

Part 1

A Clean Hit, In 'n' Out

Two triple-strand nylon ropes fell from the helicopter cargo doors and trailed in the violent breeze as it careened and swayed back to a halt, flattening the overgrown grass 30 feet beneath. The ropes pulled taught as four shadowy kit-leaden figures rappelled to the ground and set a frenzied pace into the thick bush where the copter spotlight wouldn't reach.

"Tac-lights up. We're two clicks out from the target area. Briggs – take point!"

The widest man in the squad accelerated and began cutting a path through the foliage as piercing torches flicked on at the tip of each SA80 assault rifle.

"Hey Captain, you mind saying what's got us out in the arse end of nowhere – and why *exactly* are we needing a dark insertion... over two clicks from the target?"

"Careful Briggs... catching you thinkin' again, huh?!" Foley interjected from the back of the line.

"Fuck you Fole – like you ain't curious!" Briggs shouted to his rear, "We're here for one guy, right? But the chopper can't get us any closer than two kilometres – even at night? Who is this guy?!"

Captain Roland lowered his weapon, placing an iron grip on Briggs' shoulder, and leaned in toward his ear.

"Quit your bleating, Officer Briggs – or you'll be finding out quicker than we planned."

He released his grip, allowing the larger man to continue forging toward the edge of the grasses.

Reaching a clearing, the Captain double-tapped his front-man's shoulder then held his fist up signalling a stop to the others.

"We're half a click out. Now's the time, Specialist Dartford – fill 'em in. Quietly."

The black-clad men huddled and stared at their fourth squad mate, whose eery silence was only amplified by his bug-eyed night-vision goggles and sternly pursed mouth.

"Oh, fucking hell – come on Batman" Foley jabbed, eyes rolling.

"Shh!" Dartford urged in a sharp whisper, without lifting his goggles. "You were at the snap brief – you know the two imperatives here. Be quiet and mask your scent."

"That's you fucked, Briggs."

"Foley, I swear I'll... – "

"Holster that shit, both of you." Roland seethed. "Dartford – hurry it up."

“Captain.” He nodded affirmatively, then continued. “Our scent is masked by these suits – special issue. As for the sound, that’s on us. And you’re going to want to start taking this seriously. You remember all that stuff about Colchester in the news?”

Foley’s expression twisted from arrogance to horror as it sank in. He quickly responded to confirm that the shit had now hit the fan.

“You mean *Canine* Colchester?”

“What’s... that supposed to mean?” Briggs interjected, registering the uncharacteristic quiver in Foley’s voice.

Dartford resumed, “It was a shoddy cover-up. The whole populace of Colchester just disappeared – 150,000 people. Gone.”

“Except they weren’t just *gone*, were they?” trembled Foley. “They all got turned into... – “

“Enough. That is *not* official, Sergeant Foley” Captain Roland clarified.

“What?” Briggs prompted the silenced soldier. “Fole – what happened to them?”

“Fucking **dogs**, Briggs. They got turned into dogs.”

The four men stood alone in the oppressive silence of the empty field. A smirk crept across Briggs’ face before quickly fading as he studied the expressions of the other men.

“Serious huh? So, we’re here for the guy that did it?”

“Connor Sparks. He was the only one left.” Dartford confirmed. “Seemed like the sole survivor to begin with – some lucky guy, until the same thing happened to the station he was questioned at. No humans left.”

“Only dogs?” Briggs asked with a tone of inevitability.

“Correct. And the CCTV. Turns out Connor Sparks isn’t exactly human himself – he’s got great hearing and a hell of a nose. We’ve been cleared to neutralize him.”

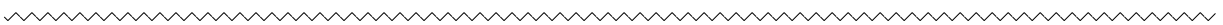
“Neuter him you mean. Right?”

Foley filled the silence with a sigh.

“Briggs – man... even if this job wasn’t so fucked up, that *still* wouldn’t be funny. You want to be sniffing arseholes the rest of your life?”

“Job’s a job Fole. In and out – the usual.” Briggs tapped and readied his rifle. “Captain?”

“He’s right.” Captain Roland pointed two fingers forward, “Lights off, comms down. Move out.”



“Foley – point. Briggs, Dartford – on me.”

The squad moved in an arrow formation toward a dilapidated compound ahead, all four now donning night goggles which painted the terrain in a grainy greyscale. They’d already cut their way through a razor-wire fence and there wasn’t any sign of light or movement; it was clear the occupant didn’t value attention. Reaching the singular iron door, they stacked up silently and waited for the Captain’s signal.

Captain Roland flicked on a small fluorescent waist-light for brief second, examining the door.

“Mechanism’s blown.”

“By who?” Foley quizzed.

“Doesn’t matter, this is our entrance.”

Roland slowly cranked the metal lever, doing his best to limit the rusty grinding sound as the door creaked ajar. The men filtered through, assuming the same arrow formation once inside.

“If your safeties ain’t already off, now’s the time. Intel says this place is a dead zone – save for the target. See any movement? Shoot to kill.”

Only Briggs’ rifle clicked as he followed the order. “Rest of you been riding hot for how long now? Guess basic was a long time ago, huh?” he quipped.

“Zip it.”

They crept forward, carefully stepping heel to toe. The silence was crushing. Brutalist stone corridors echoed only the fleeting crunch of debris under-boot and the nervous shallow breathing of Foley a few paces ahead. Red-stemmed and sparsely leafed vines grew through cracked corners and the air was still, with no draft prevailing through the failing structure. Turning a few excruciatingly narrow corners and surveying rooms as they went, the four men halted at the entrance to an open room, full of tables and benches.

“Cafeteria. Multiple exits – prepare to sweep. Dartford, cover from here. Ready... – “

“Captain, wait.” Foley broke his silence, “What was this place?”

“Military compound. 1940’s. Why?”

“Nazis ever set down here?”

“What do you think, Sergeant?”

“I think I want to know why there’s bullet holes in the walls, sir.” Foley pointed and traced a line of punctured concrete streaking across the wall and ending halfway across the ceiling.

“Just keep your eyes on those exits, Foley.”

“I don’t know if they were spray-painting the walls with standard 5.56 by 45 mil ammunition in the forties, Captain” Briggs announced rhetorically, eyeing a spent bullet casing between his fingers.

“Last time I’ll say it. Quit bitching and watch your corners.”

Briggs dropped the casing, letting it clink and come to rest on the floor among the debris, spent bullets and biscuit crumbs.

“**Fuck** was that?!” Foley squealed, spinning around.

“Voice down!” Roland shout-whispered, his exasperation peaking.

“There! Behind the table...” the rattled soldier pointed to an upturned metallic table, positioned like a barricade near the far wall. “I saw something dart back there.”

“You’re sure, Sergeant?”

“Sir.”

“Briggs – recon. Foley – right flank. I’m left. Dartford cover. *Move.*”

Rifles trained on the table, steady despite the pumping adrenaline, the men fanned out and forward. Seconds passed like minutes as they advanced. Briggs reached the table, lowering himself to the right side and into position to breach cover.

“There!” Foley shouted, his finger gripping the rifle trigger as a wiry figure dashed from behind the table, from the opposite end to where Briggs crouched. A loud yelp followed the short burst of fire as the figure disappeared round a corner, the scrabbling sound of movement ceasing a moment later.

“Briggs – confirm the kill. Foley, Dartford. Move up!” Roland shouted, the silence now shattered.

Briggs rushed around the corner in pursuit as the others followed, the sound of live fire still ringing in Foley’s ear.

“Uhhh, Captain...”

Roland and Foley rounded the corner and took Briggs’ side, while Dartford turned and mounted his gun to the convex wall.

“Is this our guy? Just looks like a... greyhound or something.” Briggs spoke solemnly.

A thin, short-furred dog lay sprawled on the ground, wounds leaking blood from its neck. Its chest rose and fell with each faint breath.

“Intel doesn’t match.” Roland mumbled to himself, before speaking up. “Dartford – confirm. Foley, switch with him.”

The men switched and Dartford sat down next to the dying animal, soon looking up toward the Captain with concern. He spoke with renewed stealth.

“Can’t be. This is just... a dog. Intel said half-human. And the other half... well, the other half is the wrong breed anyway.”

“Oh great! Dartford – you didn’t even think to tell us what fucking breed of dog-man we’re supposed to kill!” Foley craned his chin to his shoulder in anger, keeping one eye on his rifle sight as he scolded his squad mate, “Let me guess – we’re looking for a poodle?”

“Shut the fuck up, Fole.”

“No – fuck *you* Briggs. You dense fuck. Don’t you know what this means?”

The towering man stared down at Foley, before looking to his Captain for answers.

“So we’re not the first ones here.” Briggs surmised.

“I’d give you a fucking round of applause if I didn’t have to hold this rifle. Captain – you going to let us in on the big joke?”

“Isn’t one, Foley. Now you know as much I do. Knew something was off when we saw the door was already blown. And the bullet casings...”

“Gives new meaning to idea of ‘dog tags’, doesn’t it?” Foley joked morbidly. “You know, ‘cos this dog used to be a fucking soldier like us!”

“We don’t know that Sergeant.”

“Oh yeah – let’s keep up the fucking pretence. Is anyone going to put him out of his misery?!”

Foley angrily gestured toward the greyhound; the pooling blood having expanded to touch the base of Dartford’s boots.

Roland looked at the wheezing creature and shook his head.

“Can’t risk giving away our position with anymore fire.”

“Too late for that, I reckon.” A gravelly voice clattered through the corridors.

Dartford sprang to his feet as all four men readied their weapons, scanning every direction for the source.

“Captain...?” Briggs whispered with trepidation, waiting for his orders.

“Which direction did that come from?” Roland finally spoke.

“I came here to be left alone.” The voice boomed again.

“There, I think?” Foley tilted the rifle barrel into another inky-black corridor branching away from where the dog now lay dead.

“I’m on point – fall in and move.”

“*Toward* the voice that knows where we are, knows we have guns and doesn’t seem to give a single shit?!”

“Foley. Move!”

Muttering curses under his breath, Foley steeled himself and joined the four-man formation, already charting a fast tactical advance into the darkness.

“You know I could stop you with a thought.”

“Don’t listen to him.” Roland barked the order as they pushed deeper into the compound.

“No choice – how’s he doing that with his voice?”

“His speaker set-up’s the thing that’s got you impressed, Briggs? Wait for the fur to start flying.”
Foley sneered in a fearful yet mocking tone.

“You saw what I did to the others. You shot one of them dead. Aren’t you scared?”

“What did I tell you, Captain? See?!” Foley followed, desperation clinging to his words. “Roland?! We need to... – “

“We *need* to kill this son of a bitch and make damn sure that soldier didn’t die for nothing.”

“I never meant to... You’re forcing me to do this.”

“11’o’clock ahead! Behind the cabinet – engage.”

The four soldiers split into two groups, taking cover by the empty door frames that adorned the narrow concrete passage. They raised their rifles in unison and began a hail of short pin-point bursts, all tracking for the top two thirds of a green filing cabinet that stood tall against the wall fifteen paces further. Captain Roland raised his fist and the fire stopped. Three seconds of silence lingered.

“Last chance to leave.”

The familiar husky voice spoke again, but without the same booming gravity from earlier. The four soldiers held steady and kept fingers perched on triggers as a muscular male silhouette sidled out from behind the tattered and bullet-ridden cabinet. He stood remarkably at ease in the centre of the hallway, four rifle barrels all trained on the outline of his head.

“Unlikely that the filing cabinet stopped all of those rounds, Captain.”

“I know Dartford.”

“But he doesn’t appear injured. What do we do?”

Captain Roland paused, studying the man from a distance without lowering his weapon. He was too far away to confirm it, but he wondered if those protrusions atop his head might be... ears?

“Connor Sparks?”

“...”

“That’s right, isn’t it?”

“Doesn’t matter.”

“What happened to you, Connor?”

“Just go.”

“What happened to... to Colchester?”

Connor flinched and turned to the side, clearly sketching the outline of a long canine muzzle stretching forward from his face.

“Cap – “

"I know." Roland cut Foley off abruptly and addressed the creature before them once more. "Just explain your side. All those people... intel says you grew up there?"

The man's muzzle wrinkled, pulling back to reveal sharp white fangs – clearly glinting even in the blackness.

"Intel?" Connor snarled, **"Your intel should have told you to keep away from here."**

"Fuck this."

Foley mumbled, his terror getting the better of him, as he firmly pressed the trigger.

"Fole – no!"

Briggs' protest was drowned out by the gunfire as a fully automatic stream of bullets erupted from his terrified squad mate's rifle. Not even a second passed before Dartford and Roland had joined the onslaught. Briggs took aim, finding Connor's half-bestial head in his sights, but simply watched as the dog-muzzled man absorbed the barrage – motionless. He lowered his gun in disbelief, taking in the impossible sight, then quickly raised his sight again – engaging the zoom as he spotted something.

"No way." Briggs mouthed to himself, before raising his voice to contend with the rattling gunfire.

"Captain! Fole!! Stop it – Dartford! STOP!"

The shots ceased as Connor remained unflinching, a sadness seeming to pull his shoulders into a slump as his muzzle drooped. Briggs continued.

"Look at his feet!... Saw 'em earlier too – in the cafeteria. Dog biscuits."

"He's changing our bullets into... dog biscuits?" Foley stammered as a hand grenade flew past his ear toward Connor, the pulled pin clanking on the ground next to Dartford's boots.

"Get down!" Dartford shouted, as the men all scrambled to the ground.

"Why?" Connor taunted, as he lifted his foot, hovering it above the grenade.

The men all looked up as he stamped on the explosive, which let out a loud wheezing squeak.

"A fucking chew toy" Roland exclaimed, rising to his feet. "Are you playing with us Connor?"

"Not anymore."

He hadn't finished speaking before Foley cried out at the back of the group – his voice drenched in panic.

"Oh - shit no – no – no – Guys! Briggs?! I can't..."

"Fole – slow down – what is it?!"

"I ca – I can't – can't hold my gun!" Foley's rifle slipped loose from his hands and hung from the swivel strap attached to his black suit. *"My h – hands aren't..."*

"What is it, Sergeant?!"

"My hands aren't fucking working Captain!"

Connor watched as the soldiers lost interest in him, gathering around Foley to observe the obvious. The three men held their breath and stared while Foley stuttered and writhed around, manically wiping his hands against his clothes, as if to wash off whatever was happening to him. His thumbs shrank and receded to his wrists, fingers becoming stubby and stiff – fusing side-by-side. The pink fingernails darkened, thinned and sharpened – becoming claws. His palms quickly grew rough, puffing out to form thick pads. Foley’s panic had withered into sobbing as he held his new paws in front of his face and watched the sandy fur envelope them. It grew in fluffy and spread under his sleeves, the itching stopping just short of his elbows.

“They won’t move!” The hysterical man hyperventilated as he tried to move muscles that no longer existed. His paws were stiff and restricted only to bending at the wrist – a motion that gave him the look of a begging dog as he let them hang limp in defeat. *“Change them...! Please – change them back...”*

The rest of the squad hadn’t snapped out of gawking at the sight of their padded paw-handed colleague, until Connor’s voice cut through the bewilderment.

“No – keep them as a warning.”

“But I’ll leave you alone... just change them back. Please! I just... I can’t live like this!”

“...” Connor paused, a low growl rising in his throat as he raised his left arm above his head, revealing a furry, clawed paw where his hand should have been. **“You’ll be grateful to leave with what humanity you have!”**

Foley shot a glance at the outline of Connor’s thick paw, before looking down at his own.

Connor began again, **“Or...”**

“No! Just the paws – I’ll leave you alone!”

Foley pivoted into an awkward sprint, back toward the Cafeteria.

“Who’s next?” Connor prompted as the other men still stood dumbfounded before him.

“Captain?” Briggs looked toward his senior officer, who had abandoned his rifle-ready stance long ago. *“We going to stick around and the play the doggy lottery here?”*

Roland turned slowly to face Briggs as Foley’s fearful footsteps could be heard echoing down the corridors behind them. He looked at Connor once more, taking a shallow breath as he processed what they were up against. He grimaced as his teeth grated.

“Retreat – follow Sergeant Foley. Now!”

They barely noticed the feeble whine that escaped Connor’s snout as they about-faced and tore after Foley, hearts pounding. The dog-man clutched his paws to his head in agony and muttered to himself, as if trying to repress some painful thought.

Rifle resigned to its strap; Roland ran full pelt a few paces behind his men. He heard a vicious growl and spat of barking in the distance behind him, hoping it didn’t mean Connor had decided to give chase. He felt a tingling at the tip of his nose, his jaw clicked and gave him the sensation of needing to yawn, but he kept sprinting. They were almost back at the cafeteria, but Roland’s night vision goggles were being pushed up and away from his face. He tried to adjust them on the fly, but they

wouldn't fit correctly - he was running blind. Worse, he could feel something damp and leathery in the centre of his face.

"Briggs!" He barked. It came out more gravelly than he expected, "Goggle malfunction – give me your shoulder!"

Briggs slowed until he felt the Captain grip him, then continued to lead him past the dead greyhound from earlier and through the cafeteria. Roland could feel his face stretching all the while and thumbed around his jaw with his free hand to assess. His mouth felt swollen and bulbous, he knew it was pushing forward into a snout shape. If he closed his sharpening teeth together, he could partially grip around his burgeoning muzzle – but this felt instinctively wrong, so he let go, allowing cool air to fill his jaws as a widened tongue fell out. Panting as he ran, he rubbed his cheeks and the flat bridge of his new nose. It was like he hadn't shaved for weeks – thick hair bristled and covered his face, stopping just short of his eyebrows. He heard himself whine in-between panting.

"You good, Captain?" Briggs called over his shoulder. No response, but he could still feel the Captain's hand on his shoulder and the dim moonlight could be seen filtering through the ajar iron door ahead. "Almost there."

Dartford was the first to exit out into the damp grassy courtyard. Briggs tapped Roland's torso behind him and then followed through the door too.

"You guys got out! Fuck... thank god... I thought... I thought that he..."

"Catching you thinkin' again, huh Fole?" Briggs quipped in relief at the sight of his squad mate, ignoring the wriggle at the seat of his pants.

"Not the time, man! It's great we all made it, but we're fucked! We need to get evac. It's game over!" Foley shook his paws at them as if to make a point. *"Game over, man!"*

Briggs could hear his distress and knew not to mock him anymore, but he couldn't help but smile at the unwitting reference Foley had made. The wiggling in his pants grew to a distracting shuffle.

"Dartford – you got to get on the radio, man! Get us out of here. Right, Captain?"

Dartford and Foley both looked toward Roland, who was still standing silently behind Briggs.

"Roland?" Dartford inquired nervously.

"Wrrf", a muffled bark returned in answer as Captain Roland stepped forward.

"Holy shit! Your face is...!"

"Wroof!"

A louder bark silenced Foley's surprise. Roland collected himself, pulling his long tongue into his muzzle after licking his nose. He opened his maw and hoisted his cheeks to try and form words.

"Arrooouff. Rrr-huff. Awrruhhf."

Roland shook his head, snout pointing to the ground in disappointment.

"Shit..." Briggs exclaimed, scratching his backside as the shuffling had grown still while his butt felt like there was a tonne of hair tickling the cheeks. "Captain... that's rough."

Roland growled and shot a sideways glance at Officer Briggs.

“*Rough?* Are you taking the piss, Officer? That’s your Captain.” Dartford scolded.

“No! It’s just...” Briggs turned to look over his shoulder and span, like a dog chasing its tail, as the tickly mass in his pants had grown bigger and was trying desperately to nestle between his legs, prickling up against his inside thigh. “There’s something up with my butt!”

“Oh okay!” Dartford continued, “Well, that explains it then. Let me know when you have your rear under control, Officer, and until then... I’ll... – “

Dartford cut his tirade short as Briggs slipped his trousers down over his ass-cheeks to reveal the base of a bushy brown and black tail, firmly attached to his coccyx.

“Oh, hell no!” the large man shouted as he grabbed his new tail and fished its full length free from his trouser-leg. It quickly found its place twitching forward between his legs once more. The man looked dejected as his long tail quivered between his plump furless butt-cheeks.

“Hey Briggs – could be worse, man. ‘Least you can still hold your gun and speak!”

“Ruff!” Roland barked, eyes wide in shock at himself.

“Oh great! Now the Captain does tricks on command!” Foley sighed, shrugging with his paws. “He’s meant to be *in* command!”

Briggs’ tail appreciated the humour, enjoying its freedom for the first time as it wagged back and forth. Its playful bashing across his butt cheeks lightened Briggs’ mood, as he had already set to work with a combat knife – cutting a tail-hole in his underwear and trousers.

“I was about to say...” Dartford resumed, having digested the ridiculous sight of his squad mates in front of him, “Clearly, the Captain and Sergeant Foley are compromised. And Officer Briggs’ ability to resist the distraction of his tail is questionable. Therefore – I will take command of this mission. Any obje... – “

“Damn right I object!” Briggs interrupted, his tail now swishing aggressively behind him through the freshly cut hole in his pants.

“On what basis? Look at you all!”

“The Captain is still in charge, Dartford!”

“Oh, come on! Look... Roland, speak!”

“Wroof!” Roland obliged reluctantly, quickly shutting his muzzle again and clamping it shut with his hands.

“See?” Dartford asked, looking smug.

“Don’t be a bitch, Dartford! How come Connor didn’t get you anyway?!”

Dartford looked nervous. He’d been asking himself the same question, though he did feel a little warm in his clothes – he had chalked it up to the heightened stress of their situation. Nothing seemed obviously awry.

“I honestly don’t know. I’ve been wondering... – “

Dartford paused as he felt something prod his rump. He turned to see Roland, enthusiastically sniffing and burrowing his nose up under the confused man's taint.

"Roland – what are you doing, man?!"

Roland didn't respond, instead continuing to press his invasive snout between Dartmoor's butt cheeks and letting his tongue lap at the thick scent he was tracking.

"Looks like the Captain's finally taken a shine to you Dartford" Foley joked, not without concern evident in his tone. "But seriously – you okay, Captain?"

The muzzled man withdrew his nose and began aggressively pawing at Dartford's lower back, clasping and dragging his target's trousers down by the belt. Something about this feeling of pawing on his back seemed to soothe Dartford – he could feel himself melt into compliance with Roland's advances. He shimmied, allowing his trousers to drop to the ground and fell forward onto his hands and knees, arching his back to present his rear. Foley and Briggs couldn't help but look and immediately saw the problem. There, planted in the centre of a patch of grey fur that travelled a little way down Dartford's thighs, was the engorged canine vagina of a bitch in heat – lips swollen and welcoming.

Roland stood a moment longer sniffing the night air, an obvious tent having pitched in his trousers, before falling to his knees and lapping at Dartford's dripping entrance. He drank the scent in with an audible sniff and lost himself, mounting the receptive female and thrusting himself against her with increasing speed.

"He didn't even take his trousers off."

"You ever seen a dog have to consider getting undressed 'fore humping something, Fole?"

"Think we should slip them off for him?"

"What the fuck, Foley?"

"I just... oh – I think he's almost done!"

Roland pounded his female with a frantic, powerful jack-hammering motion of his hips, his rigid-stiffening dick soaking pre through his clothing as it rubbed against Dartford's sex. It could not be called dry-humping. The bottom soldier held strictly still, only rocking his rear back a little to better feel his Captain's bulge, while Roland wound up in climax, his short vibrating thrusts reaching a fevered pace before slowing as jets of cum spurted into his underwear. He was wracked with pleasure and held his body stiff for a moment before sitting back onto his knees and looking himself over. His expression twisted into one of disgust which could clearly be seen even despite his canine facial features.

"Looks like Dartford isn't satisfied..." Foley teased, pointing a paw toward the newly female soldier who was still dutifully presenting herself on all fours.

"You okay, Captain?" Briggs asked tentatively.

With a post-nut clear head, Roland went to open his muzzle in response and stopped, reaching into his jacket pocket instead. He pulled out a small pen and pad, quickly scribbling on it. He held it up.

'He wasn't in control of himself', it read.

“Well, uh, no shit Captain – no-one’s pretending you and Dartford would normally do the doggy.”
Briggs looked incredulous.

“ARF-ruff!” Roland yapped in frustration, shaking his head and writing something else.

‘CONNOR. Not in control.’

“Huh? What’re you saying?”

‘Check yourself over. Still changing?’ Roland quickly scribbled.

Briggs pulled his trousers down over his rump – threading his wagging tail free of the hole, while Foley’s eyes glazed over in deep thought. Sure enough, Briggs’ tail grew still as he noted the fur had spread further, a creamy brown mix now peppering his previously bare butt cheeks, while the black overcoat of his tail now stretched a foot up his spine. It suddenly occurred to him that this might mean other parts of him were changing – he quickly spun around, pulling up his sleeves and pulling his jacket loose to peer down at his chest. He exhaled, relieved.

“Definitely more fur spreading out from my tail, but nothing else.”

Briggs almost choked on his final word as he went to pull his trousers up, fastening the belt and feeling a pinching pain near his groin. He unbuckled himself once more and this time let his trousers fall to the ground, leaning forward to inspect his crotch.

Noting the sight of Briggs’ manhood, Roland began scribbling on his pad again.

Fur had spread from the large man’s behind and now took the shape of a creamy brown boxer-jock around his waist and thighs. Amid the fluff, a fuzzy set of unmistakably canine balls dangled – prompting Briggs to poke them, proving they were his as he shuddered in time with the satiny sack tightening. Curiously, his normal human penis remained affixed above, though held up in a semi-erect position by a half-formed sheath. Briggs was speechless as he fought through an internal conflict around whether he actually *wanted* the sheath to finish transforming and swallowing his dick, so that it looked less weird.

“Wroof!” Roland barked loudly to grab the others’ attention and held up his pad. ‘Connor wanted us to leave. So why are we still changing? He can’t control it properly. Heard him in pain.’

Cognizance returned to Foley’s eyes as he read the note. He didn’t need to check himself – he could feel the familiar itch of fur spreading further up his arms, which were subtly shrinking all the while, becoming more like a dog’s front legs.

“Captain’s right. Connor said it himself. He never meant for any of this. And think about it – Colchester went down suddenly, without any communication getting out. It just went dark all at once.” Foley glanced toward Briggs as he struggled to find a way to wear his trousers with his half-transformed canine sheath creeping up his abdomen. “And we’re still changing out here – who knows what the range of his power is?”

“Limitless, we think.” Dartford answered, having come to her senses and rising from the ground. “Connor Sparks is like a transformative canine nuke, just waiting to explode again.”

Roland began writing again as Foley exhaled hard.

“Fuuuuck sake! What do we do?”

“WRUFF!” Roland held up his paper pad. ‘We need to go back in.’

Part 2

Advancing (With Their Tails Between Their Legs)

“Before we do that...” Dartford began, pausing with a guilty inflection. “I need to tell you something.”

“God damn it Dartford you piece of shit – I knew you were holding somethin’ back!” Foley let loose a barrage of frustration at his squad mate, peppered with vitriol, “You haven’t been straight with us since *before* the brief! Thinking you’re special. *Specialist Dartford* – the man with the intel on his... glorified... fucking... iPad!” He pointed a paw, shaking with rage, at Dartford’s tac-pad pocket. “And now look at you – you want to *finally* fill us in, right when things have gone south for you!”

An uncomfortable silence pervaded the cool air as the men allowed Foley to breathe.

“You done, Foley?” Dartford finally answered. “I wasn’t permitted to share this intel with you. Not even the Captain knows. Orders from the top. Technically, nothing has changed and I shouldn’t be saying any of this – but it might be our only chance, so fuck it. And I know you’re scared, Foley – fucking hell, so am I, but... – “

“Alright.”

“Huh?”

“I said ‘alright’. I didn’t mean nothing by it anyway... You’re right, I’m just...” Foley gulped hard and held his paws splayed out in front of him. It was clear that his arms were just canine front legs now – their range of movement limited and best suited to running on all fours.

“Yeah.”

“So can you hurry up and spill it ‘fore you’re the furry centrepiece of a doggy gang bang?”

Foley nodded toward Captain Roland, who had taken to stuffing both nostrils of his black leathery nose with torn fabric from his sleeve – the smell of Dartford’s oestrus clearly prompting a renewed bulge at his still-damp crotch.

Roland took a step away from Dartford and smiled with an unnervingly toothy grin, attempting to assuage any concerns.

“Definitely.” Dartford stepped away likewise as he began. “So, it’s like you said Foley – Colchester just went dark. One moment – social media posts, phone chatter, internet searches pinging local IPs – everything you’d expect... Next moment – nothing. Whole place is silent – apart from the barking. But there was something... Some strange reports of a town-house being replaced with a huge kennel. We didn’t pick it up until after Connor went nuclear and pupped the whole place out – why would we? But after the incident, we knew we had to look into it if it might explain how this all started... – “

“Briggs – you even listening?!”

The stocky man had fully de-clothed from the waist down and lowered himself to the ground, his tail sweeping gleefully across the grass behind him as he repeatedly poked a finger into the furry pocket

at his groin. He shivered each time his finger met the tip of the sensitive member hiding within the warmth of its doggy sheath, which only caused his tail to wag faster. Like a curious adolescent, he fiddled with himself – only tickling his tip inside a couple more times before his newly-tapered red dog dick stretched the fuzzy sheath entrance and emerged to meet him. His eyes grew wide at the sight while the full length of his fleshy cock continued to push out from the creamy-brown furred cave that had crept up his abdomen. He leant back, careful not to cramp his tail, and admired himself – wrapping his hand around the shaft near its tip – the base had grown too girthy. His hips convulsed at the sensation, while an alien feeling – a blood-rush unlike any he'd known before, drove even more swelling within his sheath – the fur rippling as it stretched further to accommodate a massive knot.

“WAFF! Grrrghruff!” Roland scolded.

The sudden bark snapped Briggs out of his self-reverential trance – he withdrew his hand like a teenager caught masturbating in his bedroom and glanced toward the Captain, eyes wincing as he realised – he was somehow already past the point of no return. His squad mates watched with freakish fascination as Briggs' hips bucked involuntarily through his ruined climax – strings of dog juice flying from his pulsing pointed tip and getting caught in the tawny-cream fur that had spread down his inside thighs.

Briggs opened his eyes once the tingling waves had finished wracking his hips, beholding the mess he'd made, together with the now repulsed expressions of all but one of his squad mates.

“Like what you see, Dartford?” He mocked, noting the feminine soldier's conspicuous drooling stare – still fixated on his erect manhood.

Dartford shook herself, prising her eyes away from the alluring canine cock, stuck firmly at full mast and dribbling with the vestiges of Briggs' ruined orgasm. She could feel a tingling under her jacket, all over her chest and abdomen. With a sigh of inevitability, she lifted her jacket to find two parallel rows of breasts, eight nipples in total – and all of them radiating pleasure at the prospect of having Briggs' dog-ness inside her.

“Dartford... you were saying?” Foley prompted, eliciting a blank stare from the female. “DARTFORD!”

“Yes! I was...” Dartford's eyes refocused as she let her jacket drop to cover her canine cleavage.

“Thinking about having Briggs' puppies – I know.” Foley jabbed. “But first, you were going to mention this super-secret intel you couldn't tell us before, right?”

“Wuff!” Captain Roland added.

“Right. Yes... So, we combed Colchester to locate the house that got transformed into a massive kennel. When we found it, there was a female dog in there – nothing special considering the whole town just got turned into dogs, right? But if the timing of the reports was true, then this dog must have been the first one Connor turned. Maybe she knew something?”

“You're saying you got your intel from a female dog...” Foley turned his head to the side in mock disbelief.

“Keep interrupting and you'll be getting yours from a female dog too.”

“Fine. Get to the point then Dartford.”

“We found a way to communicate and got the whole story from her. Turns out her name was Claire. She and Connor were into some pretty interesting domination stuff... pet-play with hypnosis, would you believe it? Except she apparently inherited something – a ‘charm’ – that could reshape matter and had bound it to Connor, so he could be more authentic in his role as her... puppy. We wouldn’t have believed it if we weren’t already talking to a dog after a whole city of people had been replaced with ‘em too.”

“So this is all just some weird fetish gone wrong? How does that help us?”

“Hypnosis, Foley. According to Claire, it all went wrong after Connor got control of the Charm while still half-hypnotised in his dog persona. He turned her into a dog so she couldn’t use the hypnotic triggers on him, but that meant the trance never got released.”

“Seriously? So, we just, what... snap our fingers and he wakes up?” Foley tried to snap his fingers to illustrate how easy it would be, quickly looking embarrassed as his paw twitched limply.

“Sort of. Claire’s intel suggests we’d have to address him as if he’s *our* pet dog – ‘good boy’ – that sort of thing, in order to get control. Then the trigger to end his trance is just... ‘release’.”

“So why the fuck weren’t we doing all of this to begin with!?”

Briggs, who had been following the conversation intently despite a knotted dick still towering above his sheath and showing no signs of retreating, furrowed his brow.

“Yeah, Fole’s right – the fuck you been waiting for Dartford?”

“Arf?”

Dartford flinched as the Captain barked, recalling his lustful advance earlier, then continued.

“Just because we release his dog persona, that doesn’t mean he isn’t still basically omnipotent while he’s got that Charm bound to him. Theoretically, he could change us into... well, anything. Only reason for the dog theme is his mind is stuck thinking like a horny puppy. We couldn’t risk creating a self-aware god with unchecked power, so the brass ordered the kill.”

“Damn... more I think about it, the more I think Connor’s a victim here too.” Briggs challenged, prompting Roland to begin scribbling in his pad again.

‘Try talking first. Offer help. Trigger is last resort.’

“You sure, Captain?” Foley questioned with a sceptical grimace. “He’ll have us sitting on command before we get the chance to speak... – “

“Woof!” Roland growled to register his non-compliance with the command he’d just accidentally followed.

“...to... *talk* with him. Better to use the trigger and get control of him first, at least! Maybe we don’t even need to release the trance – we could just keep him dosed on the trigger, couldn’t we? Make him roll over?”

Roland fought for a valiant half-second, before descending to the grass and flipping onto his back, arms and legs akimbo as if waiting for belly rubs. The other men watched with pity, Briggs audibly sighing before turning to address Foley’s point.

“Captain’s right Fole – Connor never meant for any of this to happen. We need to try and help him out of it.”

“Can’t remember military training covering off canine psychiatry, Briggs.”

“We are where we are, so let’s get back in there before it’s too late” Dartford interjected, pointing to the top of his head, where two triangular ears now sat, alert and covered in silky black fur – one flopping forward slightly.

“Aww Dartford – that’s cute, man. Got yourself a set of collie ears, ya’ little sheep dog motherfucker!”

“Briggs, seriously – with these, I can hear Connor from here. He’s in pain... and we’re changing more and more every second because of it.”

“Right. Yeah. I’ll take point.” Briggs rose to his feet and made for the iron door entrance.

“You not... putting your trousers back on?”

“Does it look like they’d fit?”

The large man turned, continuing a backward walk as he gestured toward his huge dog cock – still rock hard and pointing skyward. Foley shrugged at Dartford as they followed the sight of Briggs’ wagging tail. Roland picked himself up – undeniably feeling a little hurt that no-one had offered belly rubs – and advanced carefully a few paces behind, adjusting the bunched-up fabric in his black nostrils to ensure they were properly plugged.

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The squad tracked through the darkened corridors once more, in a very different formation mostly predicated on trying to keep their canine instincts in check. Knowing what awaited them had the strangely calming effect of dialling down the tension, though their advance wasn’t without fear at the prospect of how Connor would react to their second intrusion. Dartford followed the sounds of sobbing and muttering that could be heard faintly echoing through the stark cold interior of the compound, using her soft sensitive ears to lead the way.

“Round this corner. Can’t be more than 40 metres down the next hallway. Better get your speech ready, Briggs.” Dartford whispered.

“What? Why’s it down to me?” The disgruntled soldier replied from a slightly hunched forward stance – the pelvic anatomy underneath his fur-coated hips clearly mid-way through shifting to that of a quadruped.

“Well, I’m not exactly sold on the therapy approach. Then, as far as I can work out, Foley wants to hypnotise the guy into a vegetative state... and Captain Roland... well...”

“Wrrf.” A soft woof from Roland confirmed his agreement that he was not the man for the job.

“Shit.” Brigg’s tail drooped between his legs. “Fine – but what should I... – “



**“Why are you here!?”** Connor’s growling, vicious voice boomed from round the corner.

“Aw fuck. Do we run?” Briggs joked to the others in a whisper, half-serious.

**“Come out from behind that wall and answer me!”** The dog-man’s mighty frame stood motionless in the darkness, as before. **“You’ve got three seconds before I change you into chew-toys.”**

“He can do that?” Foley asked nervously.

“Probably” Dartford nodded, beginning to tremor involuntarily.

**“Three!”**

“Briggs! Go!”

**“Two...”**

“We go out at the same time... yeah?”

**“One!”**

The four dog-featured soldiers stumbled into the open, again setting eyes on the fierce outline of Connor Sparks, pointed ears, paws and sharp-fanged maw all on display and contorted with rage.

**“I told you to leave!”**

“Connor!” Briggs started, “We did! We got outside, man! But your power... it’s still changing us.”

The beast’s muzzle softened, his snarling paused as he stepped forward, sniffing the air and glaring at the four soldiers. He studied Briggs’ canine genitals, which had finally begun to deflate, Dartford’s fluffy ears, and Roland’s muzzle.

**“I didn’t imagine those things. But...”** His expression twisted into anger again. **“It’s your fault – you should’ve gone farther away!”**

“Come on Sparks. I know you don’t want to do this sorta thing to people.” Briggs stepped forward, softening his tone to convey his understanding. “But how far we gotta go, Connor? And why do you have to be on your own?”

**“I...”** Connor took another few steps forward, his body illuminated for the first time by a dim ray of moonlight, filtering through one of the many cracks in the structure. His inky canine eye was moist with remorse. **“I don’t know what else to do.”**

“Let us help. We can work this out, Connor.”

**“How?”**

“...” Briggs paused. He hadn’t thought this far ahead.

“Connor!” Dartford, having mustered the courage to speak at last, attracted the fierce glare of the moonlit beast. “We... spoke to Claire.”

Connor’s snarl instinctively returned.

## **“Claire!?”**

The half-dog beast clutched his head, eyes squeezing shut with agony at the mention of her name. He doubled forward as memories surged to the surface of his mind, growling and whining his discontent aloud.

Roland moved to cover his ears as the pained sounds of the creature Connor grew louder and louder, but found his ears already an inch higher than they should have been and beginning to stretch – the cartilage thickening. The noise wasn’t growing louder, his hearing was becoming more sensitive as his lobes disappeared and the openings to his eardrums migrated upward. He tried to tug on them and hold them in place, but his hands simply arrived atop his reshaped canine skull. He palmed at his ears, noticing that they twitched and withdrew automatically at his touch, before stroking across his whole head to check the changes. He didn’t need a mirror to work out that he now had the fully formed head of a thick-furred husky dog. It felt like stroking the pup he’d owned as a child. He turned to his squad, expecting to see them staring befuddled at their dog-headed Captain – but instead saw that each of them was preoccupied with their own descent into dog-ness.

Briggs teetered and wobbled atop his rapidly warping legs. They were thinning overall, thighs shortening and rounding at what used to be his knees. His feet elongated to compensate, heels rising off the floor. Worst of all – his wide feet, with their ample surface area for balance, narrowed and bunched up into a paw shape. His toes were gone, and sharp claws grew – clattering against the concrete as his soles hardened to tough numb pads. He tried to stay upright, his tail swinging in all directions trying to offer a counterbalance, but the final push came from his pelvis completing its rotation. He cursed in defeat as he felt himself dragged down by gravity acting on his new floor-crawling form, human hands contacting the cold ground. He was now a dog from the waist down, bushy shepherd tail wisping above his hind quarters.

“His anger is speeding up the change!” Dartford cried out, fur creeping up her neck from where it had previously spread over her plump canine breasts.

“It’s not anger... it’s pain!” Briggs cried out, sitting back on his haunches and pulling up his jacket to track the brown fur spreading up his flanks.

“Does it matter?!” Dartford screamed. “Captain! Another minute and we’re just dogs!”

Roland locked eyes with the panicked woman.

“We have to do it! Just bark twice to confirm and I’ll use the trigger!”

The Captain’s breath was coming faster as his human brain tried desperately to compute the risk from within a husky’s head. Use the trigger, get control of Connor and release the trance – running the risk that he uses the power to do something even worse than turn a city into dogs. Or accept that he and his squad will be simple canines in a matter of minutes, trusting that Connor will continue his self-imposed isolation. Whether through fear or the steadily increasing urge to simply bark and bey regardless, Roland answered.

“WRUFF! WOOF!”

“Yes sir. Connor...!” Dartford, with a modicum of relief at the decision, called out to grab the moaning beast’s attention. “You’re a good... b-hgghuk!”

“Dartford?!” Foley chimed in, catching his breath from the contortion of his chest cavity into a canine barrel shape that he’d just endured.

“G—ghhood...” Dartford tried again, words catching in his throat as he grasped at his tickling chin. The silky black and white collie fur had climbed up to cover his neck – his vocal cords morphing underneath too. He kept trying, with nothing but increasingly canine whimpers and raspy howls to show for it. He knew, as he felt his mouth start to push forward, that he’d missed his chance.

Roland’s quickening breaths had him snorting and gasping for air as the panic of Dartford’s fate traced a chilling shiver down his spine in time with the grey husky undercoat that bristled down the same path. He could feel a tug at his coccyx, and a numbness in his hands. He quickly glanced down at himself to see fur erupting from his sleeves. His hands were already half-changed into clumsy paws. He couldn’t even write in his pad anymore. He whimpered and felt the tug at his lower back again. This was it. He was doomed to be a dog. He wondered when his human thoughts would disappear too – and if it might be better to lose them now. The discomfort at the seat of his pants grew. Husky tails were huge and curly. How could it possibly fit? He began scratching at his backside with his clawed paw-hands, trying desperately to tear his combat trousers. He knew he no longer had the dexterity to unbuckle his belt. His pelvis too had started to re-arrange, just like Briggs’. He felt the irresistible push forward and quickly brought his paws back forward to catch himself as he fell. He could feel his huge tail straining and aching to escape above his rump, the trousers pulled painfully taught as he stood on all-fours. Hearing the grating sound of fabric threads giving way, he leant into the pressure – flexing his new tail muscle as he did. The relief was an alien climax as his curled tail burst forth with a mighty ripping sound, immediately whirring into a frenzied wag of joy that made Roland feel giddy. He howled and panted with delight, turning his body as only a dog could to sniff at his own doggish scents. He hadn’t registered that sometime during the exertion of growing a huge tail at break-cloth speed, he had snorted out the fabric plugging his black nostrils. Before the thought even occurred, he locked on to the familiar female scent of Dartford’s heat and began tracking to its source on all fours.

Dartford, now fully muzzled with a toothy collie smile, noticed his husky Captain’s approach and quickly used her human hands to unbuckle her trousers. Although her changes hadn’t overtaken her to the same extent yet and despite her terror at the loss of her ability to speak moments earlier, the infusion of bitch hormones coursing through her body was reprogramming her mind to focus on only one thing. She needed to be filled with the husky’s hot raging dog dick. She fell to her knees and arched her back as Roland licked her with a nimble, ravenous tongue. Desire and belonging overtook her as the husky mounted his bitch, his freshly transformed red rocket finding its mark and plunging up the rapidly swelling knot. Roland and Dartford let purely primal movements drive their bodies, barking and nipping at each other in pleasure while they rutted.

Briggs watched the carnal chaos unfolding in-between rushing to undress himself so he could track the spread of changes up his body. He was now fully naked, but for his dog tags, the creamy-brown fur of a german shepherd now speckling into being across his huge pecs.

“Connor!” He shouted, seeing the triangular ears twitch atop Connor’s head. “CONNOR! Look at us!”

The beast-man opened his eyes, still gripping his head and looked up, his ears flattening with pity as he looked at the four men. Roland and Dartford were still mating, their transformations all but

finished. Briggs sat on his haunches, almost entirely a dog in every way up to his armpits, and Foley lagged farthest behind, just keeping his original paws, front legs and dog-shaped torso.

**“I didn’t mean to...”**

“I know. But it doesn’t change what’s happening. Can you turn us back?” Briggs asked, sincerely – his voice tinged with relief as he could no longer feel the creeping advance of fur prickling through his pores.

**“I’m sorry. I honestly am.”** Connor offered up in a whining tone.

“Then that’s a no?”

**“Look at me. If I could fix it... If I could control it...”**

“Yeah. Figured as much. But if you could fix yourself, then you’d want to fix everyone else, right?”

**“Obviously. But my head is just so messed up!”**

“You just have to... – “

“...fucking fix the mess you’ve made!” Foley finished Briggs’ sentence, though not in the way he would have hoped.

**“Huh?”** Connor refocused on the soldier who had shot at him first – the man who had earned his paws as a warning.

“You heard! You made a mess of Colchester – turned all those people, probably your own friends, into dogs! Now you’re making a mess of this. You selfish asshole. Whining about your head while you’re doing all of *this* to *us*!”

Connor’s snarl returned, baring his fangs and spitting with anger more furiously than ever.

“Yeah yeah, you growl at me like the stupid dog you are. You’re out of control, dumb animal!”

**“Control?”** Connor almost seemed to growl a guttural laugh out from his clenched muzzle. **“I’m a dumb animal who’s out of control?!”** Connor locked a dead eyed stare on the soldier.

“I’m not scared, Connor! What’s next? The tail? Or force me down on my hands and knees like these guys?!” Foley continued ranting in the face of Connor’s intense glare. “Just get... it... o—ver... with?”

Foley slowed as his final few words came out, his tone lilting up inquisitively as he realised he couldn’t quite understand his own words. He knew the feeling he was trying to put across. Something like defiance. But the words – his own words, didn’t sound right. He questioned it aloud as Connor’s muzzle began approximating a smile.

“Wuh... why? Do... I – sssssound... weird?”

Foley struggled through another sentence, tilting his head like a puzzled dog as he thought back on the words he had just uttered. He remembered the sounds, just like he remembered the feeling he was trying to express – but the two didn’t seem to match. The sounds were foreign to him. He looked at Connor, eyebrows raising with worry at what was being done to him.

**“This is what control looks like.”** Connor scoffed. **“You’re the only stupid dog around here, soldier.”**

Foley squinted, trying to lip-read Connor's muzzle as the sounds coming out of it were garbled. Or were they? He didn't know anymore. He could make out a few syllables. He heard something that sounded like 'dog'. Though the word sounded different to how it normally should. 'Dog'. Did that mean him? Was Connor talking about him? Foley felt excited for some reason. He tried to think critically about why that might be. Every thread of thought that might have taken him to a conclusion in his mind seemed to lead nowhere. He could feel it though. Instinctively. His brain was being rewired. He was becoming simpler. More reactive. More like a dog. He decided to try and communicate again.

"Mmmm. Me? Duhhh... Dawww...Guh?"

**"Shh. Stupid dog. You sound ridiculous trying to talk with a brain like that and no muzzle."**

A goofy smile invaded Foley's face and he raised his paws, batting at the air playfully as he heard that sound again. 'Dog'. It must mean him. The smile quickly faded though, as the bigger creature's tone sounded wrong – too harsh and not playful at all. Foley was confused and overwhelmed as his brain short-circuited and left him feeling blank. He took another glance at the smiling, scowling beast and turned to run, just like he had when he got his paws.

**"Bad dog! We're not finished. Sit!"**

Try as he might, not even the pumping adrenaline could convince his body to disobey Connor's command. Foley stopped dead still mid-escape and planted himself on the floor, even shuffling around to face the one who'd commanded him. He searched his mind for a reason to justify this compliance but couldn't find one. He only knew it felt like the natural thing to do.

**"Nice trick! Now... if you know you're a stupid simple dog, just speak!"**

"Roff!"

Foley widened his throat at the command of his new dog brain and tried his best to bark loudly, but his human vocal cords couldn't quite deliver.

**"Not very good at this, are you doggy? Maybe I'll just let you go – see how you do without a finished body to go with that brain of yours."**

Foley looked terrified, sat as authentically as a dog as he could manage with human legs, and failing to understand why Connor didn't seem happy with him. He was trying his best to obey.

"That's enough, Connor. You're torturing him." Briggs suddenly spoke up.

**"Doesn't he deserve it? He shot one of your former colleagues dead. He shot at me. He's a loud-mouth and a coward. The worst kind of person."** Connor argued vehemently, the snarl still making his words sound coarse with anger.

"You think you deserve all this? Or did Claire break you down and force you into it – same way you're doing to him?"

**"I... It's different..."**

“Do they deserve it?” Briggs gestured toward Roland and Dartford, now no more than a regular husky and a collie – knotted together and panting after the Captain filled an obliging Dartford full of puppy juice.

“...”

“Is it fair if you just finish changing me now? I won’t ever see my family again. I’ll just sniff around here... probably fuck Dartford at a guess...” Briggs joked, with a miraculous smirk, given the situation.

**“If you’re trying to get in my head...”**

“No, Connor... Somebody already did that. I’m tryin’ to help you see things straight.”

Connor paused, his snarl receding as he studied Briggs’ face, remarkably calm while sat atop a mostly-canine body. His tail was even gently wagging behind him. Connor knew too well that you can’t fake a wagging tail.

**“What... do I have to do?”**

“Just trust me Connor.”

The beast stepped forward, edging closer to Briggs and seeming uncharacteristically timid in his approach, for the first time.

“Good boy, Connor. Good dog.” Briggs calmly praised, watching intently for the reaction.

Connor felt something twig in his mind, like a switch being pressed and coercing him into a more receptive state of mind. He felt like he could fight it if he tried, but the way the words sounded to him – he didn’t want to. He liked being a good boy. A good dog. It had been so long. He looked at Briggs and warily began panting. His tail followed suit, slowly starting an inexorable swishing at his backside.

“That’s it! Good dog – now... release!”

Connor stopped panting much faster than he had started. His tail slowed and dangled. His eyes grew wide as he looked shocked. The canine features adorning his body all began to melt and morph back to human proportions. A matter of seconds later, there stood a naked stocky-build jock man, looking a little uneasy and more than a little confused. He looked around him – at the husky and the collie affectionately licking one another, and at the simple man with paws who was sat staring up at him, head tilted – curiously the only one still wearing clothes.

“Connor – you good?”

Briggs motioned to get his attention, tail bashing around erratically as he couldn’t hide his joy that the trigger had worked.

“You going to leave me sitting here, Sparks? Little help out of this fur please?”

The freshly restored human looked up at the ceiling, eyes reading left to right in their sockets as if recalling a vast number of memories all at once. He scanned the cracked and weathered structure around him, first morning light now peeking through the dilapidation, and set his fleshy palm upon the rough concrete wall. Finally, he set his gaze on the naked german shepherd man, happily wagging his bushy brown and black tail, and smiled politely.

### Part 3

#### *It's the Only Way to be Sure*

Morning sunlight peaked over the dewy shoulder-high grasses outside the compound. Dust drifted through a wedge of light that pierced the cracked walls, draping a translucent barrier between Connor and the dog soldiers.

Briggs spoke again, his brown and black bushy tail slowing its presumptuous wag.

"Hey! Sparks?"

"Mm?" Connor mumbled an acknowledgement past his politely pursed lips upon hearing his name. He still stood naked, glaring vacantly at the dog men, his palm pressed against the rough concrete wall.

"You know where you are?" Briggs paused, yielding no response. "You know *who* you are?"

Connor's eyes darted away from Briggs' half-canine body, settling in the middle distance to his right. He leaned toward the concrete wall, placing more of his body weight through his hand – then positioned his stocky jock thighs so that he could press forward with his legs too. His hand shook from the pressure as the concrete stood firm. He relented, letting his palm drop limp at his side, scraping dust from the wall as it fell.

Briggs' tail fell still but for a nervous twitch at the fluffy tip. He surveyed his fellow soldiers. Roland was still completely Husky and panting from the exertion of jack-hammering his seed into Dartford, himself still a fertile female Collie. And sat on his haunches, closest to Connor – dumb dog brain still at odds with his mostly human body – Foley. The situation remained entirely **fucked**. A point that hit harder as Briggs felt his shoulder joints clicking with discomfort, having only half-completed their shift to the tawny-fur peppered front legs of a German Shepherd.

"Connor Sparks! That's your name, man! You in there?"

"Feels strange." Connor thought out loud.

"There he is!" Briggs exhaled with relief as his tail began to wag once more. "Had me worried there, Sparks. Now you gonna get this fur off'a me or..."

"*So strange*", Connor interrupted, now louder though still as if speaking to himself.

Briggs' eyes narrowed quizzically. He tried to approach, wincing and tripping over his malformed arms as his legs began their quadrupedal advance. The clumsy movement caught Connor's attention.

"Who are you?" Connor asked, not without apprehension. He studied the crumpled half Shepherd as it struggled to regain an awkward stance sitting like a dog, though with its arms splayed out and a human head. Connor reframed the question, "Who *or what* are you?"

"Damn, you gotta be shittin' me! You don't remember nothing?! ...Fuck..." Briggs collected himself, "Okay, okay... Never mind me, Sparks – I need to know how you' doing? You said you feelin' strange, huh?"

“No. I feel fine.” Connor glanced down at his palm, noting for the first time his nudeness, and instinctively moving to cover himself, much to Briggs’ bemusement given the situation. “Naked, apparently. But I feel fine. This feels sort of... familiar, I guess. But...”

Connor paused, raising his hand and placing it against the concrete wall again – while failing miserably to contain his maleness behind the other.

“But?”

“It’s like a memory. Of a dream... or something. I haven’t felt a texture like this for so long.” Connor caressed the dusty rough concrete.

“I feel you, Sparks. Paw pads ain’t substituting for palms. Must feel good to have ‘em back.”

“Paw – pads?” Connor looked skeptical.

“Yeah, and if you’re head ain’t straight there’s no way you gonna get what I’m saying, but I need you to listen.” Briggs widened his expectant gaze and began nodding slowly.

“Uh yeah – I... I’m listening” Connor mirrored his nods.

“Good man. Now. I need you to focus – on me first. Look at me and imagine I’m human.”

“But you...”

“I know I know! I’m sat here lookin’ like some kinda circus act, cursed house shit – but trust me. Hell, Sparks – it was true only a couple’a hours ago!”

“I guess... you’ve got a normal face and your arms are sort of human-ish...”

Briggs winced again as he felt some mild shifting and popping. He felt his arms contorting back into the shape he’d spent years honing in the gym, prompting a wild thrashing tail to begin brushing the dusty floor behind him with glee.

“Just like that, Sparks. You got me, come on now!”

Connor watched as his imagination seemed to run on autopilot. Rebuilding a burly soldier from the mangled furry frame of a canine.

“Insane.”

“Yeah, it is. Now how ‘bout these two?” Briggs gestured at Roland and Dartford, still knotted together and licking at each other affectionately.

“But those are just regular dogs... aren’t they?”

“Now you gonna hurt my feelings! You think I rolled in here on some army business all by myself, Sparks? Nah, these guys are my squad. You can imagine that, right?”

Connor stared intently. He didn’t know what they had looked like before. At least, he thought he didn’t, but a sense of *déjà vu* overcame him as the two dogs began to shed their fur, their forms twisting and contorting to reapproximate something human before settling in their shapes.

The jock boy almost lost his composure as he couldn’t help but stare at the former Collie, who took on the form of a slight and beautiful young woman. He felt his sack tighten and placed both hands



over his cock, failing more to hide it as it grew hard. If the concrete wall had been doing it for him earlier, this was something else entirely. How long had it been since he last came?!

“Hey Sparks – nobody ever teach you staring at the ladies is uncouth, huh? Besides...”

No sooner had Briggs’ words finished flushing the jock boy’s cheeks red with embarrassment than his jaw fell agape at the sight of the woman’s... dick. Rapidly growing in time with the regression of her breasts into well-defined and hairy pectorals.

“She’s a - !”

“**Man... Ahem. He** is a man. Thank you.” Dartford flexed his human vocal chords with a firm declaration, fondling his whole genitalia frantically as if to convince himself of its existence. “Good work Briggs.”

“Pleasure, Dartford.” A grin invaded the man’s expression as he spoke, “Though the pleasure was all yours couple’a minutes ago. Right... Captain?”

Roland, silently checking himself over for fur, looked up sternly – his curly Husky tail nowhere to be seen.

“Holster that shit until we’re in the clear, Soldier.”

“Uhh. Excuse me?”

The three humans broke from their exchange to look at Connor as he timidly sought their attention, his burgeoning hard-on stalling at a semi.

“I’m glad I could help with... turning you guys back into humans, but – “

Connor paused as Roland shot an incredulous glare at his squad mates before directing it back toward him. It was too risky yet to remind the boy that he was responsible for their changes in the first place, but he couldn’t let the self-congratulatory comment go unnoticed.

Connor continued. “...But – I don’t know what the fuck is happening here. How did we get here?”

“Classified.” Roland gruffly responded, without pause. “Dartford, sit-rep.”

Letting go of his groin for the first time since its re-emergence, Dartford began to gesture, albeit keeping a hushed tone.

“Well, the trigger clearly worked. Connor is fully human, and as expected – he retains the power of the charm. Unexpected though, is the amnesia. However, thinking back on the intel from Claire – there was talk of tying the transformation and everything that goes with it to a ‘dog persona’ that would live in the lad’s head...”

“Fucking *Claire* man...” Briggs muttered in disapproval. “I blame her for all this shit.”

“Well, apparently Mr Sparks was quite taken with their arrangement – ‘an exuberant pup’ according to the official report. *Ahem.* Anyway, think of it as an alternative personality, trapped inside Connor’s head and holding onto the memories of whatever transpires while it’s unleashed. All it needs is the trigger and it’s back in control.”

“Sounds unstable. A monster like that is a liability.” Roland folded his arms.

“Captain, come on.” Briggs reasoned, fearing a resurgence of the original mission objective – to kill Connor.

“You’ve seen what he can do.”

“Yeah, and I got through to him too. Proof is you standin’ back on two feet, ain’t it? Or you not feeling grateful your muzzle ain’t in Dartford’s taint no more?!”

“You looking to adopt, Officer Briggs?”

Dartford juttet between the two arguing men, hushing them and pointing toward Connor with his eyes, his calm expression betraying a deeper urgency.

The jock boy wavered on his feet, clutching his head and muttering under his breath. Briggs squinted to pick out Connor’s expression past the shafts of sunlit dust bathing his stocky frame. He was in pain.

“What’s he saying?” Captain Roland quietly demanded.

“I think – I think he’s saying ‘Claire’. No, ‘who is Claire’. And some other stuff, but I – “

“That’s enough for me, Dartford. He’s losing it – get your weapon.”

“What about Foley? If we don’t turn him back...”

“Your weapon, Specialist.”

Briggs scoffed, “You mean the one loaded with dog biscuits?”

“F-fuck.” Roland stammered out his frustration as he recalled the last time they’d taken aim at Connor. “Well then, got a better idea?”

Briggs flashed a judgmental expression at the Captain and turned to Connor. “Sparks! This don’t need to go that way again, brother. I know your head’s hurtin’ and you got some shit to get straight, but this ain’t the way”, he appealed.

Connor growled louder than a human could fake, sending Roland and Dartford stumbling backward instinctively. A light coating of fur began to prickle through the jock boy’s bare skin, his ears subtly lengthening to a point and a twitching nub forming above his rounded butt. Numb pads formed on his hands and pressed into his temples as he clamped his head tightly.

“Bring it down, Sparks! Bring that rage down – think about someplace calm. Where’s your home at, huh? Colchester?”

Dartford gritted his teeth at hearing Briggs’ gamble. Bringing up the place where Connor had committed transformational genocide against his friends and family could only go one of two ways.

“Wrrff-rarghff! H-.. ome?” Connor croaked out a single syllable amidst the garbled growling and barking of the dog in his mind. “I remember... home. But that was before they... before I...”

“That’s exactly why you got to get this handled **now**, you hear me?!”

Trembling, Connor pulled his hands from his head and breathed deeply – filling his chest.

“Grrr - I can. I - wrrfff. I ...will.”

“Yeah, you know it. Now do it.”

With a huge huffing exhalation, Connor’s fur began to recede along with the other changes – only leaving his ears with a subtly angular canine shape. An exhausted smile spread across his face.

“You my boy, Sparks! Fuck yeah!” Briggs celebrated, almost missing the tail that would have been wagging behind him. “Now how ‘bout you take a quick breather then help out Sergeant Foley over there. He’s been sittin’ patiently through all this shit – you *know* he deserves a treat.”

“Yeah. Especially considering I think I get what happened now...” Connor spoke monotonously, his voice tinted with shame. “I did this to you, right?”

Dartford and Roland shared a concerned look, leaving it to Briggs to respond.

“Don’t dwell now, man... You kinda did, yeah. But... being real – Wasn’t really *you*, y’know?”

“Okay, it’s just that... in Colchester.”

“Past is the past, Sparks. Now, you gonna help out Foley before he does himself some injury?”

Connor glanced at the dog-minded man as he desperately tried to stretch his human ‘hind leg’ over his head for some personal grooming. Smirking with pity, Connor imagined that Foley could speak, think and reason once more, watching the cognizant confusion take root in his eyes a millisecond before the doomed attempts at licking his own balls ceased.

“You back Fole?”

Foley stretched his jaw and, with some hesitation, attempted to respond. “Ahhh – *ahem*. I – uh – think so. Was I just trying to... lick my balls?”

“Ain’t the worst thing to happen Fole – you don’t remember the Captain pumpin’ his puppies into Dartford, nah-ha-ha?!”

“Briggs!” Roland cautioned.

“Hey, we’re in the clear now Captain!”

“**Shh!**” Connor whisper-shouted, still-pointed ears twitching from their higher position atop his head.

“What’s that sound?”

“What’s with your ears? Are you losing control again?” Dartford probed.

“No” the jock boy deflected. “Just, using what I’ve got. You hear that humming?”

The men visibly strained to listen, instead hearing the vibration of the tactical link in Foley’s pocket. Hearing it too, Connor locked eyes onto the only clothed man in the corridor.

“Foley, was it? What’s in your pocket?”

“M-my phone, or...” the man stuttered, holding up his paws as if to shield himself from Connor’s scrutiny.

“Look – you don’t need to be scared. But, I can hear a humming noise outside and now you’re getting some message through – I know that’s no personal phone in your camos! Don’t bullshit me.”

“Please...” Foley begged, paws bent forward.

Connor sighed, focusing the Sergeant’s human hands back into existence – as much to rid himself of the pathetic sight of his limp-wristed begging as to inspire loyalty. Fondling his renewed digits for a second, Foley quickly reached into his pocket and pulled out the tactical link.

“It says...”

“I think I know what it says”, Connor pre-empted. “I can hear footsteps.”

“It says back-up is *en route*. Sixty seconds.” Foley beamed at Roland.

“What do they want?” Connor pressed.

“Keep it calm, boy” Roland spoke in a firm tone, conjuring the courage to approach for the first time since his human proportions returned.

“Don’t try to stall me out, Roland. I know I did this to you and I know I’m dangerous. So – tell me! Why were you sent here?!”

“We can get this all straightened out, Connor.” Roland tried to sound reassuring, hand outstretched as if to maintain some semblance of control over the situation.

“Don’t come any closer.”

Roland slowed, still edging forward as the others watched the tense exchange.

“I’m serious! I’ll... I’ll fucking... turn you into a fish or some other messed up shit!”

“Now, why you got to go and say something like that Connor? Just when I’m thinking we understand each other and we want the same thing. We all just want to go home. Us. You. Everybody safe.”

“A-And what do *they* want?!” Connor demanded, gesturing toward the tac-link.

“Saaame thing.”

“Captain?” Briggs spoke in a sceptical tone, drawing Connor’s attention.

“What do they want Briggs? Come on – be real with me. Why are you here?”

“Sparks – we came here...”

“Stand down, Briggs” Roland cut in, purposefully speaking over the other man.

“**Sit**, Roland.” Connor ordered, leaving Roland’s brain only enough time to fire one or two neurons before his entire genetic code was forcibly rewritten. His body tore itself apart and reformed, a panting obedient Husky once more, sat on its haunches faster than if gravity had pulled the man to the ground. The dog barked, entirely unaware of who he had been or what he had been saying a second earlier. Connor snapped his attention back to Briggs, “What was the mission?”

“We – “ Briggs stuttered uncharacteristically, double-taking at the speed with which Connor had dismantled Roland and put him back together again as a dog. He pondered what he was about to tell Connor, feeling ashamed. “We came here to kill you, Sparks.”

“So, the reinforcements?”

“Third wave – *also* here to kill you.”

“*Third... wave?*”

“Long story.” Dartford broke his silence.

Connor furrowed his brow, wondering for a moment what Dartford meant, before twisting his neck toward a sudden beeping, muffled behind the thick concrete compound wall.

“DOWN!” Briggs screamed, as everyone but a stunned Connor and clueless husky dog took cover against the cold floor. A deafening explosion rang out and echoed down the corridor while the bright outside forced its way in, accompanied by clattering rubble from the breached wall and a hail of heavy boot-steps filtering through to encircle the naked jock boy.

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“Keep sights on the tango. Wait for my mark.”

The order came from beneath the armoured helmet of a black-clad trooper, rifle raised and trained squarely between Connor’s eyes. Seven more troopers likewise covered the boy with green targeting lasers from every angle.

“Hold up!” Briggs’ voice pierced the maelstrom. “He’s not a threat – we got through to him.”

“Weapons ready.”

The third-squad leader held up a fist, his goggles gleaming as he turned to hear Briggs’ protest.

“Look at him! He’s just some kid – ain’t no dog monsters here, so lower the sights... yeah?”

“Negative. Where’s your superior?”

“...” Briggs choked on his words, telegraphing the answer with an accidental glance toward the fluffy husky dog that now curled up for a nap.

“I see. On my mark – shoot to kill.”

“Go ahead.” Connor coughed as the dust finally began to settle. “If you can, you’ll be doing us all a favour. But... first – “

“Fire!”

Short controlled bursts of M16 fire rattled toward Connor’s skull from all eight positions, then a more constant barrage followed when the boy remained standing, unphased but for a solemn disappointment that crept across his face. The din quickly gave way to the sound of biscuit crumbs falling harmlessly to the ground.

“You don’t listen too well, I take it?” Connor addressed the third-squad leader. “I’d have thought you’d want the Captain back to normal before killing the guy who can make it happen. Look.”

Roland the husky dog lifted himself from the ground, as if roused by something and then quickly contorted back into a dazed but intact human – too fast for anyone to even dwell on the body-horror of his organs and flesh twisting like beaten eggs. The restored Captain tilted his head to the side, a vestige of his canine mind which quickly dissipated as he noted the tactical advantage the soldiers now seemed to possess.

“Where was I?... *Right* – the target’s surrounded! Good work.”

“Welcome back, Captain.” The third-squad leader spoke from the corner of his mouth, never letting his eyes come unstuck from the jock boy tethered to the end of his rifle’s green laser sight. “But our weapons are clearly ineffective. I’m not sure we aren’t right where he wants us...”

Connor smacked his head in frustration, causing a chain reaction of jitters among the men, their flinches accentuated by the trembling of green beams tracing a path through the dusty air.

“You’re still not listening! This isn’t some trap. I’m not out to get you.” The naked boy let his arms swing loose as if to convey some ironic sense of powerlessness and snorted a mock laugh.

“Something’s wrong with me, I know. I’m missing entire – fucking – *parts* of myself... I can feel it – just out of reach. As... as if I could grab them and work out what the fuck is happening – but I know that if I do – !”

Connor’s nostrils flared, his chin trembling as a tear tracked down his dirty face. In the brief pause, a would-be hero from among the black-clad back-up squad sprang forward, drawing a combat knife from his shin-strap and plunging it down into the space between the boy’s neck and collar bone.

“Sorry, kid.” The soldier mustered his gruffest voice, pressing the knife down and waiting for the life to drain from the target’s body.

“You will be, if you don’t step away.” Connor responded, the pity sincere in his words.

The soldier refused to give up his position, instead wrenching his goggles from his face to more easily angle his vision down and check the entry wound. A bunch of pastel-coloured fabric strands protruded from the knotted rope toy that was pressed against Connor’s carotid artery, the blade nowhere to be found.

“Do as he says, Pearson. Step away.” The squad leader confirmed, as Roland’s team shared Connor’s pity for the humiliated soldier.

“But I felt the blade in my hand... and I stabbed him. What the fuck is this?”

“Pearson, right? What did you expect?” Connor spoke calmly. “Bullets are dog biscuits. Knives are rope toys. Grenades? They probably squeak when you squeeze ‘em.”

“So how do we – kill... *ghrrf*... you – *rrf*?” Pearson stumbled over the bizarre nature of his own question, his voice turning gravely as he spoke.

“Kill me? ...Charming. But before we get into that, check your hands – they’re probably finished at a guess. And your whiskers are tickling my neck.”

Pearson gripped the boy tighter in defiance, as if he had the upper hand, before looking down to see the rope toy had fallen loose from his stiffened hands, fingers now fused together, stubby and tipped with black claws. Panic set in, as he tried to maintain a grip, crossing his rapidly thinning *front*

*legs* around Connor's neck, paws unable to get purchase and looking almost like a dog struggling to hump something.

"He's *wuff*-fucking with me, right? *Raarff*-right guys!?"

Green lasers dipped from their target for the first time since the wall was breached, as Pearson's change progressed slowly enough to take in the details, but fast enough that his squad mates dared not look away. His mouth grew prominent fangs, pushing forward into a snout – nose blackening and becoming damp as it invaded his vision. Large white whiskers had already sprouted and adorned the sides of his new muzzle, now swiftly followed by coarse black and white fur. His front legs had slowly creaked and locked into position, despite his best efforts to continue restraining Connor. The man whined first, then began growling as he snapped his maw, staring cross-eyed at the reality of his own muzzle.

"*Wr-arf! Arf. Rowwwrawwwruff!... Wroof...*"

Connor grimaced at the loud barking right next to his ear.

"Bad dog. **Down.**"

Displaying only a fluffy whiskered muzzle and doggy front legs in exchange for his assault, Pearson fell to the ground in compliance – his human eyes set fearful just above a line of fur which had encroached to cover his cheeks.

"Was that really necessary?" The squad leader probed.

"No, obviously not. He could have stepped away at any time and he'd have been fine. Probably just a light sprinkling of fur on his wrists. Was it really necessary for him to jump me with a knife?"

"You're saying it's automatic?"

"Looks that way. Closer you get, the faster things go feral. Pressed up against me like that – I'd guess Pearson's got himself a cute furry belly under all that gear. Hey – maybe a nice dog dick too."

"*Arrrr-wooff.*" The suggestion quickly had Pearson barking out his anxiety while fumbling at his belt with a pair of clumsy paws.

"What a *fucking* joke." The squad leader spat in anger.

"You're lucky really." Addressing the third-squad leader, Dartford suddenly spoke up - unclothed and crouched against the wall amidst the stalemate. "It was worse before Connor got a hold of himself. His transformative aura was radiating so far it swallowed this whole compound. You'd have all been barking and... exhibiting *other* canine behaviours already. At least the proximity is now more practical."

"Practical for what?!"

"For re-integration into society, sir."

"Oh, you have lost your fucking mind, soldier! You under his puppy spell or some shit?! He can't go anywhere near real people. You forgot what he did? So what if it's some close proximity deal now – he shakes your hand and you get stuck with a paw?!"

"Sir..."

“He sits behind you on the bus and suddenly you’re off at the stop with a tail in your pants?!”

“Sir... we – ”

“No fucking way. That doesn’t make sense to me. Look at Pearson drooling over his dick down there! I don’t want that in my town and – ”

“Third-squad leader, **Sir!**” The corridor fell silent. “We... can’t stop him.”

“Watch me. Squad, take aim.”

Connor sighed as the rifles raised again.

“On my mark...”

The squad-leader raised a hand aloft alongside his own rifle, ready to issue the kill command, despite a sudden lump in his throat. Channelling his time leading drills in the corps, he prepared to shout past the growing rasp. He drew a huge breath in.

“*Wrrrrgh-arf!*”

The men looked around at each other, then at the squad-leader.

“Sir, do we – take the shot?”, one of them asked.

“Yeah, should they waste more bullets making snacks for Pearson here?” Connor taunted.

“*R-arf!*”

The squad leader responded without thinking – trying again to muster the word ‘fire’, but only conjuring an adorably high-pitched yap.

“Didn’t catch that... you want head-pats or something?”

The stern military man tore his headgear off and violently threw it against the wall, face red with humiliation. He hesitated. He knew the word. ‘Fire’. A simple syllable. But he couldn’t be sure what might come out of his mouth if he spoke again. Palming his face to check for changes, he confirmed he didn’t have a muzzle – not even any fur. He didn’t feel any physical change whatsoever.

“Well? Your men are waiting for the order.” Connor jabbed again.

It can’t be that difficult, he reasoned – his speech couldn’t be stolen from him that easily. His throat swelled with effort as he braced his top teeth against his bottom lip and held his hand up to motion at Connor in time with the order to ‘fire’. To ‘fire’. ‘FIRE’.

He was ready – he chopped his raised hand toward the boy like a guillotine through the air and barked his command.

“*F-rrarfff!*”

“What? Ready... aim... woof? Doesn’t sound right to me – and I don’t think your squad are getting it either.” Connor gloated, finally having a little too much fun with the impetuous army officer.

“*Arf! Wroooo – aff... Arf?*” The defeated man barked aloud to himself, wrestling with his broken speech and pitch rising even higher in panic.



“It’s weird how easy it is”, Connor started. “Right now, the part of his brain that deals with language is just – rewired I suppose. To match how it is in a dog’s brain. He doesn’t even need a muzzle to force him to bark – though granted, it’d sound more authentic if he had one. Right, Pearson?”

Connor patted the head of the muzzled man still obediently cowering down at his feet.

Two of the black-clad back-up force turned to run for the breach-point in the concrete wall.

“You two – **HEEL!**” Connor snapped at the attempt to escape.

The word chased after them and wrangled them effortlessly, both men switching their sprint and enthusiastically skidding into position alongside Pearson down at Connor’s feet. It was almost as if they’d been heading there all along. Their expressions seemed mismatched to their actions, the only clue that their bodies had betrayed their intentions.

“Good boys!” Connor praised, watching as their eyes glazed over, any fears melting away into comfortable obedience. “That’s right – good dogs.”

The remaining men stood frozen in place, frantically trying to fathom an escape that didn’t involve having their minds warped into canine compliance. Connor continued his lecture.

“Now these guys have had the reward centre of a simple, cheerful and well-trained dog transplanted into their brains – that’s basically it. So they’re still entirely capable of obsessing about all those fun things that humans get stuck on... What led me here? How do I escape? Why am I wagging a tail I don’t have? Ha ha!” Connor pointed at one of the men, squirming and rhythmically shaking his butt from side to side in pure bliss. “But! As soon as they hear a command, no amount of logic is going to help them – they can’t help but obey and get rewarded with that sweet conditioned hit of dopamine. Anyone else want to try it?”

Despite the silence and a few heads shaking, Connor proceeded with his show of power.

“Can’t pull a trigger with paws, boys!”

Anyone still holding their rifle was forced to awkwardly balance it between their leathery paw pads or drop it as their hands grew stiff and furry.

“How about a tail, so I can tell when you start enjoying yourselves?”

The sound of fabric tearing echoed through the corridor as tails of all proportions sprouted out forcefully enough to rip a trouser-hole above their butts.

Mercifully spared from his demonstration – Roland, Foley, Dartford and Briggs watched on as Connor played puppy puppeteer with the relief squad.

Different parts of each man’s body sprouted fur, morphed and grew feral with no single one gifted a fully canine form. Connor was showing off. He chose one man to become a bitch in heat – his human penis shrinking and being enveloped by an oestrus-engorged opening which immediately drew the attention of three other freshly-muzzled men, Pearson included. All of them advanced as slaves to their sense of smell, varying sized bulges soon tenting at their groins. The newly female soldier pawed at her clothing, desperate to fully expose her wet sex and present herself for breeding. The

male dog men obliged with primal urgency, lapping up her moisture and clambering over each other to mount her.

Some were left chasing their tails in circles, or sniffing at each other's butts out of instinctive curiosity. The most disturbing thing was the unmistakable cognizance in each man's eyes. They were living every second of it. Fully aware of their distasteful behaviour and utterly unable to control themselves. Connor had made certain of it.

A muffled voice faintly murmured between the barks and whines. The squad leader's radio was chattering from the ground, having been discarded upon the discovery that he now possessed both a sensitive red dog dick, pulsing as it pushed out from a fuzzy sheath, *and* a long, flat tongue – perfect for panting... and self-grooming. Roland nodded at Dartford to covertly retrieve the radio, as he sat nearest.

Dartford gritted his teeth and crawled through the mosh of dog men, batting away the wet black noses that poked at his exposed rear and even one who had the audacity to give his balls an inquisitive lick, with zero peanut butter in sight. He seized the radio, hoisting it to his face and speaking in a hushed whisper with eyes trained nervously on Connor. The jock boy seemed busy giving belly rubs to his now-very willing victims.

"This is Specialist Dartford, second-squad. We are pinned down by the target. Situation is irretrievable. I repeat. Do **not** attempt further reinforcement. Abort the mission. Over."

"Negative, Specialist. This *is* the mission." The muffled voice retorted.

"..." Dartford creased his brow in confusion, scrambling back toward Roland before responding. "Requesting confirmation. Mission abort is negative? Over."

"Mission to proceed as planned. Asset inbound."

Dartford shot an incredulous look at Roland, who mirrored his assessment of the insane decision to send anyone else in here.

"Don't! Call them back! We aren't ready for him!"

"Dropping comms protocol so readily, Specialist? *Over.*"

"Who cares?! How can you be so calm – you're not seeing this!"

"I've seen plenty."

Dartford quickly studied the reinforcement pups in their various stages of undress – noting the glinting lenses affixed to each discarded helmet. Someone had been monitoring a video feed of the whole thing.

"So you know what he can do – and you're still sending more of us in here to end up begging at his feet?"

"..."

The radio crackled in silence.

"Coward." Dartford spat with vitriol.

“Seems unfair...” A slight, blonde boy – not much different in age than Connor – stood silhouetted in the section of wall that had been breached, grinning and wrapped in a puffy teal coat. “Considering I’m right here with you – on the *front lines*! Oh, and for the record – I’ve got no intention of begging for what I want, Specialist.”

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“Hush!” Connor’s voice peaked above the chorus of baying, panting and howling – reducing it to a whimper and then silence. He turned to address the new arrival. “And what *do you* want?”

“Hey Connor. Gotta say, dude – it *stinks* of dog in here, even with the window open”, the blonde boy stepped over the rubble and into the corridor, thumb pointing behind him at the blown out hole to the outdoors. “I want something similar to you, I think. But, can we start off with who I am?”

“It won’t matter who you are if you’re just here to kill me too. I’ll choose a name for you once I see what kind of dog you make.”

The blonde boy surveyed the stone passageway – Connor stood bare-skinned ahead of eight half-dressed half-dog men, all sat obediently on their butts, three naked and weary looking fully human men, and then Foley, who had miraculously retained all his clothes throughout the ordeal.

“Fine. You’re out of patience, Connor. I can understand that. And I see you like demonstrations, so let’s do it. Make me bark.”

His confidence met with an intrigued smirk from the brown-haired jock boy.

“So you’re skipping the bit where you plead to keep your humanity?”

“I said no begging, remember?”

Connor laughed at the challenge and focused his fierce glare on the intruder.

Blonde hair gave way in patches to sporadic tufts of autumn brown, the slender boy’s ears forming subtle points. A single fang protruded from the upper left side of his mouth, giving him a cute toothy overbite as it indented his lower lip. The tip of his nose blackened as his grin widened, raising leathery palms and turning them outward for all to see. He jumped theatrically, the masochistic joy glowing in his eyes as he reached back to feel a wriggling nub tickling its way between his butt-cheeks. Fur bristled across the boy’s cheeks, his body wobbling forward slightly.

“You look like you’re enjoying yourself. And I reckon you’re about ready to get down on all fours like the rest of them.” Connor gloated, seeing the excited boy teeter on his slowly-shifting legs. “Can’t fault your enthusiasm, so I guess you can keep your name once it’s done. Didn’t catch it before, did I?”

The blonde boy simply laughed, toppling forward onto his hands and knees while craning his neck up to aim a lengthening muzzle at Connor.

“Your name? Probably only a few seconds left to say it before it’s all barking and whining for you...”

The restless nub at the base of the newly quadrupedal boy's spine continued to swell, clearly visible through the tight fabric of his trousers and straining for space against the similarly inflating bulge at his crotch.

"Not playing ball? Fine – but you will be. Took a bit longer than the others, but you're starting to look like a really *good dog*. So, why don't you **speak**?"

The still-human soldiers stared enraptured at the most drawn out transformation they'd yet witnessed, waiting for the inevitable – waiting for this cocky young Commanding Officer to succumb to Connor's will and join the pack.

The blonde and brown-furred dog boy shook himself inside his teal coat and bounced up, balancing on his back legs with some considerable effort. He began to open his whiskered muzzle.

"Woof... woof? That what you were expecting?"

Connor narrowed his eye in disbelief, "Why aren't you barking?"

"The name's Marcus by the way."

Temporarily stripped of his transformational omnipotence, Connor began to feel naked in a very different way than he had for all of his recent memory. Who was this blonde boy... Marcus? Why was he here? Who was toying with who exactly? Why was he not concerned about his body morphing into a cute, fluffy Shep? *Why* did Connor just think to himself that this cocky asshole was cute?!

"Aww, now you're the one tilting your jumbled little head, Connor. But don't look away yet..."

Refocusing his eyes from searching blankly and back to Marcus' four-legged frame, Connor saw the boy's skin beginning to ripple like a pond with a stone dropped into it. Each ripple starting from a random place and expanding in circles, raising and lowering Marcus' furry features as it passed over them. More than that, softening them – gently washing them away – reversing the changes!

"Who the fuck are you?!"

"Hold on..." Marcus held up a soft-palmed hand to defer the question as another ripple radiated across his face, inviting his muzzle to sink back and approximate a human mouth once more. He stretched his jaw wide, maintaining his cocky grin throughout, then lowered his hand to continue – placing it conspicuously into his coat pocket. "Aghhh! That's better! ...Who am I? *Now* you want to know? And after I already told you too..."

"How did you – "

"Maybe I ought to get a more impactful name... or a title? Something memorable...?" Marcus mumbled to himself, stroking his chin with his free hand and rising to stand comfortably on two legs.

"Hey! Are you even listening?!" Connor demanded, his voice almost sinking to a familiar growl.

"Sorry, yep. Definitely. How did I... *not* become your obedient little dog boy, all horny and eager to please you?"

"Yeah! Maybe... not really...uhh, what I meant...but..." The jock's face blushed red with fiery hot embarrassment.

“Well... truthfully, I sort of did become your obedient little dog boy. Almost. Trust me, I don’t know if you could see from that angle, but – I was pretty horny right there! Kind of still am... But wow – honestly, credit to you, Connor. That’s some powerful stuff – I almost *wanted* it to work on me!”

Roland’s squad marvelled at the freedom with which Marcus danced verbal circles around the canine killer of Colchester. Dartford even began to wonder why this guy hadn’t been sent in first, to spare *them* the humiliation.

“You still haven’t answered me”, Connor stropped. “Why can’t I change you?”

“You can! You did! Temporarily. Like I said – powerful stuff!” Marcus zipped up his teal coat as if preparing himself for something. Taking his other hand out from his coat pocket, he beamed. “Let’s see *how* powerful, yeah?”

“What are you getting at? If I change you, your skin’ll probably just do that weird jiggly thing again and change back at a guess – so what’s the point?”

“Not me, silly boy! The missile.”

“The fucking what?”

“The missile.”

“Stop murmuring! Did you say ‘missile’?!”

“YES! A little while back I pressed a button that launched a supersonic cruise missile set to target the tracker I’ve stitched into my extremely suave teal coat!”

“You did **what**?!” Connor screeched, almost in unison with Roland, Foley, Briggs and Dartford.

“Well – I saw the stuff with the bullets into dog biscuits and the squeaky grenade toy – that was great! But, I guess I want to get a feel for your potential. Just so I know what I’m signing up for, y’know?”

“Signing up for...? You’re not making any sense Marcus.”

“You *do* remember my name! Oh Connor, now I can die happy. Which... umm, 500 miles per hour... carry the two... **will** happen in about 35 seconds if you’re not as impressive as I think you are. Oh – and yep, you *could* just run, but trust me – it’s a big missile! And I don’t think you’re the type...”

“Fuck – okay. Did you say 500? Miles per hour? I won’t even get a chance to stop something that size going that fast!” Connor began to panic, placing his hands to his head in pain.

“Ohhh! I’ve seen that look – it’s the one where you do your best work, right? But I guess I *could* give you a little range boost...”

“Fuck – how long left?!”

“Dunno, maybe 20 seconds? Relax! I heard it on the video feed earlier – it’s automatic, right? With the bullets and the knife...”

“But this is a missile!”

“Tell you what – I heard something else on the video feed too...”

“What?!”

“The range of your power stretches right outside this whole compound when you’re going *beast mode*...”

“... No... Marcus, don’t.” Connor somehow looked even more afraid.

“Too late... **Good dog, Connor** – roll over!”

In a split second as the words hit his eardrums, all thoughts and fears fizzled into nothing. Nothing but focus, instinct and a heightened sense of things. Connor lurched forward, a bushy tail thrusting down to hang between his thick thighs, fur creeping up from his perineum to cover his churning sack and the sheath that zipped up his dick tight to his stomach. His sharp-fanged muzzle pushed forward, flat tongue rolling out like a red carpet to pant in anticipation of obeying the command his triangular, fuzzy ears had zeroed in on. Thumbs retreated from the stiff paws that eagerly hoisted to his chest as he buckled onto his freshly-furred flank.

Waves of transformational impetus radiated and filled the room, completing the changes for the eight-strong squad of back-up dog soldiers, while bending the minds of Roland’s team into canine patterns yet again. Marcus’ skin rippled and contorted, almost violently – resisting and dismantling the onslaught of dog-like features almost as quickly as they invaded his appearance.

Connor rolled onto his back, furry belly skyward and eyes pointed through the breached wall, fixed on the tapestry of fresh and frothy summer clouds. A distant whistle grew louder, perceptible only to canine hearing.

Dog Connor drank in the scents around him. All the new pups he could sniff... and tussle with... and mount. He was glad to be back, far from the existential dread of the crimes he’d committed back home and happy to pound his leg against the floor with excitement as Marcus began to ruffle his silky belly fur.

“Good boy, Connor. Now let’s see what you can do.”

With a final screech of pierced air above the compound, 8 metres of metal and nuclear munitions rammed into Connor’s sphere of influence – unravelling and unmaking itself as it inched closer to impact each nanosecond. The metal casing stripped and grew soft, wrapping itself around the payload which first became spongy, then dampened and rearranged itself into a fleshy mass. The shift made a mockery of the missile’s aerodynamic design and, together with the rapid deconstruction and neutering of its propulsion – slowed the final descent to a gentle thud next to Marcus, still calmly fussing over a blissfully ignorant pup Connor.

“Oh wow... wow... wow!” Marcus exclaimed as he paused the petting to check the ‘impact site’.

The missile slowly opened its eyes, intact and unharmed and looking no different from a cheerful, dopey chocolate Labrador.

It barked once, then began panting – presumably with the exertion of having recently been travelling at supersonic speeds through the atmosphere. The only discernible remnant of its former status as a

weapon was a faint glow at its chest – perhaps vestiges of the highly enriched uranium which would have vaporised the room it now lounged in.

Marcus gave the... missile... a pat on the head, watching as pup Connor rolled onto his front and lifted himself onto four legs to begin sniffing at the new canine.

“Connor – good boy, now **release.**”

Marcus placed emphasis on the trigger to swiftly bring the jock boy’s human side back to the fore, eager to discuss the results of the ‘experiment’. Groggily, but with his memory of everything leading up to the resurgence of his inner dog fully intact, Connor the human roused with a start.

“Fuck – the missile! How long?”

“About thirty seconds ago...” Marcus responded.

“Huh? Did... we die?”

“Ha! We’ll need to work on stitching those split personalities back together I think.”

“You... brought out... *dog* Connor?”

“Yep – and somehow, you... created life, from metal.” Marcus marvelled, pointing at the placid chocolate Lab.

“Is that?”

“The missile...”

“Wow.”

“That’s what I said too.”

Connor suddenly twigged and scanned his empty environment as he wondered aloud, “And the soldiers? Briggs? Dartford – and the others?”

“Alive. But all turned into dogs again – lucky fuckers. Probably got scared off by the missile screech before impact... we’ll round them up and you can shift them back to their boring human bodies. Guess that’s what you’re planning to do, right?”

“Sounds fair, considering.” Connor hung his head for a moment, reflecting on what he’d put them through, before mustering a grim but genuine smile and nodding toward the missile dog. “Marcus...? I think I’ll call him Bomb.”

“Oh, right. Not Rocket?” Marcus squinted.

“Too obvious.”

“Mm.”

“So, you gonna tell me who you really are?”

“This again? I thought we’d developed some kind of mutual trust and understanding through a shared near-death experience, but I guess not... That hurts, Connor.” Marcus feigned a frown.

“No – I mean, maybe – but you know what I’m getting at. How come I can’t change you?”

Marcus roll his head along with his eyes in a grossly over-exaggerated manner, taking a deep breath in and letting it momentarily balloon in his cheeks, before responding.

“Like a dog with a bone, this one. Let’s sort the tenancy agreement first, then we’ll talk.”

“Sort the what?”

**To be continued...?**