to pelt random objects at the donkeys, who continued to back up and then wander closely again, as if utterly intrigued by their new guests. They sniffed the air, sampling the strange scent of humans, and Janet was revolted to realise it was likely her perfume that made them interested.

"Don't even think about eating my dress, you gross mules!"

"Just keep them busy, honey! I've got bars! I'm gonna make the call now!"

"Can't we move!?"

"I can't risk it. Just keep them at bay!"

Mike victoriously dialled his insurance company for a mobile repair job. It was always worth having a good service on call, especially if other suckers were paying for it. After just two rings, someone on the other side answered the phone. Only the voice sounded off, somehow. Almost as if it wasn't human.

The Braying One was a stubborn mule of an entity, and that was only half-metaphor. Unlike other entities such as the crazed Dog God or the narcissistic Lord of Cats, the Braying One was a salt of the earth type, preferring to graze and oversee the droves it had made at the beginning of creation. It generally stayed in one place at a time, perhaps for a century or so, before moving on. Rarely was it angered, though when aroused to anger it could be mighty furious indeed, sticking its hooves in the ground and becoming quite literally immovable. But most of the time it kept its eyes trained on whatever job it set itself on, be it moving mountains or testing saddles or ensuring that its kind could traverse the most inhospitable climates while carrying immense loads. Yes, it valued such loyalty and hard work in its kind. Donkeys, mules, and other anthro-folk that shared the entity's likeness had been given the same gifts: stamina, endurance, patience, loyalty, and a strong sense of duty. And just like their creator, they too were endowed with the kind of stubbornness unknown to any other creature: to stand immovable in a field when required, to pull back against even the most belligerent master if they were cruel. Yes, the Braying One was proud of its creations, though its own nature meant it would not often say so. Actions meant all, when it came to donkey and mule-kind.

Unfortunately, the entity was witnessing actions that were pulling the Braying One from its slumberous existence. It had been quietly enjoying its time on Earth, moving from place to place invisibly, becoming fascinated with the hard work of humanity and its cooperation with donkey kind. Of course, sometimes a cruel master had to be corrected. Indeed, the Braying One had just used its considerable power to transform a man into a living saddle, forced to help the mule he had whipped transport heavy goods for the rest of his existence. Another middle-aged man had neglected to feed his donkeys or care for them. The Braying One had 'blessed' this man to become a jenny, servicing the jacks he had once ignored. That was years ago, and the jenny had already become pregnant several times and helped that particular drove flourish.

Now, the Braying One felt a new call, a new bray from across the continent. It travelled slowly but surely, time being of little substance to the entity. When it arrived, it found itself utterly furious as the situation unfolded.

"Stupid, gross, pathetic creatures!"

"Detestable, aren't they? Seriously, what a backwards place this is, for backwards creatures no less."

"For once we agree, Mike! I can't stand the smell of them, hurry up and get a damn signal! I'll seriously have to blind one at this rate!"

The Braying One huffed through its wide nostrils, and its ears flicked up in anger. It did not know the two humans before it, but it recognised their type: the exact opposite of anything that could be described as ‘salt of the earth.’ They were materialistic and shallow, and this extended not just to their sense of dress but the expressions upon their faces, their words and deeds. These haughty, preening, incompetent figures *dared* critic its creations? Dared to mock them as simple and stupid, when simplicity was its own state of mind? Dared to mock their stubbornness and ruggedness, when these were hardworking virtues?

No, this insult would not do.

The Braying One looked at the male figure, and how he was holding a device high in order to get some desired result. The entity had never bothered to learn such complexities. The simple life of the land was all that it cherished. Still, it could recognise the way the male spoke into the device, trying to hear some response to it. The Braying One did not need to understand technology in order to subvert it. It was a higher power. All it had to do was reach out and make its thoughts a reality, and teach these humans a lesson worth remembering.

Besides, it wanted to send a message. It sensed something within both these figures; a yearning for a better time, a more honest sense of self. It had the vision to see this, and the wisdom to sense it. They were not beyond redemption, but sometimes punishment and rebirth was its own teacher.

Perhaps they needed to learn the hard work of a donkey before they could appreciate what they had lost, and what they could regain.

‘You have insulted my drove,’ came the voice, deep and bestial, and somehow ancient and powerful all at once.

“What?” Mike said, creasing his brow as he heard the voice.

‘My kind. My wonderful donkeys. They have withstood much, when their masters left. They have endured nobly, and remained loyal, waiting for new humans to give them the jobs they crave. They are stubborn and wonderful, and now you insult and mock them? I will not accept this. You and your mate have brayed and brayed at my kind. Now we bray back.’

“Is this some kind of joke?” Mike said, flabbergasted. He cut the line and redialled.

‘I am still here. And I can wait eternities. I will, if necessary, but that won’t be necessary. As you can see, the eyes of my creations are already upon you.’

“What the fuck does that even mean? Who the hell are you? Is this a prank?”

Janet interrupted his confusion. “Um, Mikey! Something weird is happening! The donkeys are acting strange! They’re like . . . like people!”

Indeed, they had arranged themselves in a semi-circle around the pair, all six donkeys keeping their dark eyes flat upon Janet and Mike, their expressions baring teeth, their hooves dug in as if to say ‘we will not move, you cannot make us.’

‘They are my kind, and they are loyal. You show no loyalty to anything, male human. Nor does your mate. You are superficial and uncaring, and I sense no love between you, only the rotten core of a love now lost and rotted away. But I offer you one final chance for redemption. For learning an honest day’s work and the pleasure that comes from living close to the land and sweating in the act of tending to it. I cast you to Tanarra, and may you learn to appreciate donkey folk then!’

Mike narrowed his eyes, holding out the phone before him as if to inspect it.

“Tanarra? What the hell is-”

There was a bright flash of light that engulfed both him and Janet, and then they were gone, hurtling through a multicoloured void that seemed to be a great shifting kaleidoscope of colours, vibrant and strange and filled with alien figures. Janet screamed and Mike yelled with her. They could see into these fractal reflections, and both could see entirely new worlds as they fell through this cosmic tunnel. Humans in strange pigmentations and outfits, tribal fantasies, techno-futures, and other dimensions beyond all imagination, filled with creatures that had no like on Earth. The pair turned and twisted, spinning in the great multiversal chasm, cast down by the Braying One. And in that desperation, Janet reached out to her husband, earnestly desiring his comfort, here at what she imagined to be The End. Mike embraced her, and for just a moment, the narcissistic pair remembered what it had been like before the change in their lives, the genuine connection they had once shared before they had allowed money and looks and prestige to gobble it all up.

“I’m sorry!” Mike shouted.

“I’m sorry too!” Janet said. “I - I wish we had more-”

She didn’t get to finish the sentence, because two great mirror shards separated to reveal the destination they were hurtling too: a world much like Earth, but whose continents were entirely different. They rocketed down, smashing through the glass-like membrane that separated the worlds and falling through the atmosphere together. Below, a farm waited for their arrival, a large business that seemed far more alive than the one they had just left.

The pair held one another, no longer crying out, fearful that this was it.

A silent regret passed between their eyes, and then everything went white.

The Braying One looked at the unconscious forms of the humans. It hadn’t been to Tanarra in some time, but it was glad to see that things were doing well. Apparently the tigers were

repopulating, that was pleasant. The wolf people too. Donkeys were in no danger, of course. Its kind never were: far too useful. But that's exactly what this couple needed to be: useful. A small cloud of dust had erupted at their arrival, but there was no actual damage to their bodies, just the usefulness of sleep with which the Braying One could weave its hard work without interruption, just the way it liked it. It focused its power upon them, sculpting their bodies. The pair would dream of this moment, perhaps even 'see' it in some sense, stirring into brief consciousness. That was good, too.

The Braying One began its work.

Mike groaned. Something was strange. He woke briefly, trying to understand what was happening and why there were all these weird pressures in his body. His eyes flickered open, only to see Janet laying in the grass beside him. Something was off about her though, and as she too stirred awake he could see what it was: her skin was turning grey!

"J-Janet, what's . . ."

Her eyes were delirious too, but focused momentarily upon him.

"Mike! Your skin, you're g-growing f-fur . . ."

He looked down at himself, unable even to stand, only to see what she was referring to: all across his body, the skin was turning grey, and dark grey fur was beginning to push from his skin. It itched like crazy, but as each tuft released and grew in a strange comfort developed.

"N-no," he managed, and then his mind fell into sleep again. His body stirred, and Janet watched in horror as her husband's form began to thicken, muscle and fat both added to his form. He was clearly in some state of discomfort, because he shifted like a poor sleeper, even as his face began to grow thin grey fur across it. His arms bulked up, and his legs very much so. A similar pressure grew in herself, causing her to gasp. Muscles ached as they expanded, and she could feel her breasts beginning to melt away as her pectorals swelled in a far tougher way. Her biceps rippled with strength, and she found her limbs jerking spasmodically, as if affected by electrical jolts, the tensing of new muscles just formed.

"What is h-happening to usssss," she moaned, before slipping back into unconsciousness as well. For just a moment, she thought she caught the flicker of something. An outline of a large, powerful donkey with a man's body, celestial and yet present at the same time. But it was just a vision, and soon she too was writhing in her sleep as more changes occurred.

Mike woke again, several minutes later. Something was different, he could feel it. Why had he fallen asleep again? Something had happened, some kind of cosmic experience and some world called Tanarra and grey skin and -

Grey skin!?

He startled, managing to open his eyes and look over himself. No, he was far beyond grey skin now. His body was almost completely covered in fur, and to make matters worse it was the coarse, thick hair of a barn animal, like a donkey. Donkey. Why had that animal come to mind? He remembered that a creature had cursed he and his wife for treating donkeys poorly.

That realisation was immediately followed by a new set of pressures, ones that left him grunting and writhing. Already his body was bigger, thicker, but now his hips widened, the pelvis making a cracking sound as it changed shape. His shoulders had never been broad, but they became so now, and yet even as that occurred they also gained a sort of petiteness to them at the same time; they were muscular, and yet had a gentle sloping arc to them.

"This isn't p-possible. You can't just t-nghhh!!"

Something pushed out from his backside. Was he naked? Who had taken his clothes? He looked over to his wife and saw that she was now completely naked too. Where had their clothes gone!? She looked even more bulky than him, still gaining muscle in a way that captured his attention.

But then the pressure above his ass became too much, and something *pushed* its way out. He reached back a hand at the same time as Janet woke, only to feel a furry tail with a thick, hairy end to it.

It was enough to make him faint.

"M-Mike! Stop f-fainting, you fool! We can't - oh God, is that a tail! Oh shit, I can feel - nngghhh!!"

Hers grew in moments later, but her changes were also accelerating beyond this. Her breasts were gone by this point, and she gripped her ears as they began to migrate north, Mike's doing the same in that moment. They stretched, becoming pointed, flat, and quite elongated. Her hearing was enhanced, and somehow she could take in the sounds of people in a far off farmstead, chatting about the local work the 'mule types' needed doing. It was all too much, especially when new set of changes began in her feet and between her legs. Her toes hardened - hell, her *fingers* were too - becoming black and hooves. The digits of her hand began to fuse together, and she held them before her, horrified as she was left with only two fingers and a thumb per hand, the digits looking like hardened half-hooves.

"Please, whoever is d-doing this, s-stop it! We're s-sorry! We're - mmmhmm!"

The new change brought pleasure, unwanted as it was. Something was sliding out of her, emerging from her womanhood and snaking forth, growing and growing and growing in length even as a large sac plopped out behind it, containing two rounded balls. She felt at her changed genitalia, unbelieving what was occurring. What the hell was it? Her tired mind couldn't figure it out, only that it was completely unlike the beauty queen she was meant to be. She looked over to her husband and saw that he had woken again, currently staring at his chest as it developed what looked like a heavy set of furry breasts.

"Mike! What are you doing?"

"I'm not d-doing this! I'm growing tits and my damn cock is - aghhh!"

It was retreating, was what he was trying to say. Retreating right back into his body to form a new feminine entrance, one to match the thick but curvaceous new form he had. He felt at his new vagina, moaning in reluctant arousal as his hoof-hand caressed his large furry breasts.

"Mhmmm . . . Janet, get h-help! We need to - *BRAAAAHHH!!*"

"What are you doing, Mike!? You sound just like - *BRAAAHH! BRAHHH!!*"

The braying sounds erupted from the changing pair, and soon they were unable to stop themselves. This was the signal for the most telling change of all. The pressure began in their skulls and spread across their scalp, their face, their jaw and tongue and nose and hair. It was painful. It was too much. It made the pair woozy.

And then, slowly but surely, their skulls changed shape, and everything else upon their head with it. The pair brayed insanely as their mouths pushed forwards, taking their noses along with it. The extension gave them each a noticeable snout, all while their teeth flattened, perfect for chewing grass and cud and other feed. Their ears grew further upward, and a mane of sorts grew in, more typical in shape for Janet, and more flowing and somewhat feminine for Mike, hanging down over his, now *her*, shoulders. In just half a minute, the pair now had donkey-like features. The only real mercy, as they looked at one another with pure astonishment, was that they weren't donkey heads on anthro-looking bodies, but rather still rather humanoid faces; their snouts were far shorter than an actual donkeys, and their eyes were still much more human. One could easily tell, for instance, that Mike was quite feminine, while Janet had a masculine squareness to her - his - face.

Still, it was hardly a large mercy. The pair had been transformed and gender swapped, and the tiredness was coming over them once more.

"N-no," Janet grunted, his voice far lower than it should have been. And why was he thinking of himself as a 'he'? Why couldn't he stop that? He tried to raise himself, only to fall back down again, the call of sleep beckoning him.

“Can’t s-sleep,” Mike said, her own voice like a gruff woman’s. It shocked her, as did her new feminine identity. She sounded like a young woman with a raspy voice, used to hard work. “Why do I sound like . . .”

She collapsed back, her heavy breasts bouncing. In her final moments of fighting the call of sleep, she felt one final pressure between her legs. The donkey woman was momentarily hopeful that she was regaining her manhood and turning back, but instead something pushed into existence above her genitalia, something bloated and rounded and rubbery, with two sensitive points. She pawed at one with her hoof-hand, her dreary, weary self trying to make sense of it.

“F-feels like an udder,” the woman mused, before falling back to sleep.

The Braying One smirked, satisfied at the changes it had wrought. Not all had gone to plan: in its stubborn refusal not to get to know these selfish humans too closely and administer their punishment, it hadn’t paid attention to which body was closest to it. In the mixup, it had accidentally altered the human male to become the new female of the pairing, and the female to become the male. Briefly, it considered reversing these changes, then decided against it. The Cat God was always getting on the Braying One’s case to have a little more fun, and perhaps this would be a small - very small - gesture of conciliation. Besides, it would add to the pair’s punishment, as well as their path to accepting change. Change didn’t come naturally to donkeys, however, so who knew how that would go?

Perhaps they would need just a little help. Donkeys, despite their reputation, are truly caring animals, and can forgive a lot once a proper amendment is made for one’s behaviour. The Braying God was no different; it had set the example, after all.

It reached out with its power one last time as the naked pair slept, having shifted to hold one another automatically. Interesting, that: they hadn’t shared a scent at all when the Braying God had first met them.

‘Take some instinct with your new forms,’ the entity declared. And it was so: it allowed their new hearing to be a bit more familiar, their muscles to not be so alien to their bodies, and their changed genders to not be an obstacle to another animalistic trait they had been given; a fresh desire to breed. Goodness knows apparently they were not breeding before. Humans were very strange that way.

That would have to be enough, of course. No use making it easy. The pair would have to adapt on Tanarra or not. Hard work was the crucible through which character and essence was formed. The Braying One had no interest in checking up on this pair as they adjusted. It would do so at a later date.

For now, it had work to do.

“Well I’ll be! It ain’t usual ta see a pair sleepin’ on the job! You sure ya’ll are cut out for land living?”

Janet and Mike both woke to the strange voice and the laughter that followed. They both leapt up, instantly remembering the strange, transformative dream they’d both had. Mike’s mind was already thinking that they’d just ingested some strange toxic chemical in the farmstead or something, and now were being rescued by the repair service he’d called for. The sun was in his eyes as the silhouetted figure stood over him, but as he rose he came to dwarf the woman, which was the moment he and his wife realised that something was very, very wrong, because this woman wasn’t human.

She was a pig-woman.

Her skin was pink, literally. Her nose was a wide piggy one, and there were holes in her straw farmer’s hat for her pink, flappy ears to stick out of. She was a widerset woman, adorned in workman’s overalls and a slightly dirtied green flannelette shirt. A very canyon-like depth of cleavage showed out of the top of it, and Mike’s eyes were drawn to the fact that, from the tightness of the fabric beneath her already prodigious bustline, this woman clearly had not just one, but two or even three pairs of breasts. As she turned to inspect Janet, Mike noticed she even had a twisty pigtail showing out through a hole in her overalls.

“You - you’re a pig lady,” Mike said.

The woman scoffed. “And you’re a jack - a donkey man! Just like your wife is a Jenny, not that you seem it from all this lazy sleeping in. So what of it?”

Mike was about to correct the woman that his wife’s name was Janet. In fact, he was going to ask her to get her freak furry costume out of here so he could get someone to fix his shit and get him back on the trail to his investor gathering. But then he took in his own voice. More than that, *she* took in *her* own sense of self; a very female sense of self.

“Mike, what the hell is happening? Who is this absolute *freak!*? And why is my voice so deep and - am I covered in hair!?”

The two exchanged a look before the equally confused pig woman. Janet was no longer a woman or even human. *He* was now a tall, powerful looking donkey man, complete with snout, tall ears, and what looked to be a very large furry sheath between his legs. And Mike, of course, was no longer a man. She was instead a shorter, albeit still quite muscular and thick-bodied Jenny. She had large furry breasts that wobbled with her movements, and between her legs there was nothing but a womanly slit, thankfully obscured by her fur. What *wasn’t* obscured, was what she had seen just before her transformation had finished: an

actual damn *udder*. It was a grey leathery bag with just two teats, and strangely sensitive at that. The new woman placed her hoof-hands over it, shocked at this development.

“No way.”

The pig woman folded her arms, clearly annoyed. “Are you two stoned or what?”

“This has to be some fucking dream, or nightmare!” Mike announced, still clutching her breasts and trying to ignore the very slight jiggle of her udder.

“There’s no way I’m some gross, disgusting donkey man!” Janet said. “I can’t do this! I’ve got followers! I’ve got *fans!*”

“I’ve got fucking investors!” Mike added. “How can I be a goddamn alpha male looking and sounding like some animal freak!? Lady, you need to get us out of here. Call triple zero. Jesus Christ!”

The pig woman was backing away slowly, alarm on her pink features. She pushed her ginger hair back over her shoulders.

“I don’t know what in the hell has happened to you too, or who this ‘Jesus Christ’ is, but by the holy Sun Above, you both need to get a hold of yourselves! This a damn *farm*, and I hired on two donkey folk to help me plough the fields and tend to the cabbage fields. I’ve got a whole new dang field and there ain’t no way I’m putting up with a pair of crazy potheads, or whatever you are clearly coming off of, or maybe it’s just all this fresh air you two aren’t used to. But donkey folk always get the hard work done, or so I’m told, so ya’ll got one day to sort this out. And by the Sun, put on some dang clothes! Ya’ll have quarters over in your accommodation there, and I’m a traditional gal. Don’t listen to those damn rumours about public mudbaths, I ain’t that kind, so you can put it all away, thank you very much. Go shirtless at most only when you work up a sweat. Now, if you don’t mind, I got a farm to see to. Sort yourselves out!”

And without any further fuss, the woman began to walk away.

“Who the hell are you?” Mike said, seething at this treatment.

The pig woman turned and put her hoof-hands on her very impressive set of hips. “Who am I? Sun Above, sleeping under the sun must have scrambled your brains, so ya best get some water, ya hear now? I’m your *employer*, Mila. You and your husband James. But ya’ll can just call me Miss Paker, okay? That is, if you even last the first day of the season.”

She headed back to her farmstead to sort out whatever it was she needed to, leaving the very confused, scared, and most of all *angry* couple standing in the open space together.

“There’s no fucking way this is real,” Mike said, though already her mind was starting to associate her identity with ‘Mila.’

Janet, who was also starting to think of himself as 'James,' wasn't so sure, despite being aghast at being a gross male animal. He reach and pinched Mila on the boob, causing the new woman to squeal and jump back, nearly stumbling on her hooves.

"What the hell, James? I mean, Janet!"

"We're not dreaming," James said, blinking slowly. "This is real. We've really turned into gross, disgusting beasts. We're not in fucking Kansas anymore, Mila! We're not even on goddamn *Earth!* Just what in the hell was that weird donkey ghost thing I saw, and what does it have to do with that call you got? You better not have screwed this up again!"

Mila swallowed, intimidated by her wife's - husband's now, perhaps? - booming voice and larger size.

"I think," she said, looking over to the little living quarters that sat on its own not too far from where they were standing, "I think we should get inside and in clothes first." She tried to cover her bosom - her large dark grey nipples were clearly on display, being the only part not covered in hair. "And then I can tell you how I think we were sent here by some *God.*"

Mila laid out the story as they tried to get changed. *Tried to* being the operative words here: neither were used to the massive changes in their bodies. They were both strong, tall and stalwart, and James in particular was having difficulty getting used to all his rippling muscles, just as Mila was struggling with having not just a pair of breasts, but another set of mammarys that brushed against her thighs when she walked. Still, she managed to stumble through her story, describing the strange being that kept latching onto her phone call and admonishing her. It had an animalistic voice, one that she said was similar to James' now.

"Great," James said, managing to pull on a second flannelette t-shirt - the first had torn apart at the buttons when he'd flexed his muscles too much in the act. "Just great. So now, because you called up this gross Donkey God thing, I have to pay for it! Look at me, Mila! I'm a seriously ugly animal man! I've got this big gross furry sheath! What kind of person would possibly subscribe to that? My social media career is *dead* unless *you* fix this!"

Mila snorted, which made a heavier sound thanks to her widened nostrils.

"Please, I'm sure there are *plenty* of strange folk willing to subscribe to see a big donkey man, or even a donkey woman. Freaks, sure, but well-paying ones. But who is going to take me seriously as an investor guru? Who is actually going to listen to me when I've got fucking donkey tits! I can't even operate a keyboard now, let alone a smartphone!"

James made a low, animalistic growling sound, but then halted as his eyes widened. He had managed to fit his head through the shirt, mindful of his snout, and had just put on a

pair of work shorts that left most of his muscled legs on display. It was a good thing, at least, to hide that revolting sheath he now had, and the enormous penis he didn't want within it.

"Wait, smartphone, you said? Where are our smartphones? Where are they, Mila! Mike!"

Mila became alarmed too. She was having a lot more trouble with her clothing, on account of the fact that she had a large E-cup bra she evidently had to put on but had no clue about from her new female perspective, and there was also what seemed to be a support band that was designed to wrap around her lower waist and cup under her udder, supporting that too. A sort of 'udder bra.' But she dropped both of these items and looked around for their things.

"No smartphones," she said, as the pair of them tore the little quarters they evidently now shared apart. "Just old-style cell phones! No laptops or computers! No podcasting equipment! I don't even have my pager or my headset! How can I know how my stocks are doing!?"

"Forget your stocks, all my makeup is gone!"

"How the hell can you even do makeup now that you've got a snout and no human lips! Good luck getting kissy faces!"

"Better luck than with yours, you'd be the one wearing lipstick now that you've got a freaking donkey pussy! Ugh!"

The two scowled, continuing to dredge up as much as they could from their quarters. Part of the irritation wasn't just a continuation of their own marital disputes, nor even their material desires, but also the fact that they were still getting used to their new faces and heads. They were slightly heavier, for one, and they had longer tongues to match their extended jaws. For some reason, speaking came instinctively easy, but having all those flat teeth and the big nose with its wide nostrils meant that even the act of breathing, talking, chewing, or expression felt so utterly alien. Their facial expressions to each other, at least, were easy to read, but how much of that was governed by the same instinct that allowed them to walk on their hooves was uncertain. Even then, said hooves were difficult to manoeuvre into pants legs.

"It wasn't my doing," Mila snarled, returning to try and clasp the bra again. "You were the one to snap at those donkeys and throw things at them. That was animal cruelty."

"You joined in!" he declared back.

"But you started it!"

"What are you, twelve?"

"I wish I was, because at least then you'd be a lot smarter and could use that now-deflated brain of yours to help us out of this situation!"

Mila continued to struggle with the bra, but a silence had fallen. After a few moments, she checked back on the male donkey man she had started thinking of purely as 'James' now.

"James?" she asked the figure, who was standing still and gazing at a display table. "James? What's going on? Are you having a stroke?"

"I'm having a memory," he said in his deep tone. His tail flickered behind him - at least their work shorts had a hole in the waistband for them to slip through - and then held up a photograph. "Of when this sort of thing would have fascinated me. I was so smart back then, you're right. Fascinated by the world. I *liked* my father's farm. I was proud of it, until the other kids began to bully me. Look at this."

Mila looked at the photo, struggling for a moment to hold it in her hoof-hand before managing to succeed. What she saw made her gasp.

It was an image of a surprisingly cute little donkey child, a male one, presumably James, laughing maniacally as he ran along a horizontal fence post. At the very left of the picture was a donkey man who looked to be a farmer judging from his dress, watching over the spectacle with pride.

"Is that you?" Mila asked.

"I - I think it is. Oh God, has all of reality changed? This is like some kind of multiversal hypothesis, I swear!"

"Since when did you throw around terms like that? You said you hated science!"

James paused. "I do, I just . . . I remember a time when I loved it. Look, there are other photos of me here, from some version of high school. Look at all the people."

Mila gasped. The pig woman, Miss Paker, wasn't a one off. Apparently, this entire world - Tanarra - was one that was occupied by a whole slew of anthro-animal people. There was a little duck girl and a wolf boy and a whole team of cute little tiger girls with matching stripes, as if they were triplets. There were gecko kids and a big bovine bull of a teacher, complete with big horns and a somewhat stern expression, as if he were about to charge if any of the kids misbehaved. In the centre of the photo was an image of James as a young jack, holding up a trophy.

Best Science Project, it read. It looked to be something to do with irrigation of crops.

"I look so happy," James mused.

"Yeah, cool, that's great. I'm glad in this fucked up reality that you were happy as a little monkey boy. Look at the tech of this place! If this is mirrored by the rest of the world I'm fucked! It's bad enough to be stuck as a fucking jenny, but can you imagine listening to a girl rattle on about crypto investment? It's bitcoin *bro* for a reason, and this world might not even be advanced enough for *that!* Damn it!"

The new donkey woman observed several photos of her as a young donkey girl, including one with her space telescope. That was enough to get her to stop for a moment. She had loved astronomy - and dinosaurs - as a kid. She couldn't remember the last time she'd actually pursued a passion like that, for its own sake instead of to advance that grindset twenty-four seven grifting lifestyle.

"We're married in this world," James said. "Look, you're in a pretty wedding dress."

"Gross, donkey wedding."

James chuckled. "Revolting right? But weirdly kind of . . . genuine, isn't it?"

They both regarded the photo further. Both figures were beaming, and the next one featuring their kiss beneath the altar could not have been a faked expression, unlike their own, far too Instagram, investment-aimed wedding.

"Losers," James said. "Missing out on an opportunity."

"Yeah, what a pair of schmucks."

And yet, in the brief silence that followed said all. Some part of both of them longed to experience such sincerity, such genuine romantic happiness. Paired with these images of childhood that so closely mirrored what they had lost, and a sharp twinge of bittersweet, nostalgic pain had hit the pair. But, appropriately enough given their new donkey natures, both were too stubborn to admit this.

"We need to figure a way out of these gross, revolting bodies!" James announced, still a bit feminine in his delivery.

"Agreed. If we can figure out what's happened and how to turn back, then I'm sure we can still fix up our honeymoon."

"Get my followers updated. Make it out as a dramatic story that will just make them soooo sympathetic to my plight! I might even use it as an excuse to take on a new style, really milk that trauma."

"Contact my own investment bros and keep everything going, the wheels greased. I still have that NFT collection to hawk as well. But until we can figure out what's the hack to this world, we'll need to keep these ridiculous new heads of ours down."

James brayed accidentally. "You don't mean . . . ?"

"Working on the land like a total rube," Mila said. "Ugh. At least we've got more muscles, freaks that we've been turned into."

James smirked. "Just don't check mine out too closely."

"Yeah, sure, and don't be envious that my tits are better than yours were, honey."

It should have been angry bickering once again, but this time it felt different, like it was simply silly, playful banter. In fact, James found it hard not to look at and appreciate his former husband's chest, and even the udder was strangely alluring. Likewise, Mila did in fact

look over those muscles and then remember that large sheath. Something in her went a little too warm for her liking.

Both backed away from one another.

“Work it is,” James said a bit too quickly.

“Yeah, work. Out in the fields. Like some goddamn Luddite.”

It was work in a way that neither had known for a great deal of time, especially Mike/Mila, who had never even grown up on a farm, though she had visited Janet/James' as a child. Now that they were a pair of anthro-donkeys, complete with powerful muscular forms, they were expected to do the real backbreaking work; namely, dragging the plough to ready the fields for planting. The two literally had to fit themselves with a harness tied to the heavy plough, then work in concert to haul it back and forth in long lines across the first field of many. Indeed, this would be a multi-day job, not that either party intended to be along for the full job. As soon as they found a way to contact that strange Braying One, they would do so, and find a way to turn back.

“This is - hghh! - completely unbearable!” Mila whined, dragging the plough alongside her donkey husband.

“P-please, I'm p-pulling all the weight, h-honey! Hghh!!”

“Only b-because you got to b-be the man! So unf-fair!”

James actually got a little smirk on his small snout, peering over at his feminised former-husband. It was strange, really. His libido had been healthy enough as Janet, but sex had only been something they'd done to let some steam off; their marriage was just another step in what had become a monetised relationship. Now, even though he had become a big-cocked donkey man and his husband an impressively chesty *and* uddered donkey girl, he couldn't help but feel a strong attraction to the hard working woman beside him. Something about the sounds she made putting in all that hard effort and work was a turn on, and it made his cock hard.

“Ew! Love, what on earth are you doing!?”

James blushed - not that one could ever tell now thanks to his dark fur. He was wearing regular working clothes now - baggy trousers and the classic farmer overalls over the flannelette shirt - but even so the large impression of his erection was *very* obvious.

“It's not my fault!” James declared, once more disgusted at how plain and without style his clothing now was. “It just sort of happens! I was staring at you and-”

“Ugh, don’t remind me that you’re attracted to *this*,” Mila groaned, pulling the plough further and then gesturing to her udder. “I’ve got a freaking udder here. You can even tell through the clothing. It’s goddamn sensitive. And these stupid furry tits keep jiggling!”

“I imagine they would: they’re bigger than mine ever were!”

“Pfft, don’t get jealous. I won’t be making the cover of any magazine like you did.”

“Who knows with this crazy world?” James spat, sighing as he pulled the plough once more. He was definitely the stronger of the two, which gave him an unexpected pride. “Tanarra, r-right?”

“Y-yeah. They worship the sun.”

“Idiots. And they don’t even seem to have invented social media yet! It’s totally the worst! Do they have a space program? Can’t we fly back to Earth or something?”

Mila shook her head, gesturing up to the sky. “I don’t think we’re even in the same galaxy. Or perhaps even the same universe. Apart from the fact that there’s - hhg! - two freakin’ moons up there, the sun is different. Redder. It’s further along than others in its lifespan.”

James scoffed, stopping to put his hoof-hands on his hips. He still wasn’t used to those hands, or the fact that the ‘hands on hips’ motion came less naturally now that he didn’t have, well, a womanly pair of hips.

“And how the hell would you even know that? Is there some kind of solar system-themed NFT scam you ran while I wasn’t looking? Or perhaps crypto based on the cycles of the moon or something?”

“No,” Mila said, surprisingly softly. “I used to love astronomy . . . back when I was a kid. You know, before I even knew that crypto was a thing. You had braces back then. And you loved math.”

James winced. Something about the memory of that stung *because* of its sweetness. Janet had been a real science and math girl, uncaring about how she looked, and certainly not what strangers subscribing to her would think of her.

“You’re right,” he said. “I remember reading something about suns, actually. That was when I was a loser nerd girl with braces, as you say.”

“Yeah, we’re much better off now. I mean, now as humans, not as freak gender-bent donkey people, obviously.”

“Yeah,” she said.

And yet a distinct sense of discomfort passed between them as they both reminisced on the past.

“They were . . . simpler times though, weren’t they?” Mila said, swallowing a little and fiddling her strange hoof-hands together. They didn’t have as much sensitivity as regular fingers, so she was always picking at them.

“Simpler, yes,” James said, before breaking into a spontaneous smile. He made a delighted braying sound. “I remember when I got my first-in-class certificate for my science project too - not the one in the Tanarra picture, but in *our* world. I did the volcano experiment. You know, with the baking soda and vinegar. It was so obvious. But I did mine as a scaled down Krakatoa explosion. I did my best to get the shape of the volcano right and everything. Had little plaques explaining the event and all, right down to the crack of thunder being heard all the way in Australia. I . . . I haven’t thought about that in years.”

“Not good for your subscriber numbers, then?”

James frowned. “No. And it doesn’t move makeup, or any kind of product.”

“Shame. You know, when I got into scamming people with NFTs I actually looked into dinosaur-themed ones. I loved them as a kid. It was stupid.”

“I don’t know, I always thought it was a bit charming. You know, before all of this.”

Whether James was referring to *this* being donkeys, or *this* being their transition to the vapid, self-centred subscriber scammer lifestyle, was unclear to Mila. It was unclear to James as well.

“We did have a good time as kids, didn’t we?” Mila asked.

“Speak for yourself. I was on a gross, dirty farm like this! Except we had real donkeys. Stew and Kitchen.”

Mila arched an eyebrow. “Kitchen? You loved Kitchen! You gave her that stupid name.”

“Hey! Kitchen was *not* stupid! She was a beautiful donkey! And yes, I know I’m contradicting myself. Ugh. I’m getting serious farmer brain again. Let’s just finish this job, and hopefully we won’t get kicked out by that big multi-boobed pig woman, and then that damned entity that changed us can change us back for a day’s hard work!”

Mila grunted agreement, took a deep breath, and tried to ignore the way her furry breasts rose and fell like two mountains upon her chest. Then she geared up her muscles and continued to pull the plough, heaving alongside her husband.

Neither wanted to acknowledge how, within minutes, the pair found a nice groove that almost seemed to calm their agitated minds. It was hard work, of course, but just like a good day in the gym, hard work came with a sense of satisfaction.

Miss Paker has her hands on her hips and was oinking proudly - literally - as the two returned, their fur matted with sweat.

“Well, it seems you two finally found out why you were here, then!” she said, grunting a little with her own measure of contentment. “After that bizarre little heatstroke start this

morning I was getting worried, but it seems there ain't no need for you ta be replaced. You pair go shower off and food'll be served up. Part of the contract, as you'd know."

"Th-thanks," James said, simply. Clearly it was enough of their pig boss, because she oinked again in satisfaction and then stomped off.

"C'mon," he said to his wife. "Let's have a rinse off and then have dinner. I'm famished."

"God, same. Hungry as a hippo."

"As a donkey."

"Don't remind me."

They returned to their little shack, still shaking the sweat off their fur. Without even thinking, Mila peeled the clothes off of her form, letting her donkey tail go free. She'd worked with a number of IT guys when it came to her crypto and NFT and other investment businesses, and so she had the knowledge that a great many of them were sick freaks who were into furry stuff like this. Right now, she couldn't blame them as she looked in the mirror: her sense of ugliness was gone, and it was clear to her now that she was actually quite beautiful, at least as far as a donkey woman could be. Not that she wanted to be one, or even a woman, for that matter. Still, it didn't hurt to look at her husband either, as he undid the straps of his overalls and removed his now-unbuttoned shirt. It showed off his impressive fur, his even more impressive muscles, his marvellous frame.

"This is insane," she muttered to herself. "I'm finding my donkey husband hot. God, hotter than how I saw him as a girl. What the fuck is wrong with me?"

"I heard that," James said, making Mila actually *bray* in shock. He gestured at his ears. "Donkey hearing, remember."

"God damn it! I was just fucking joking, James."

"No, you weren't. I was just thinking the same thing as you. That's why I had that massive erection before, right?"

"What do you mean before? You're practically breaking through your pants right now!"

James looked down and scoffed. "Gross! Ugh, this thing reacts to everything!"

But the truth was it was reacting to *Mila*.

"Why is this happening?"

The donkey man sighed. "Because of that damned donkey god entity. It's changed our past, our species, our gender, and it's made us . . . compatible."

Mila shivered, staring at that hard cock.

"Since when did anyone ever feel so damn aroused and ready for sex after a hard day's work anyway? Just a day with the numbers and moron investors is enough to make me hit the hay . . . only the hay is more literally, now."

“Same for all my subscriber content. Now . . . God, I feel like I could take on the world.”

The revelation hit them at the same time.

“Because we’re donkeys!” they said at the same time.

“Ugh, it’s so fucking stupid,” Mila groaned, slapping her forehead and causing her tits *and* udder to jiggle. “Now we’re all, what, learning the value of hard work and its rewards? Living in bodies that get juiced up *because* they’ve been out in the damn sun all day?”

“I guess so. This is so not me, Mila. I’m meant to be a delicate thing, not dragging a plough and having a tail and body hair and a huge hard cock!”

“Well, at least we finished the job,” Mila said. “I can’t believe I’m saying this, but thank God for these mad fucking donkey muscles.”

She flexed, still naked before James. In the act of doing so, she inadvertently thrust out her chest. Her large furry breasts were topped with dark grey nipples, and they were practically throbbing, stiff and large and erect right before James’ gaze. His eyes swept down from her cute, furry donkey face to her strong yet undeniably female body, especially those wide hips. Those wide *breeding* hips.

James had no idea why the thought had come to him. Why that word in particular. They had never planned on children unless it was to monetise them with one of those lucrative mommy and daddy blogs, and only then if they got desperate. But now . . . breeding felt something far more natural. Animal.

Primal.

“Stop that,” James said, trying to snap himself out of it.

“Stop what? You always wanted me to have more muscle instead of being, and I quote, ‘a boney IT guy’. You’re complaining now that I’m actually ripped? This is the only fucking good thing about being a donkey girl.”

“No, I’m not complaining.”

“Oh, I’d say you are. Not like you don’t have big sexy muscles of your own. And I’ll admit it, I’m jealous of that big cock and those muscles and that height. But admit it back, you’re jealous of *my* tits and hips and shape, even as a gross animal girl!”

“Not gross,” James said, unable to hold himself back. “And now jealous either.

Attracted.”

And with that, he strode across the room, placed his hoof-hands around her form, and began to make out with her. Mila was momentarily shocked, but quickly gave herself over to it. The instincts were with her too, raging beneath the surface, and now they were swelling as surely as her breasts had, currently squashed lovingly against her husband’s muscular chest. It was hell and it was heaven: the pair hadn’t ‘mated’ since even before the wedding, and even that had been teased online by Janet as a fun sexy experimentation that

had caused Mike to become angry and storm out after the act. And now, trapped in bodies that could not have been less like their own, they were finding a spark of attraction anew. James was shocked to feel his member sliding even further out of his sheath, hardening against Mila's belly, her udder's leathery texture rubbing upon it as well. She in turn was shocked by the sensitivity of said udder, not to mention her furry breasts, which he squeezed and pawed at as if he'd always been male.

"Why - ohhhh - do I want this s-so fucking bad!?" she pleaded.

"I d-don't know, honey," James replied. "We're so furry and sweaty and muscly and animal-like and - and *hot!* I need you!"

It was instinct. A mating drive. Neither could know it just yet, but this was the nature of all intelligent species on Tanarra; they maintained that primal breeding instinct. Not that humanity had exactly shed theirs either back on Earth, but it was certainly more controllable. Now, the strongest of wills would have a hard time pushing against the need to breed, and neither James nor Mila, nor their original human selves, had ever possessed a great deal of willpower. It was how they'd fallen so far in the first place.

"**BRAAAYY!!**" Mila bellowed, as her body pressed against the back wall of their little farm flat, causing ornaments and books and picture frames to fall to the ground. "I didn't mean - it's just so sensitive!"

James, who had squeezed her udder a little with his hoof-hand, grinned.

"And so is this," he said, moving her hand to his erect member. "You remember how I used to stroke yours? Do that for me now. I have to feel it, Mila. Just like you need to feel me."

"Fuck, this is so wrong!"

"Of course it's wrong! I'm meant to be a woman of style and influence! Now hurry up and stroke my cock, honey!"

Mila bit her lip, still not used to how her new snout was configured. There was just a moment of resistance, and then she gave in. She reached out with her hoof-hand and began to stroke it, first gingerly, then with more confidence as instinct took centre-stage once again. James, for his part, played again with her udder and breasts, kissing his lover in the meanwhile. The two shifted in the room, accidentally knocking away more ornamentation and books and the like with their tails, clattering what had already fallen with the hooves that now made up their feet. Both were lost in a forbidden, bestial passion, and their muscular, powerful donkey forms only made the leadup to sex all the more *potent*.

And sex was indeed coming.

The smell was in the air, and they couldn't help sampling each other. James even pressed his snout into Mila's cleavage and breathed deep, taking in as much of her female scent as possible. Then, much to her surprise and perhaps his own, he lowered her with his

strong arms to the floor, scattering the rest of the debris, and then lowered his snout to her nethers.

“Ahhhhh,” he grunted, taking in the glorious scent of his lover’s now very wet womanhood. “You smell so inviting.”

“N-no! We can fight this, damn it!” Mila moaned, even as she widened her legs, placing her hooves in the air as she did so.

“Then close your damn legs, woman! You’re like me after a party! Remember than night in Fiji?”

“H-how can I forget? Ohhhhh, even my tail is going to one side to invite you! This isn’t m-me!”

“This isn’t m-me either! But after all that hard work, why not enjoy some rewards?”

“Listen to yourself, James!” Mila cried, but she was stroking his cock again, imagining what it would feel like inside of her. The world of crypto, bitcoin, NFTs, investor scams, online trade, it all seemed to melt away into Mila’s uncaring subconscious compared to the very real desire to be mated. “You’re not acting like you!”

“Aren’t I? I used to be curious! I used to want to try new things! And you used to be so sensitive, just like this!”

The male donkey tweaked her nipples before running a hand down to her udder, making the female moan. James’ own mindset had likewise transformed: skincare, beauty routines, the process of airing out her every outfit, petty drama, celebrity gossip opinion and shallow Go Fund Me goal was now insignificant when measured against the power of her form. Just as the Braying One had hoped for them, their first true hard day’s work in literal years was bringing to the surface their shared attraction, even in their radically altered forms. The driving bestial Tanarran instinct was just there to kick of the magic.

“Stop it, then!” Mila cried, and for a moment James was actually disappointed. But then she spoke again: “Stop fucking delaying! No one likes an investment that takes too long to pay off!”

“Is that what you think of this as?”

Mila groaned. “Just let me think of it in those terms and I can put up with aaaaaa!”

She never got to finish the sentence, because that’s when James entered her. She hadn’t even realised she’d helped guide him in, but suddenly he was parting her walls, and those same sensitive walls were clinging to his member, coating it in her juices, and making the experience all the more pleasurable. She seized up, shuddering as he went all the way in. And perhaps they would have savoured this more, had they not delayed so much already. Instead, James began thrusting almost immediately, working deep within her and pulling almost all the way out, then thrusting deeply again.

“Holy fuck, I’m fucking you!” he cried.

"I kn-know! Don't you - ohhhh - s-stop! This is s-something else!"

"I know! What the hell are we d-doing?"

"Trying n-new things, right?"

James actually laughed along with her - when had been the last time they had even laughed together like this? Not scoffed, not guffawed or smirked or sneered with the lips turned just a little up at the edges, but actually joyfully *laughed*? Neither could say, but it only made them laugh again, pausing their sex for just a few moments as they held one another, appreciating the sheer insanity of what they were going through too, but also appreciating *one another*.

"More," James declared, and then they were back at it again, him bucking, practically *pounding*. His tail flapped all over the place, and hers whipped at his leg. He got the feeling he might have some mighty welts there later, but somehow that was even more of a turn on. She gripped him with her powerful thighs, and he took the time to lick her nipples with his elongated tongue. This was the kind of treatment James would have loved as Janet, and he put that knowledge to good use.

"M-more," Mila repeated. "More! I n-need more, James! I can f-feel it! You're s-so big! So strange but soooo - NGHH! NNGGGHH!!!! BRAAAAAYYY!!!"

"BRAAYYYY!!!"

It came upon them suddenly, and perhaps almost disappointingly. James orgasmed inside Mila, making her bray like a true donkey. She too was lost in orgasm as well, and both were shocked at the pleasure they received. It turns out that was something they could also thank the Braying One for - he had certainly rewarded his kind with intense bliss, almost as much as the Porcine God (who had gone distinctly overboard, what with those half-hour orgasms).

After some time, James lifted his head off of Mila's neck, where he had been nuzzling her. A further understanding passed between them over what had just happened, and after a protected grunt and further braying as he extracted his cock from her still-moist depths, a dark silence followed.

"That was a one time thing," James announced. "It won't be happening again."

"Please, princess! Don't speak as if you were the victim just now! I was the one that just got fucking penetrated like you should have been on your wedding night if you weren't too busy posting!"

"Oh, like you didn't enjoy it? I heard those brays!"

"It's these stupid instincts! Damn that donkey god, when will he be appeased?"

James folded his powerful arms. "One thing's for sure, we won't be doing that again while we wait to find out, no matter how good it felt."

Mila swallowed. "Yeah, exactly. It did . . . it did feel good though, didn't it?"

James cracked a small, genuine smile. “The kind of bliss we should have had on our wedding night, if I wasn’t posting all the time.”

“Or I wasn’t already on the crypto subreddits . . .”

Another smile was exchanged between them, this one even more genuine. They laughed awkwardly, as if they were young again, and still wide-eyed at not just the world but one another.

“It’s still not happening again,” Mila said.

“Obviously,” James replied. “We weren’t acting like us.”

The two took their dinner - all vegetarian, to their new appetite’s delight - from Miss Paker, rather than eating with her. The pig woman was a little disappointed, clearly hoping to know more about her new hires, but accepted their decision.

“We’ve got a whole season ta get to know one another, don’t we?” she said, snorting happily as she shooed them away. “Sides, no doubt ya’ll are tired after a first big day’s work! Looking forward to seeing how you plough together tomorrow!”

Both of them froze at her words.

“P-plough together?” James said.

“Yeah, making my fields ready for the new cabbage planting.”

“Oh, of course! Y-yeah,” Mila said, meekly withdrawing.

Both were already thinking of that *other* kind of ploughing. It remained in their minds as they fell asleep. Mila let James have the bunk, given that James was originally the woman of the pair it seemed the gentlemanly thing to do, even if odd for their new configuration. She slept on the carpet with some pillows and a blanket, but given their new bodies they could have probably slept in a barn or on the dirt beneath the stars and found it comfortable. That was the scary thing, really; how hardy and tough their new bodies were. There was almost something admirable about it.

This proved to be more and more true as their first day on Tanarra as donkeyfolk turned to their first pair of days, and then their first half week, and then their first full week, and then their first half-month. Each day, the pair of donkey folk had to get up at the crack of dawn to fulfil their duties. The planting time would soon be upon them, and according to Miss Paker the weather shifts were unpredictable this year. Her friends over at the so-called ‘Mackinson Farm’ were friendly competitors, and she was set to host a dinner with one of their members soon, and wanted her newly expanded fields to be all set with pride and joy.

Pride and joy.

Those two simple words that had been utterly alien to James and Mila until recently. Both were adamant on finding a cure to their condition, to getting back to Earth even if it meant bowing apologies to the Braying One, not that they truly knew much of the entity that had so easily changed them. But in the meantime, forced as they were to occupy their new lives and work for a living, that very work was coming to sustain them beyond just the monetary and the provision of shelter. Neither Mike nor Janet could have ever imagined it since going down their respective rabbit holes, but working hard and close to the land indeed endowed them with a powerful sense of catharsis. It had been a long time since James had ever valued farm work, but the former female was now recalling why her father would return to the home after a long day's work in the fields looking satisfied despite all the dust and mud and sweat he had accrued. And now that they were donkey people, hard work seemed to quite literally sustain their spirits: it was hard to actually resist the call to take up the hard burdens of farm work, even as both desperately tried to pretend they didn't care for it.

It wasn't just ploughing the fields either, but the continuous work of then helping sow said fields. There was also the repair work on the rudimentary machinery of the Paker farm as well, and helping resurrect the semi-collapsed barn that had been hit by a particularly strong gale the previous year. Even stuck as a woman, Mila was astonished at her own strength: working with her husband, she could hold a load-bearing post in place that was keeping up half the upper barn floor, all while Paker or a farmhand went to work setting it back in place.

"It's crazy how freakin' strong we are now," Mila said, once more posing with her furry grey muscles.

"Imagine being male, then!" James announced.

"Trust me, I often do."

"Oh, yeah, sorry. If it's any consolation, you're doing more manly work than you ever did as an actual boyfriend or husband, Mila."

She folded her arms as they walked back to their little flat at the end of the day.

"Don't remind me! It's throwing my sense of self way out. I keep waiting for that damn donkey god thing to turn us back, by the Sun. Shit, now I'm apparently referring to the local sun god, goddamnit."

James chuckled, throwing a strong, slightly sweat-matted arm around his wife's shoulders. He couldn't help but enjoy the sway of her hips, the way she moved upon her hooves, even how her tail swung behind her thighs.

"Don't get too accustomed. I still plan to go back to makeup and beauty routines, and get back in touch with my subscribers once this is all over."

"Same for my businesses, obviously. Have some new investments on . . . things."

In truth, Mila hadn't thought of her businesses in a few days, and had forgotten some of the numbers she was constantly juggling in her head.

They entered the flat, a new energy coming over them. James closed the door and immediately began removing his clothing. Mila did the same, sighing as she did so, that need coming over her once more.

"On the bed or on the floor?" James suggested, his huge member sliding forth from its furry sheath.

Mila shook her head. "Neither. Up against the wall. I want you to lift me."

"Mhmm, I like that. You're such a needy girl, Mila."

"Hey! This is what we both need while we're stuck like this. Don't make it weird."

James chuckled. "We're just exploring, I know."

"Exactly! Just . . . enjoying some curiosity again."

Indeed, what followed was quite curious. Despite their best attempts to hold onto their own former frameworks, the two had been fucking practically every day after their long hours of work. Something about the build up of sweat, effort, and their constant gazes at one another's very healthy forms just made it all impossible to avoid, not that they truly wanted to. Mila was increasingly addicted to James' very impressive donkey cock. Where once she had loved feeling dominant, like when she acted the part of the all-knowing investor leading little lambs to success, now that sensation of giving herself over to a true master was divine. And while James was finding himself shedding away his shallow obsession with being petite and done up and perfect, now savouring that manly feeling of dominance.

But beyond even the pleasure, there was something else, a connection that was slowly but surely reforming between the pair of them, as if years of obsessive point-scoring and money-hoarding were slowly being undone. Mila brayed openly, uncaring how loud she was being as James fucked her against the wall, and once more a number of ornaments from their new lives tumbled to the ground. She climaxed, gripping her lover tightly and braying a second and third time in tune with her orgasms. James, for his part, exploded within her, his throbbing dick shooting stream after stream of warm cum deep into her womb. He brayed too, in a much lower tone than even her husky voice.

And this was where that connective element came in, because instead of parting immediately, washing themselves off, and trying not to talk about it, James instead pressed his furry forehead against hers. Mila returned the gesture, and the two closed their eyes, nuzzling softly against one another, their hands still roaming each others' forms. James lowered her gently down to her hooves, helping her steady herself, and the gesture was one of utmost intimacy.

"That was really nice," James said.

"Y-yeah, it was," Mila said.

The pair laughed. Giggled, in fact, like they had in the old days before some dumb online algorithm had told Janet that giggling in such a sweet, silly manner brought a net reduction to online social stream earnings.

“This is so ridiculous,” Mila said.

“I know! There’s no way we’re actually enjoying this, right? All this farmwork and stuff?”

“Well, you did do farmwork that one time for your Instagram account.”

“Please, I paid that one guy to take a shot of me banging a few nails and then claimed it was for charity. Jesus, I was being a shit person that day. The old me from the farm would have hated what I’ve become.”

“Huh, same for the old me, too. I loved dinosaurs and space and exploring and climbing rocks. The idea of growing up to just exploit people using metrics . . . fuck. When did that change even occur?”

The two of them sat on the bed, the frame creaking slightly under their impressive weight.

“I don’t know,” James said, slightly pensive. He held his wife’s hoof-hands in his own. “But we’ll have to go back to that, right?”

“Yeah. Of course. We’ll have to.”

“So this will just have to be a crazy little trip sideways, or something. Until that donkey god changes us back, we’ll just . . . enjoy living close to the land and being a bit more like our old selves again.”

“A holiday from the grift. From the numbers.”

“Exactly!” James said. “I mean, I’m not exactly winning any beauty awards right now, am I?”

Mila smirked. “Just like I’m not exactly commanding attention with furry donkey girl boobs and a two-teat udder, right?”

“I don’t know, maybe it’s just my donkey man instincts, but you command my attention.”

Mila blushed, thought again, it was hidden by her fur. “And you look very beautiful to me, at least, right now. Very handsome.”

That’s when the pair did something they very rarely did as humans, but felt so natural to them now: they kissed. Not as a prelude to another round of sex, not from the passion of physical attraction. They kissed because they wanted to, because they had both begun to feel for one another again.

It was a surprise to them both.

That night, they slept together in bed, holding one another’s furry forms. It was the best sleep either could remember in ages.

Faye Paker snorted with laughter before taking another bite from her fruit-filled plate.

“Well, well, who knew my two new farmhands had such a sense of humour? I swear, you were the most serious, withdrawn pair I could imagine when ya first came along.”

James and Mila smiled, perhaps a little nervously. They hadn't even meant to make a joke when they had mentioned their favourite food and 'pork' had come up, but clearly their porcine employer had found it hilarious.

“We were just nervous,” James said. “Um, the food here is actually amazing. I can't believe how good it tastes.”

Miss Paker snorted again. “Just hay and grass, sonny.”

“But surely you do something with it?” Mila said, half-chewing on some hay from her plate.

“Nah! Just hay and grass. I ain't running no charity. But then, we all got our quirks, I suppose. Porcine kind just can't help but throw themselves in a warm mud puddle even on a busy day, and donkey folk got simple but powerful tastes. Can't say I'm not jealous. What do you think, Charlie?”

They were eating inside Faye Paker's house, and were apparently on first-name basis with her now. It made sense: they'd been working for her for over a month now. She had insisted they hurry up and join her for a meal for once, and this time they had accepted, feeling strangely comfortable to do so, if still a little nervous. She was eager to introduce them to a member of the Mackinson farm clan from a few miles north. Apparently they were a 'mixed family.' For humans, that would just mean people of different races. In Tanarra, it apparently meant they had cow, horse, and pig people all under one roof, all inter-married or related in some way or another, not that James or Mila were confident enough to question how the baby situation would work there. Charlie, the one who had come to dinner from the Mackinson farm, was a big burly boar man, almost as wide as he was tall. He was shorter than even Mila, but he could probably give James a run for his money in brute strength. His tusks jutted out from his lower jaw, and he was impressively hairy, albeit in a far coarser manner. He wore simple farmer's clothes and guffawed at a lot of the jokes. Once, the pair would have detested being in the presence. Instead, both of them liked him immediately.

“Farm work really changes you, doesn't it?” Charlie said, his voice a bellow in the dining room as he went to work on his own plate. “I remember once I could barely stand it! At least, I thought I couldn't stand it. You couldn't catch me doing farmwork thanks to my partner. I was . . . you might even say a bit *prissy* over it! Hah!”

He snorted in amusement at some private joke.

“Wanted to go to the big city to follow my h-wife. I know a lot better now, and so does she. Turns out I really did want the farm life all along. Besides, the city isn’t the best place to raise an endless parade of piglets.”

Mila and James exchanged a look.

“You have children?” Mila asked. Her stomach grumbled a bit. She was hungrier than usual recently, so she forked down more as she listened to his answer.

“Oh, we got . . . carry the one . . . twenty! No, twenty one!”

James’ jaw fell. “Twenty one?”

Charlie grinned. “And counting! We make big litters, us porcine folk.”

“Which is why I remain a single woman, thank you very much,” Faye said, rolling her eyes a little.

“It’s not for everyone,” Charlie said. “But raising a family close to the earth, letting the little critters roam and explore and find all sorts of strange things to interest themselves, there’s nothing better than it. Besides, they get to grow up and see hard work up close. I didn’t have that as a kid, so it took something, er, rather strange in my life to point me in a different direction.”

Again, the donkey pair exchanged a shared look of understanding.

“Um, we had something very, well, strange happen to us too,” Mila said.

“One that definitely pointed us in a *very* different direction to what we were expecting,” James added.

Charlie eyed them somewhat curiously, his brow creasing as he considered them.

“Is that so, huh?”

“It was just a change in the city,” James added, hurriedly.

“Yeah, yeah, I can imagine so. I know that kind of change well. You get led astray by all kinds of different entities . . .”

He left the sentence hanging. Mila actually gulped. Faye though, clearly missed any undertone to the conversation, because she just clapped her hoof-hands together.

“Right! Who wants another round of tucker? Call me a pig - ha! - but I’m still starved!”

It was a good excuse to send the conversation in a different direction, and from that point Charlie seemed completely unsuspecting again. But both Mila and James got the distinct sense that he knew something, so when he got up to leave and say goodbye for the night, they chased him out before he could get into the tractor he had decided to use for his ride.

“Wait, wait!” Mila cried, her furry bosom heaving as she climbed up the side of the tractor to see the boar man from face to face. James was just behind her, still standing on the ground.

“Can I help you, miss?” Charlie asked. “It’s gotta be quick. My darling Dani is pretty damn full of piglets right now, and I’d like to be back to help her put the littlest pink ones to sleep.”

“You know something, don’t you?” Mila asked. “About what’s happened to us?”

Charlie paused, and stopped the tractor’s engine. “And what exactly happened to you?”

Mila took a steady breath. It was worth the risk. “We came from . . . a different place. Have you ever heard of social media? The Declaration of *Human* Rights? Cryptocurrency? Race meaning more the colour of your skin than the number of teats you’ve got or the shape of your head?”

Charlie chewed on a nonexistent piece of straw for a moment.

“I won’t say that I have,” he said.

Mila’s face fell. “Oh . . .”

“You’re not listening close enough, girl. I said ‘I *won’t* say that I have,’ meaning that I will neither confirm nor deny what you’re talking about. I will say this, though. People that come to Tanarra from . . . elsewhere - theoretically, of course - they come here for a reason. Perhaps because they were running away from a life they loved all because they felt pressured to do so, or perhaps because the life they had wasn’t the one they should have had. Sometimes it’s punishment, but sometimes a punishment can turn into a gift.”

“But . . . going back?”

Charlie shrugged. “Wouldn’t know about that, and that’s the full truth. If you can go back, I don’t know of it. But then again, I wouldn’t want to. Would you?”

It was the armour piercing question. Mila’s pause was just long enough for all three persons to recognise the meaning of her silence.

“That’s what I thought,” Charlie said. “Sometimes it takes a while to cotton onto it though, doesn’t it? Now, if you’ll excuse me. Ya’ll have a good night now.”

He turned the engine on while Mila lowered herself. Then he drove away slowly, leaving the donkey pair to stand there. Slowly, James placed an arm around his wife.

They didn’t have sex when they returned to their home on the farm that night. Mila was feeling more exhausted and emotional than usual, though she still had to scoff down some more hay, much to James’ amusement. Neither talked about the question Charlie had asked, it was still too fresh in their minds. Instead, they showered together, shared a laugh at their frizzy forms as they helped towel each other off, and then went to bed together.

The next day was hard work, and it helped keep their minds off of the subject. Other people had clearly been transformed as they had, transported to Tanarra. Charlie had all but directly implied it. And yet, he was clearly happy in his new life. As they worked the plough and helped sow the land, both Mila and James couldn't help but follow a similar line of thought: weren't *they* happier, too? They were having more sex than ever before, sure, but they were also *closer*. They talked easily, readily, and honestly. Mila was saving up for a telescope so she could map the night skies of Tanarra, and had already ordered some books on the strange megafaunal extinct species that once roamed this world. James, for his part, was getting more and more nostalgic for his own farm days. He dreamed of starting his own farm up once they'd collected enough savings. He would have to get back into his research, but his science-loving heart had also been unlocked. There were ways of treating the soil and irrigating the land that the people of Tanarra clearly hadn't considered yet. Why shouldn't he apply his old, forgotten smarts and be a trailblazer, all while connecting back to the values of a hard, honest day's work?

"That's crazy," Mila said, checking through her telescope and taking notes on the stars. This conversation had been circling around between them by this point.

James, who was enjoying watching Mila bend over as he sat on the grass behind her, scratched the fur on the side of his face.

"It's just theoretical, honey. I'm finding myself remembering a lot more about the kind of person I used to be. If we do end up stuck here—"

"We won't be."

"But if we *do*, we could . . . we could start our own farm. It would be our project. Not separate between us."

Mila bit her lower lip and adjusted the telescope. She could feel her husband's gaze on her *rondure* backside, she let her tail raise up a little to give him a better view.

"Well, that doesn't sound all bad. Nice, actually. It's just hard to fathom. I mean, from a life of crypto to being a donkey farm girl? It feels like it should be insulting."

James caught the little hook in her words. "Like it *should* be insulting . . . but does it actually *feel* insulting?"

Mila adjusted her scope. The stars truly were beautiful here. She'd lived so long in the city that she'd forgotten how it felt to be beneath a small town sky, or even better, out in the rural scape. No doubt James was feeling quite similar.

"I don't have to answer that," she said.

"I'm your husband, honey."

"You should be my wife. Ugh, not that I've been complaining lately. This is all so fucking insane. At least the stars are beautiful. Fascinating, really."

James chuckled. "I missed this side of you. The cute nerd."

Mila turned to look at her husband. He looked quite handsome, sprawled out on the grass, bestial and beautiful.

“And I missed this side of you; the side that loved nature, and not just for a fancy curated photoshoot.”

“God, I don’t miss those photoshoots.”

“I thought you loved them.”

“Nope. Hated them. I think . . . I think I hated most of what I did. Really fucking hated it.”

Mila nodded. “I was thinking earlier while we were doing that repair job, that it was giving me that same rush of improvement and advancement as grifting did, without, y’know, having to be a grifter. I guess, if nothing else, that donkey god has taught us a lesson, huh?”

James nodded, and opened his arms to accept Mila back into them. She lay back in his lap, allowing him to hold her. Both of them should have been in bed, of course. Each day was a hard day, with the exception of their weekends, but the stars were out and romance was in the air once more.

“Just watch the udder,” Mila said. “And the boobs. They’re a bit sore from all the attention lately.”

“I’ll keep that in mind. I think I fucked you into a coma the other day with how much you wanted to sleep in.”

“I was tired! Even for a donkey!”

“Ha, you used to make fun of my own ‘beauty sleep,’ as I recall.”

Mila brayed softly, a small chuckle.

“Why did you pause?” James suddenly asked.

“Pause when?”

“Yesterday, when Charlie asked if you wanted to go back to Earth or not? To be human again?”

Mila had to wipe away a few tears. That was another thing, she was feeling so emotional lately. She lowered her husband's hands down from her tender breasts.

“Because,” she said, speaking slowly, her ears pricked up in fear that someone else might hear her words, “because I didn’t know the answer.”

James held her a little closer, his hands rubbing her stomach softly. It was strangely comforting for them both, as if it came naturally.

“You like being like this?”

“No! I mean . . . kinda? I like the change it’s made to me.” Mila sagged a little. “I’m happier. It’s fucking embarrassing to admit, but I think we’re both happier, right? I mean, we’re having more sex, we’re doing work together we like, we’re having romance like this. I’m sorry, James, maybe it’s just because I feel like such a freakin’ hormone cocktail the last

week or so, or some stupid donkey instinct, or maybe - and this is the really fucking crazy part - I might actually *like* being a donkey gal. Maybe I'm just weak, despite being a buff female now and everything. But a really big part of me - a growing part - just doesn't want to go!"

James was silent, still holding her as she talked to the sky, unable to face him.

"I mean, is that so crazy? We could make a life here, right? It's not exactly the life we could've had if we ended up not becoming such a pair of shallow scammers, but it's closer to how we were before, isn't it? We could have a farm like the one you grew up on just like you say, and you could bring back all those smarts you used to have to make it happen. We both could!"

James remained silent, his hands still around her. Mila found her mouth yapping on as it often did when she was making pitches to dumb yuppie investors. Only instead of using savvy charisma and deceptive arguments, here she found herself completely genuine.

"I know it sounds insane. I've got an udder, for Christ's sake! Not that I plan to use it. And big furry boobs. And that's not even getting into what's between my legs versus what's between yours. But we've made it work, haven't we? I mean, we're actually loving our work and finding ourselves in a busy but peaceful life. I don't even *want* to deal with all those blasted numbers again, and you haven't even *talked* about wanting to post stuff for your subscribers or start a new trend or whatever in two weeks, it seems! Maybe this really was a kind of, heh, *donkey* kick up the backside for both of us? Maybe this could be a kind of redemption."

She stared up at the stars.

"A new start, for both of us. Together. James?"

She turned her head back even as she sat in her lover's lap. "James?"

To her surprise, her husband's expression was one of utter relief. Slowly, a smile spread across his face, his hoof-hands holding her even more lovingly as he rotated her to face him. She spread her thighs so that she was upon him, her own hands around his thick, stout neck.

"Honey," James said, clearing a throat hoarse with emotion. "I think you're damn right."

"Y-you do?"

He nodded, pressing his forehead comfortingly against hers.

"Let's try and make this work, both of us."

Mila giggled. "Even if I'm your donkey wife?"

"So long as you accept me as your donkey husband."

The pair kissed, running their hands over each others' fur, their passion growing.

"Outside?" James asked. "Are you sure?"

"I'm feeling really horny right now," Mila said. "And we've got a lot to make up for after spending too many years faking love. Now, I want to be *making love*."

James grinned, helping his wife out of her clothing.

"I want nothing more, honey. No Snapchat filters, no Instagram poses, no Pinterest pinups. Just us beneath the stars."

"Make a pair of asses of ourselves," Mila quipped.

It was enough to get them both laughing again, before they resumed their lovemaking. And then, some rather pleasurable braying occurred.

Faye frowned as Mila and James approached them. They hadn't finished the jobs she'd set for them for the day, and was clearly hoping there was no problem. She sniffed the air, full of concern, only for her eyes to go wide.

"I'm sorry, I'll get ride back to the fences, Miss Paker," James said. "My wife is a bit sick. She's been throwing up and I think she needs some care, first. I don't know if it's gastro or-"

"Mhmmh," Mila said, covering her mouth a little, before sighing. "It's - it's passed, now. I feel totally fine and then this exhaustion comes over me, and then I throw up! Three days in a row now!"

Miss Paker smirked and folded her arms, regarding the pair. Yes, the nose didn't lie, but then how did this woman's husband now smell the obvious, given his own senses? Clearly, these city-slicker types had forgotten their bestial roots!

"Oh, I don't think she'll need much care, but she'll need to take it easy for a bit, of course."

"Of course," James said. "Perhaps a day off?"

"I was thinking we put her on lighter duties for, oh, say a few months? Maybe six or so months, in fact?"

The pair frowned. Mila was confused. "Look, I may be a lady, but I'm still tough as hell. Tougher than I was, er, before."

"Oh, I don't doubt that, young one. But I'd also recommend that you take care of yourself. And perhaps eat a bit more, too. It's not like it's just about you now, is it?"

Mila frowned, cocking her donkey head to one side. Faye was aghast. And *she* didn't know?

"Ya'll really haven't figured it out? By the Sun, what do they teach you in those big cities of yours? I heard that braying that goes on at night between you two! You been mating!"

James tried to formulate a reply, scratching his dark donkey's mane. "Well, we didn't mean to-"

"And did ya'll not think of the consequence of mating? Tell me dear, has that udder of yours been feeling a bit fuller later? The breasts too?"

Mila's eyes went wide. Realisation hit her. Oh God, it couldn't be . . . could it? She shot a hand to her stomach, and this made James gasp in a manner that was surprisingly quite the callback to his once lady-like existence.

"No! What? Really!?"

Faye smirked as she beheld the two. "My congratulations to you both. I look forward to meeting the little foal in a couple of seasons."

Mila's jaw was still dropped, as was James'. But even as he placed a comforting arm around his wife, the pair couldn't help but feel a warm glow inside them. They exchanged a glance, and a smile snuck over Mila's features.

"We've already gone through one wild change," she whispered. "What's one more?"

The Braying One was stubborn, but always true to its word, even to itself. It had no true desire to revisit those it had punished until a long enough time had passed and the entity happened to be in the area. Such was the case now, five years on from that day it had transformed the pair. The Cat God had met it twice since, and found it deeply amusing that the Braying One had accidentally switched their genders. It was enough of a nuisance that the donkey god nearly decided to change them back upon returning, in order to silence that annoying, teasing creature.

That was, until it arrived in Tanarra, and found the area it had deposited the couple entirely absent of them. Faye Paker - one of the Porcine God's creatures, naturally - had hired a number of donkey folk, but none of them contained the essence of the ones who had been Mike and Janet. The Braying One sniffed the air, and invisibly shifted across the plains, traversing great distances in a straight line to its destination. There, it found its targets, only to be quite happily surprised.

Well, not quite *happy*. The Braying One was far too stoic and serious for that. But perhaps . . . contented. Satisfied.

A new farmstead had been constructed, one that was not ostentatious and garish, but large and practical, its wood and brick structure made sensibly through hard work and effort from the very persons that owned it. Surrounding it were all the sheds, barns, and silos of a farm dedicated to its wheat, grain, and oats, right down to its expansive fields. The Braying One drew close, keeping itself invisible, in order to see how the pair were going.

But of course, they weren't exactly a *pair* anymore.

"Mooooom! Can't we go already! I wanna see Jacklin!"

"That's *Jaqueline*, dear."

"I wanna seeeeee her! She's my bestest friend in the whole world! And she's a cow person! They're the best!"

Mila rolled her eyes, smirking privately to her husband, who was holding her hoof-hand firmly as they descended the front steps of their porch.

"We'll be there soon, Abigail, just have patience! Your mother can't move as easily as she did. I've got a foal in one arm and another in my belly, for goodness sake!"

It was true. In the five years since they had first transformed, life had truly changed for Mila and James. The evidence was right there in her hands and in her figure: she had an adorable little foal nursing from her at that very moment, with the same dark grey colouring as his parents, but with some speckled white spots across his hide. His name was Peter, and while he was now old enough to crawl and even occasionally walk, he still required a good amount of milk per day from his mother, though he was slowly weaning off. It was a good thing too, because it would only be a few months until the third little foal arrived for their family, one whose gender was not yet known but would be loved equally regardless.

"Are you sure you're up for this?" James asked, fussing over his wife.

"I'm - nng - fine!" Mila declared, straightening her back as they marched across the lawn, little Abigail running to and fro in her adorable little pink girl's dress, her donkey ears pricked high in the air as if hoping to hear the Mackinson clan from here. "Just a lot of damn kicking from the little one! Udder's getting f-full again too."

James smirked, rubbing his wife's back as they walked to the car. "As I recall, you were the one who was very keen on not using protection that night," he whispered, so quietly that not even their daughter's able hearing could pick them up.

Mila nudged him playfully with her elbow. "Oh, don't you start! You were a monster that night . . . not that I minded. Not that I mind any of this."

She stroked her belly. She was in her Sunday best, even if Sunday meant something entirely different in a world where denizens literally worshipped the sun. The donkey woman was adorned in an old-fashioned green maternity dress that had built-in support for her lactating udder and gave access to nurse her children. With her wide brim hat, she felt like something out of an old movie . . . if an old movie had donkey folk in it. Of course, normally she was a lot happier to wear flannel and a loose skirt (made it easier for udder access for her children than denim maternity jeans), or perhaps a pair of overalls with a flap for milking. But today was to be a barbecue get together with their friends at the Mackinson clan, as well as Faye Paker who would be joining them. It was an excuse to dress up a little - smart casual at best - and have some fun and celebrate life.

And indeed, life was worth celebrating for the pair. No longer were their lives shallow or obsessed with chasing ever greater fortune. They had acquired their own farm right before Peter's birth, and from there worked to make it their home. The pair were immensely proud of it, and already Abigail was following in her parents' footsteps, obsessed with ancient species and going out with her mother to look at the stars. And this was to say nothing of the love that had continually bloomed in the homestead: James and Mila were even more deeply passionate now, even as busy parents, than in the weeks following their initial changes. Something about being pregnant had flipped a switch in Mila too: after the initial panic and excitement, she had come to love the sensation of growing life within her. And when little Abigail and then Peter had arrived, she had decided to be a farmer's wife true and have a whole horde of little ones to fill their large household with. Not that it hurt having such a loving husband who was always there to help her into the car, which was what James did now.

"Thank you honey," Mila said. "Oof. I swear, I sometimes feel like I've got twins!"

"Here's hoping!" James declared, kissing her. "Okay, Abby, let's get you into the car!"

They buckled their excitable daughter in, then placed the now-sleeping Peter into his own seat. Their vehicle was very retro, what with Tanarra's technology being behind that of Earth's. For the pair of them, that was utterly fine.

They were an old-fashioned pair of donkeys now, and that was fine by them.

"It seems a lesson has been learned, and then some," the Braying One said to itself, watching the car slowly exit the farmstead and make its way onto the road. The donkey god nodded with satisfaction, pleased with its efforts. It was a good thing that it had all turned out right, because it wasn't like the entity would admit a mistake anyway.

Donkeys could be stubborn like that.

The End