

Going Grey

By FoxFace

An Anonymous Commission

Connor and Darnell are two wildlife enthusiasts travelling through the Congo in search of elephants. But when a miracle sighting goes terribly wrong, they'll do anything to redeem themselves before an angered spirit of the forest. But when a bargain is struck, they are shocked to find themselves becoming a mating pair of the very species they came to see.

Going Grey

The land was beautiful. The scorching sun rose over the forest, lighting up the earth in warm tones of orange, red, and yellow. The trees were still in the calm air, but the movement of life was still abundant. Hornbills and oxpeckers fluttered in the trees, and wild antelope, who moved with graceful elegance, were stirring in their herds, slowly grazing upon grass and nearby bushes. Farther in the distance, visible by binoculars, packs of wildebeests washed themselves in the water, lapping at the shallow waters. Further west, a leopard lounged lazily on a warm rock, disinterested in potential meals, for now at least.

"Wow," I said, taking it all in.

"Damn straight Connor," Darnell replied. "What else is there to say?"

We were two young men in our early twenties, and had both taken a gap year to travel the world and see its sights. I was the slightly younger of the two at twenty one years old. I was caucasian, with light skin and light freckles on my cheeks, and bright red hair that refused all attempts to be made neat. I was of average height and build, and at the start of our travels I had been less muscular than I desired, but the many treks and activities we had partaken in had made me more lithe than thin. I looked at the sight before us, lost in awe, and thankful that the friend I had made only the previous year had convinced me to get outside my comfort zone. I couldn't have done it without the push. I was studying environmental law back at university, as I had always been passionate about conservation and protection of the natural world. Seeing this made me realise how much it was necessary to witness that natural world up close, in order to truly appreciate it. I smiled appreciatively at Darnell in that very moment, communicating the sentiment clearly, without need of words.

Darnell was twenty four years old, and noticeably taller and fitter than me. He was of African descent, with dark skin and curly black hair, though he had never until this trip actually visited the continent, having grown up in the same city as me. He was a handsome

man, with a strong jawline, easy white-toothed smile, and bright eyes. He was very proud of his abs, which drove the girls wild, and more than once he'd taken advantage of that attraction while travelling, though he always made sure to play wingman for me: a lot of overseas women digged our accents. He was forthright and decisive, and always determined, a quality that made me look up to him. For Darnell, it simply came naturally, particularly since he wanted to become a park ranger one day. That dream had allowed us to become fast friends, and we often conversed about climate change, conservation efforts, and our shared interests in the animal kingdom and beauty of the natural world. My knowledge was pretty advanced on these subjects, and Darnell always seemed a bit impressed. And, though he'd never admit it, I suspected he found it nice having a friend who viewed him as a sort of mentor.

We had been travelling for three months now, free of all commitments. Neither of us had close family - Darnell by circumstance, me by choice - and it was a shared agreement that we would avoid all social media contact with our ordinary lives, and simply enjoy the excitement and adventure of our trip. Canada had been captivating, Malaysia marvellous, Russia romantic (we had both found some beautiful Slavic girls in St Petersburg willing to come back to our hostel), and Brazil had been just brilliant. But it was the countries that held the great savannahs and jungles south of the Sahara that were the most wondrous, from Tanzania to Zimbabwe to the great Congo Basin. It was the last that held the sight before us, and we were both overcome by its wonder.

"This is why I want to work in environmental science," I finally said. "This is what I want to preserve."

"I get it," Darnell said, beaming. "Man, to be a ranger at a place like this. If only I spoke the language; half of everyone here keeps mistaking me for a local."

I chuckled. "Yeah, I don't think I'll have the same problem."

We both laughed at that. For a time we simply sat in our jeep, admiring the view for a while, when suddenly Darnell gripped my shoulder and spun me to face towards the more forested east.

"What the -!?"

"Look man, look!"

"Holy shit!"

There, emerging from the treeline, was the sight we had been most hoping to see. A herd of beautiful African forest elephants marched forward, their sizes incredible, their skin a wrinkly grey, their tusks prominent. Several small calves followed by their mothers as the beautiful creatures marched implacably to the watering hole. There were at least twelve of them, and they kept close to one another, as elephants often did. Darnell and I marvelled at the sight, taking in the great beasts: these were *the* African Forest Elephants, listed as

critically endangered by conservation groups across the world. I reached for my camera, and expertly took a number of shots. Within a few minutes, the great grey creatures were lapping at the water, treading down into it to cool themselves, and spraying each other playfully with their long trunks. The largest of them rose their trunk into the air and let loose a trumpet blast of joy. It was enough to make us two men laugh, and bold enough to creep a little closer to one of the specimens that lacked a child. Surprisingly, the elephants let us close, though we knew what we were doing was foolish, we couldn't resist the opportunity to see one closer. A large bull broke from the herd to approach us. It regarded us with an inscrutable gaze.

"Stop, stop," I said. I was starting to wonder just what on Earth we were doing. As usual, I had followed the more adventurous, more confident Darnell.

"Just wait," he whispered, giving the animal a grin and holding up a hand slowly.

The bull approached, its large tusks sharp and powerful. It extended its trunk, sniffed us. It stepped closer. We both held our breaths as it seemed to reach a decision. It extended a trunk once more and blew snot all over me. Darnell had to stifle a laugh as the great beast let loose another trumpet, and turned to its side, still regarding us.

Darnell, divisive as ever, moved forward to touch it.

"Wait D!"

"He's letting us touch him, don't you see!"

Indeed, the bull was. Darnell ran his hand across its grey, leathery flank, and the man beamed from ear to ear. Shocked and amazed, I joined him.

"That was the most magical experience I've had . . . maybe ever!" I exclaimed.

"Damn, you're not wrong," Darnell said. "At the break of dawn tomorrow we should get out there again, see if the herd remains."

I nodded, grinning like a madman. I wanted nothing more than to stay out there, and so did he, but we needed to get back to our hotel before dark. It was a long drive, and the sun was not far from setting on the horizon.

"Hold up, got what looks like men with guns ahead," Darnell said, slowing down. I looked up from the camera I'd been using to take snaps, and sure enough, there were a couple of flat-bed trucks and a jeep, around which several jacketed men were waving at us to slow down. Several had guns, though they thankfully weren't brandishing them.

Yet.

"Fuck, who do you think they are?" I said.

“Hell knows, but they look scary. I don’t want to barge through them and get shot to Swiss cheese. Get your wallet ready to hand over: if it’s a stick up then I don’t want them spooked by us reaching into the car.”

Things felt tense, very tense as we pulled the car to a top. Several nasty looking gentlemen wore camo vests and held what looked to be some pretty powerful military-grade equipment in their hands. They motioned for us to put our hands up.

“What are you doing here?” one said.

“We’re just tourists,” Darnell said, keeping his hands visible. “We were just watching the elephants.”

They exchanged some words with one another, and appeared to relax after viewing our passports, lowering their guns and moving to chat to one another. A white-skinned man joined them, roughly in his fifties. He spoke with an American accent.

“Okay fellas, don’t worry. These guys are just park rangers.”

“They don’t look like park rangers,” said Darnell, wide-eyed.

The man laughed and extended his hand. “I’m Bartley. I’ve been working with the rangers for going on eight years now. Trust me, they come a bit more aggressive here; poachers come fully-armed, and they aren’t the desperate hungry types you probably think they are.”

He had an easy smile, and his way allayed us. “I’m Connor, this is Darnell,” I said.

“Good to meet you both. We convoy around this area because some of the animals are pretty prized. Especially elephants; a lot of unsavoury types want to get hold of those tusks.”

We nodded. The ivory trade was something we both despised.

“We saw a whole herd of elephants with tusks a few hours west,” I said. “I can imagine it’s hard to keep track of herds like that.”

“Almost impossible. We’ve got a large number of them here, but a few subspecies are still quite endangered. Scientists are still discovering new variants. We’re a small outfit who have a big territory to cover, and lots of dangers, so you can imagine we get a bit nervous when we see unfamiliar faces driving around.”

“Understandable,” Darnell said.

“Where were these elephants, anyway? If they had full blown tusks and they were nearby, that’s a worry to us. We’ve had a couple of poaching incidents recently.”

Darnell gestured for me to get the map, and I did so, even if things felt a little odd. Darnell traced where we’d come from, and the specific location we’d seen them. Bartley slapped him on the back. “Good on you, son. We’ll check round that area tomorrow, and we’ll be sure to keep ‘em safe. You two have a good night now.”

We were allowed to leave, and Bartley waved us off. The rest of the drive was peaceful, but I felt a little uneasy about what had just happened.

“Hey,” I said, “do you think we should check that watering hole again tomorrow?” I asked.

Darnell gave me a funny look. “Why? The rangers will take care of it.”

“I don’t know, I just have a feeling.”

He shrugged. “I guess so. We’ve still got a few days before we fly out. Then it’s off to home.”

“Yeah,” I said, leaning back in my seat as we approached the outskirts of the city. “I kinda wish I could stay here forever.”

We set out again at dawn the next day, intent on visiting that magnificent sight once more. I felt a little tense in my stomach, however. As if something was just ever-so-slightly wrong. I couldn’t put my finger on it, and Darnell must have noticed my undercurrent of anxiety, because he hit the accelerator, taking us further across the Congo basin. I had my camera still with me, and was hoping to take some more shots of the beautiful forest elephants, but perhaps it was just the overcast weather that gave a somber mood to the proceedings. An urgency.

“Hey dude, it’ll be fine,” Darnell said, “even if they’re not there, it was amazing enough to see them just once. They’re listed as critically endangered, and we of all people managed to see them.”

It calmed me down some. We were in a dangerous part of the world, but the beauty of it was unparalleled. To be part of this nature, even for that one day, was something else. It was just hard to get the sight of those guns afterward out of my head. The rangers who needed such heavy equipment.

“It’s West Africa, dude,” Darnell said, “it has a violent history, and a lot of colonial baggage. It’s not necessarily out of the ordinary.”

“Would you feel comfortable being a park ranger like that?” I asked.

My friend fell silent, and I could tell the comment made him ruminate. Perhaps he knew more about other ranger practices than me, given it was his interest to be one, but his troubled look told me a lot too. He didn’t speak much when we left the jeep and made our way on foot through the intractable jungle slopes.

My fears were confirmed when we arrived at the site of the massacre.

They were dead. At least four of the mighty elephants had fallen, and one of their calves. Gunshots riddled their sides, rivulets of dried blood matting their leathery grey skin.

Their tusks had been removed, cut cruelly off by the men that had slaughtered these noble beasts.

“No,” I whispered, then my voice rose. “No! NO!”

I ran forward, as did Darnell, splashing into the shallow waters to see the carnage up close. There was evidence that men had been here beyond the bullet wounds; tracks from all-terrain vehicles far more capable than ours, and numerous footprints in the muddy banks. And evidence that the remaining herd had fled also.

“Fuck, oh God, I did this,” Darnell said, putting his hands over his head. “This is my fault. I showed them where they were on the map.”

I placed a hand on a still hide, and wiped my tears away with the other. “I was the one who first said something.”

“But I showed them where! I gave them the fucking location and everything! What the hell was I thinking!”

He was weeping also. Who wouldn't be? There was little else to say, and we checked over each creature in turn, hoping for life. It had fled them all, bar one; a female whose trunk was reaching to the forest, in search of its herd. We stayed with it, trying anything we could, but its time was short. She expired there, and the clouds grew even darker, rain falling upon us.

“African Forest Elephant,” Darnell said in an empty voice. “*Loxodonta cyclotis*. Critically endangered. Only about twenty thousand left. And we just took away from that number.”

There was no sound but the wind in the trees, and the slow fall of saddening rain.

“It is true, you are in part responsible for this tragedy.”

I twisted my head to try to determine the source of the low, feminine voice I had just heard, and could see that Darnell was doing the same. It sounded like it came from a woman right beside me, but there was nobody.

“Did you hear that?”

Darnell nodded, tears still in his eyes, a hand still planted over the fallen beast beside him. He was looking around, trying to determine where it had come from.

“You told them that my elephants were here, and so they came, and so they took.”

“Who the fuck is that?” Darnell shouted, “where are you!?”

‘I am everywhere. I am within the soil and among the trees. I am on the vine and in the lake. I am the spirit of this forest, and those that dwell within.’

“This has got to be a joke, right?” Darnell said, looking to me with panic.

I wasn't so sure. We both turned, watching each other's backs, wary and feeling almost a little crazy.

‘You do not believe me. Then I shall take a form that will suit you.’

There was a sudden rush of air from the trees all around us, and the mud and soil in the centre of the shallow lake rose and coalesced, forming into a figure slowly and surely. The mud and clay and water compressed and smoothed, forming a torso and head and limbs, and each softened and shaped until they adopted a feminine form. We each took a step back as green roots shot from the construct's scalp and small pebbles wreathed around the figure to form a makeshift skirt of stone around the figure's waist. In mere moments, standing before us, was a woman made of soil and water and roots and stone. Her shape was that of a curvy native's, her 'hair' of roots forming dreadlocks down her back, and her earthy breasts topped with small nipple-like pebbles. Her eyes were green, green beyond imagining, and glowed softly. I had hardly even noticed that the rain had started to lessen, so fixed was I with the site of a real life magical forest spirit before us.

'I am Mbokomu, mother to life, and protector of the green,' she declared. She stepped through the water to us, and we both fell back against the hide of one of the poor elephants. *'And your careless actions have robbed my lands of my noblest beasts.'*

"We're - we're sorry!" I yelled, holding my hands up.

"Yeah! I didn't mean to!" Darnell said, "If we could take it all back, we could!"

'Liars! You are men, and men take and do not give! You care for profit, and nothing else!'

"That's not true!" I managed, overwhelmed by the entrancing sight of the goddess before me. "I'm - I'm an environmental conservationist in training. And Darnell is going to be a park ranger! We care deeply for life."

"It was a mistake," Darnell said, backing me up, and pushing away from the elephant carcass. "Like I said, I wish I could undo it. I really do. I want to protect nature, and help it flourish."

"We both do!"

The goddess seemed to consider this. She stepped forward, her eyes glowing even brighter emerald as she regarded us. She twisted her hands, and small roots curled up from the water to wrap gently around our ankles. I could feel a strange thrum coursing through my body, and somehow I *knew* that my actions, my personality, my very soul was being examined and weighed. Darnell briefly fought, until I indicated for him to calm down.

'Hmm,' Mbokomu said, rubbing her earthen chin, *'you appear to speak the truth. And yet you aided the sinful poachers. You,'* she said, pointing at me, *'told them that my beasts were here, still so few in number. And you,'* her finger moved to Darnell, *'committed a worse sin, by instructing the hunters exactly how to find my grey children.'*

We both lowered our heads in shame. She had spoken the truth.

'But you also show true remorse, and great . . . potential. There is an ancient way that you can give back, and repay the debt you have accrued. You, the one known as

Darnell, whose blood runs centuries back to this very land, you said that you wish you could take it all back. Alas, you cannot. But you can give it all back, if your hearts truly are of a nature's kin, and you agree.'

"Yes, yes," Darnell said, "abso-fucking-lutely I'd agree."

"Me too," I said, raising my voice. "Anything to give back."

She smiled, and it appeared utterly genuine. *'It is not without risks, nor without . . . changes. But if you embrace my magics, you will be far greater conservers, protectors, and progenitors of nature than you ever could have been otherwise. In this sacred space, with the blood of these slain animals, I can bless you with powerful magic to ensure the great elephants of the forests will flourish forever. If you wish to accept what I offer, then eat of the fruit I offer.'*

Two great bulbous purple fruit lowered on vines from trees far above. They glowed slightly, and looked like no earthly fruit I had ever seen. I took one, as did Darnell.

'Know that what you accept is permanent, and unchangeable.'

"But it will help the elephants?" I asked. I could see Darnell had the same question burning in his heart. The need to atone.

The forest spirit nodded. *'It will. More than you can imagine.'*

"What do you think?" I asked my friend, talking quietly.

"I think this has been the wildest twenty four hours of my life, man. Magic is here, and it's real! And it's offering me a chance to do something, after what I did yesterday." He paused, looking around at the still beasts. "You don't have to man, but I'm going to eat it. Don't do it just because of me, though."

I put a hand on his shoulder. "Darnell, of course I'll eat the fruit because of you. It's because of you that I've travelled the world. It's because of you being so damn confident and such a decision-maker that I've realised so many of my dreams. I'll follow you anywhere, man."

He smiled, and bit into the fruit. I didn't hesitate in following him. It tasted pungent and sweet, and yet it thrummed with something undeniably different and alien, a powerful sensation that radiated through my body down to my very core. I continued to eat, and I was shocked at how immediately ravenous I was; it was a very large fruit, not something to be consumed in a single sitting, and yet my appetite had become beyond voracious. Darnell too was tearing into his fruit, his lips staining purple as he sucked at its juices. My stomach growled, desiring more, and for a brief moment I looked to the goddess, who only smiled thinly, her expression knowing and pleased. We both ate the fruit down to its core, and only then were we sated. I breathed deeply, almost raggedly at the effort. My stomach bubbled, and I felt at it.

"Ooohhh," I moaned, as it sloshed, "that's a bit odd."

Mbokomu smiled. *'It is a good sign. You two are indeed pure of heart, and have spirits in tune with nature's way. The change has already begun.'*

"Ch-change?" I asked, starting to get a bad feeling about this, but suddenly the bubbling in my stomach increased in power and intensity, and my body doubled over as an almighty pressure rose, centred in my core.

"Ahhh shit!" Darnell cried, and he fell back against the deceased elephant behind him. And it was then that we both saw that the elephant was beginning to glow, brighter and brighter with each passing moment.

"The h-hell?" I stammered, lifting my head as my muscles burned and stretched, skin becoming itchy and hair pulling at my scalp. The glow was not contained to just the one elephant remains, but to all of them, even the calf, as if golden light was glowing within them, and getting more powerful every moment. Soon it was near-impossible to notice any detail upon their skin.

The pressure increased, and it felt as if my body was actually trying to expand! Tissue and muscle seemed to increase, and I could feel myself become heavier. To my horror, the stomach which had only been merely bubbling a moment ago was now churning like a raging sea, and I clutched it.

"Ah - ah - ah - aAaaAAAHH!"

I almost screamed as the internal pressure became too much, and all of a sudden my belly rose, becoming larger and larger, tight as a drum. It rose, pressing against my shirt, and all efforts to push it back with my hands failed. I breathed like a woman in labor, the pressure extending out to my shoulders and hips. Bones popped painfully, growing larger and expanding even as muscle and tissue formed around my limbs. Darnell moaned, and I saw that he too was bloating up; not just his belly but his arms and legs, becoming impossibly and aberrantly thick. He looked like a freak, and therefore I most likely did as well.

"What's happening t-to usss?" I yelled. My bones ached as they stretched, more and more fat and flesh and muscle stretching and growing. My stomach was unbelievably heavy and stretched, and I could barely wrap my arms around it, even as all four limbs extended.

"I don't - ugh! - know! NGH!" Darnell replied.

It was as if a thousand different sets of tongs were gripping my flesh and pulling it in all possible directions. I bit my lip in response to the alien sensations, only to feel that it had swollen.

"Wha-"

I sneezed, and I fell backwards against a glowing elephant body. It broke apart, exploding into brilliant lights that fell like embers, or autumn leaves. All the bodies were breaking apart, the golden light dispersing into the air, before slowly arcing down. And as

they did so, they arced *into* us. There was a flood of energy, and the changes accelerated. Invisible hands pulled at my ears, and I could feel them thickening even as they spread outwards, becoming heavy. The bones in my face shifted and re-arranged, and I sneezed again, falling backward once more. Even amongst all the pressure and bloat and popping joints, I could feel an incredibly powerful push just beginning to grow behind my nose.

“We’re fuck - are we becoming elephants!?” Darnell asked.

I looked to the goddess as something pushed from my spine and continued to spill outward, new joints forming to become a strange hanging limb that was getting larger by the second.

‘You are,’ she said, simply, ‘how else could you give back? You are to be the progenitors of new elephants, and in doing so, give back to the species!’

“Nnn-NO!” I yelled, mouth cracking wider and my teeth flattened and grew. I could feel my lips becoming thicker, my skin rubbery and strange. Already my arms were far longer than they should have been, and my fingers were increasingly number as more and more golden embers were absorbed into my body.

“T-turn it back!” Darnell yelled. I could see that his skin was becoming grey and more than a little wrinkled, just like an elephant’s hide. Mine was too. Worse, the pressure behind my nose had grown in intensity, and the entire shape of my face began to alter as it pushed outwards, extending and extending and extending. I whimpered as my new trunk formed, a limb unto itself, and my brain almost short-circuited in response to all the new feeling and minute muscles contained within it. In a great show of shock I blew a great trumpet, causing the goddess to chuckle in a low voice.

‘What a mighty elephant you are already becoming.’

My hands swelled, sensations numbing further as fingers cracked inwards, increasingly becoming another set of elephant’s feet, complete with stubby bony toes. They had a ways to go still, but they were increasingly more like wrinkled grey pillars than arms, and my legs weren’t far behind.

“I d-don’t - MHhmm - want this!”

My tail extended, and I panted loudly as my entire form heaved, finally bursting through my clothes and leaving me naked and grey. I was far beyond the point of morbid obesity now, and every second saw more and more pounds added to my heavy form.

‘You agreed to the change, and you ate of the fruit. The change cannot be stopped. You shall become fine new specimens of this mighty species, and you will live the lives of elephants for the rest of your mortal span.’

“God no! Shit shit! We didn’t realise!” Darnell shrieked. His face was swelling beyond recognisability, and his ears were getting larger. “I don’t w-want to be - HRRgGH - just an elephant!”

'But you will not be just an elephant. You have been given the blessing of the forest, and so you shall have an existence beyond that of an ordinary member of your new kind. You will work to add new members of your species, not take! This is what you have agreed to. It is a great gift.'

"D-don't feel like one!" I said, as my hips exploded outwards, thickening immensely, my shoulders following suit. It was almost impossible to stand, and so I fell backwards onto my enormous ass.

"AHH! My dick! The fuck is happening to my dick!?"

I looked over to my mutating friend, and saw Darnell's look of shock. His penis was growing, extending, becoming utterly *monstrous* in size, several feet long in fact! He groaned as it thickened and greyed, much like the rest of his skin, but even stranger, it appeared to be *coiling*. It moved like a tentacle, writhing slowly as its base thickened, its whole shaft widening. He stared at it in shock, grasping it with his hand, only to groan in what looked like pleasure.

"Holy shit you've got an elephant cock Darnell!" I yelled. It was massive, and even as the rest of him bloated, it still appeared to be a mighty member in size, its tip curling slightly at the end and back again.

My own crotch continued to burn, and at any moment I expected my dick to expand similarly to his. Instead, however, I gasped as it began to tug. Small tugs at first, then stronger ones, pulling not outward but inward to my increasingly large body.

"Oh f-f-fuck . . . I can f-f-feel it g-going! Whhhhy . . ."

'Only one bull is needed. You shall be his cow. An elephant pairing to give back to the forest.'

The meaning of her words finally struck me. I looked at her, even as my eyes separated, pushing further and further apart as my entire cranium swelled to elephantine proportions.

"I'm gonna be f-femaaaaale?!"

She nodded, still smiling. More golden light poured into me, the very essence of the elephants mingling with my being, altering the fabric of my DNA and turning me into a living specimen. A living *female* specimen.

"OOhhhhhh . . ."

Further pressures expanded with my body as I neared closer and closer to completion. My genitals pulled in between my legs, and my balls with them, swallowed up even as a tugging within told me that a large womb was forming. I whimpered as my penis was replaced with a large opening, a gash between my enormous pillar-like legs - rear legs, now.

“Holy shit Connor!” Darnell managed through grey, swollen lips. He gave a gnarled cry as bones began to jut out from either side of his mouth, pushing out like spears to form mighty tusks. Mine followed, painful and powerful, flesh stretching around them.

“Wait I - Ggnhgghnnnnn!”

Speech became impossible between us, and we could only look at each other as the last of our hair fell away, skulls increasingly massively in size alongside the rest of our bodies. Vertebrae formed, tissue swelled, and our rib cages expanded enormously.

But that was not the only thing that swelled. To my absolute shock, two central points between my arms - my forelegs, I suppose - had their own separate internal pressure. Like balloons, they inflated, the grey skin tightening and expanding until a pair of incredibly generous breasts formed. They were tight, and large, and even on my own misshapen and swollen form, they felt heavy, easily double or triple the size of a human head, each topped with a large grey nipple. I had breasts! Breasts and a vagina! There was no doubt now that I was a cow: a female elephant.

My ears fanned out like a plane's wings, and my trunk fattened, extending further. The last great tugs and swellings of my body played out as the final golden embers soaked into my form, infusing me with their magic. In moments, the changes settled, and I was a female elephant, just as Darnell was a male one.

For life. Forever. Until the day we died, these were our forms. As if to confirm it, the goddess spoke.

‘It is done. Your new forms are finished. You have sacrificed much for the greater good, but you will find it worthwhile, given time.’

I was still slumped awkwardly in the shallow pool, my leaden limbs too massive to comprehend. I couldn't figure out how to move, and I was dreadfully fearful that my mind - the last vestigial remnant of Connor Maxon - would be next to go. I let loose another trumpeting cry, as did Darnell.

The still form of the goddess seemed to sense our panic.

‘Fear not. You shall always be able to communicate mentally, and you shall both keep your minds. Though you will have some instincts to guide you, you can always resist them.’

A torrent of muscle memory flooded my enormous brain, and I suddenly felt able to move this massive form. I rose, pushing my incredible limbs with an unbelievable might, lifting my heft up so that I stood now on all fours. I could not believe how huge I was: I now towered over the forest spirit, and my perspective was so much higher than as a human. More than that, I had the alien sensation of additional and altered limbs; I flapped the mud from my huge ears, and whipped my tail free of slime as well. My trunk, dirtied by the water, extended and blew, expending mucus and filth. Darnell did much the same.

'Holy fuck I'm an elephant' Darnell said. No, he didn't say it, he *thought* it.

'I just heard you man!' I replied, and I froze, because while Darnell's voice was unchanged in my mind, my own mental voice was higher, softer, gentler. It was an undeniably and deeply feminine voice. The voice of a movie starlet. The kind of voice you wanted to go to bed with, somehow attached to the enormous bulk of my elephant body.

'Holy shit dude, you really are a female.'

'Fuck, I know! Shit, dammit! I know! I've got - I've got a vagina.'

'I can tell - I can smell it, somehow!'

I felt utterly humiliated. The goddess cut in before I could muster a reply to that statement.

'You see that the mental link between you is established. You will forever be able to talk like this, and like most animals, you will recognise one another by your smells. You are to be a powerful breeding pair - a bull and his cow - and together you will mate and produce many great calves to bring prosperity to this land again.'

I blanched, trumpeting slightly in alarm as I stepped back. It was instinctive, as if it was the normal response. Sure enough, I could indeed smell my friend. He had a powerful musk, and it made my insides tingle, as well as the parting between my rear legs.

'No', I thought, *'I don't want to be a mating pair. Are you telling me I'll have to get pregnant like this?'*

The goddess nodded. *'Indeed. As the more submissive of the two men you once were, it seemed only natural to allow you the female's role. You are now an incredibly fecund member of your species: your gestation period is not twenty-two months, but a mere six, and as soon as you give birth you will be ready to be impregnated once more. To help you with this, I will place your body in a permanent heat.'*

She waved her hand, and I was suddenly overcome with yet another change, as a strange need erupted within me, a warmth in my new opening, a wetness that needed attending to. I stuck my great new tongue out, licking at the stem of my great tusk, and stomped my left foreleg several times, trying to distract from the feeling.

'We're friends,' I moaned, trying to ignore that my instincts were now telling me that Darnell looked very, very attractive as a mate, his prehensile penis especially so. *'We're not going to have sex, and especially not get me knocked up!'*

'You tell her Connor!' Darnell added, despite what seemed to be a stirring of his great penis. God, his musk was nice.

Mbokomu extended her arms in an almost maternal concern. Despite now being smaller than us, I could sense that she was truly far larger, extending to the great Congo Basin in its entirety.

'You will not have to do anything you do not wish, though I would be disappointed if you did not fulfil your new destinies, and bring forth new life to replace the old. Is that not why you agreed to this change?'

'Connor and I didn't realise we were going to be changed like this!'

The goddess appeared sad for a moment. *'Then I am sorry. But I am also sorry for the damage caused by man, damage you played a part in. I cannot reverse your transformations. For good or ill, you are now elephants. Connor shall possess the power to be mother to hundreds of calves, and Darnell the potent seed to keep her pregnant with mighty descendants, and to impregnate other cows of your kind. Both of your lives are extended by many years; you shall live somewhere between three hundred and four hundred years, during which you have the power to birth many new calves into the world.'*

My jaw and my trunk dropped at that revelation.

'As a further blessing to your fecundity, Connor, you have the developed breasts of a mother elephant already, and your milk production has already begun. It shall be in prodigious quality, and those that suckle from your milk - be they calf, human, even your mate Darnell - will be granted hearty strength and be healed of their wounds. This is a further blessing to an already highly blessed form.'

I stamped my great feet awkwardly as my mammary glands pushed outwards further, becoming even heavier sacks. It was strange; I could actually feel them *filling* with milk, and it reached the point where they were a little sore. My great nipples stung, the milk pressurised behind them.

'Ahhh, oh God, that feels strange. Shit. I've got milk. I've got big elephant boobs full of milk!'

'I - I can see that Connor. I'm so sorry!'

The goddess was beginning to fade, and we both startled, our heavy bodies shifting to try and keep her in view.

'Do not be sorry,' she said, *'rejoice instead. You have accepted a gift not given in centuries, and now you may go forth and find the herd that was reduced, and aid in its replenishment. You will enjoy knowing that the sex act for you will be far more comparable to a human experience, in time that may transpire, and pleasurable sensation that follows. A small final gift to impart to you both, for the great service you undertake. Now, farewell, and may your lives be fruitful, and your descendants spread through these forests in great multitudes of herds.'*

She disappeared from view before we could trumpet or mentally say another word, leaving us trapped in our enormous bodies. Trapped as a mating pair of elephants in the Congo.

For a long, long time to come.

We had been getting used to our heavy new bodies for over three days now, and it hadn't been easy. Bad enough that we were stuck as a pair of elephants, apparently permanently, but we were also contending with our new instincts. This ranged from eating and travelling, to scenting the air for our own kind and sources of water. It was a wild thing to suck up water with my trunk the first time, then suck it into my mouth, only to repeat the process. Much of elephant behaviour was drawn from our gifted instincts, but it didn't make it any less humiliating to raise one's tail and drop an enormous pile of elephant dung on the forest floor, whip my tail at a few buzzing flies, and simply move away. It felt like . . . well, it felt like being an animal.

And both of us being animals, now of the opposite sex, also included some new . . . feelings towards one another. I had been unable to quite get Darnell's scent out of my nose - er, trunk - and it was making my new elephantine lady parts constantly moist. Just as annoyingly, my ridiculous breasts were constantly swollen with milk, and it was a difficult thing to try to milk them with my trunk. Who would have thought that elephants actually had breasts on their 'chest' like a bipedal creature! They even bounced a little, and it only made it more embarrassing when Darnell made slight jokes about me being a bit 'busty' now. He wasn't wrong.

The instincts ran the other way between us too. More than once I caught Darnell's snout nearer to me than I cared for, and he became a little ashamed when he realised he had been sniffing at my scent, which was apparently quite intoxicating. It was certainly enough to make that prehensile penis of his stir. I could only thank the stars above that Mbokomu had ensured that we could resist our shared urges, because with this stupid four ton elephant body was not subtle that it wanted to be mated; my permanent oestrus made sure of that.

I reached up with my trunk and pulled at another branch, gripping a great bushel of leaves and dragging it down to enter my gaping maw. I was getting rather good at it, and I couldn't deny that my new taste buds adored the texture and flavour of vegetation. My large mouth watered as I caught the scent of jackfruit in the air, perhaps half a mile off. Raising my trunk I sniffed in desire. It was by far the most delicious thing for both of us now, and we consumed enormous quantities of that yellow delicacy wherever we could find it. Them, and entire banana groves, skins and all. I reached higher with my trunk for a particularly juicy branch, but couldn't quite reach it.

That was when my bigger friend's trunk snaked up to grasp it, pulling it down for the both of us, allowing me to feast. God, he was already being protective of me, the poor little four-ton female.

'This sucks man,' I mentally said, as I took in a big helping of plant matter and continued walking through the forest. I tried to ignore how my new mental 'voice' sounded like a hot college cheerleader inviting the alpha male of the football team into the bedroom.

'I know,' Darnell replied. He'd kept his voice. *'But I don't see a way back. We just have to follow our trunks and find this other herd, and then figure out what to do.'*

'I can tell you what we're not gonna do. Have sex. No way are you mounting me, or putting little - or big - elephant babies in me. I don't care how good my vagina smells.'

Darnell gave a minor 'harumph.' *'That's good, because no offence Connor, but your vagina smells really damn good to me. It's these damn instincts.'*

'It's this damned permanent head, is what.'

'Well, we both have it pretty bad.'

I slapped him lightly but angrily with my trunk, turning heavily to face him. Vegetation was crushed beneath my enormous elephantine feet.

'Yes, we both have it bad, but I have it way worse. Neither of us are human any more, sure, but at least you still got keep your gender. At least you got to keep your dick - even if it is basically a tentacle now. At least you aren't expected to become fucking pregnant and give birth every six months for the next three hundred years. So keep that sexy penis of yours to yourself.'

'Fine, fine. Wait, did you just call my elephant penis 'sexy'?''

I stormed further through the jungle, following the scent of the herd, before he could ask me again. It was these damned instincts. Thankfully, I had a choice to ignore them.

'I'm going to need some privacy. Again.'

'Oh, okay. Is it the?'

'The heat. Yeah.'

'I'll be back in five, I guess.'

'Thanks.'

Darnell moved away, giving me some privacy in the forest grove we'd found ourselves in. I manoeuvred my heavy body so that there was a smooth tree behind my ass. My vulva had been throbbing with want, and while I had to get more inventive with it than I was used to, I had found a few successful ways to get off in the last couple of days. Slowly, I rubbed my backside against the arc of the tree, enjoying the way the firmness pressed against my feminine lips. Little sparks of pleasure rose in me as I increased the pass, rubbing my pelvis up and down upon its surface. I lowered my trunk, manipulating it down to begin massaging my full breasts. It felt wonderful, and I was curious if Mbokomu had

increased their sensitivity. They certainly felt erogenous; my milk ducts produced waves of enjoyable stimulation, and it was not long before I had paced my nostril against my own left nipple, and begun to suck. I harrumphed as milk flowed from me, the pressure relieved in a continual ecstasy, a pleasure only increased by the increased bucking against the tree I made. I moved my trunk to the other one, sucking there also, and letting my spent milk pour upon the ground around me. I bucked hard, almost furiously against the tree, and it was impossible not to imagine that it was not a tree but instead another elephant, a bull, a strong virile bull mating and mounting me, and sticking his enormous slithering grey cock deep inside me. The mental image was too strong, and I pulled my trunk up in the air and trumpeted loudly as orgasm after orgasm rocked through me, so different from when I was a human man. It was as if there was more pleasure for every pound of me, for every great ton, and I shook the earth with my footsteps.

'Oh, Darnell!' I cried out mentally, before realising my mistake.

There was silence, for a time, and then a reply.

'I'm guessing you're done, Connor?'

I breathed heavily, enormous lungs working. The heat had abated, and though it was never terrible, it felt good to relieve it for a time.

'For now,' I muttered.

It was another night, and we had just eaten. Together, we had used our trunks and the strengths of our bodies to break and manipulate some lows and branches for a rudimentary shelter. It was not much, but it gave us a semblance of human habitat each, though due to our current forms, we had started building shelters separately. That had been decided after, in our sleep on the first night, I felt a prehensile penis hardening against me as Darnell slept. I think my trumpet had woken the whole forest.

My female genitalia still throbbed with want, and I tried to think of other things. It was easiest to get into the mind of an environmental scientist; to think of the species of plants and animals we had passed, and the nature of the Congo Basin's geography, in order to ignore that permanent need to have something hard within my new passage. To minimise the distraction further, I was slumped at least thirty feet away from Darnell, keeping silent so he couldn't be turned on by my womanly 'voice'. Instead, I simply flicked irritating mosquitoes away with my tail, dug at the ground idly with my large tusks, and watered myself using my tusk and the nearby stream. A stream that also provided us with refreshing quantities of water.

The stars were brilliant tonight, and again I was taken in by the majesty of the place. Even stuck as a female elephant for the rest of my life - a fate I was still grappling with - I could still appreciate the beauty of my surroundings that I otherwise would not have seen.

I fluttered a little, brought back down to earth by a discomfort in my chest. My nipples stung slightly, and a check with my trunk confirmed what I had suspected; I was slowly lactating milk. Great. Just great. What a wonderful 'blessing' from Mbokomu I had been given. What kind of man *doesn't* want to have a big old rack of elephant tits that serve no actual purpose yet.

And never would, I had to correct myself. I was not planning on putting a calf to these chest udders either.

'Hey, Connor?'

I lifted a heavy head to see my friend. His size was impressive, and it was strange to be thinking along those lines, but I was. At least his penis was hidden away beneath him.

'Yeah, D?'

'Um, this is awkward. You know how you need to relieve your, well, pent up frustration?'

'My heat, yes. I am very aware, in fact. What about it?'

He seemed to shift, and his large ears flapped a bit, as if it were the elephant equivalent of embarrassment. *'Well, I know I don't have it as bad as you.'*

'Damn right about that. You don't have a pussy and tits.'

'Yeah, I know, I can see and smell them. Jesus, I can smell them. But it's just that . . . well, I have a bit of pent up frustration as well. It's been building for the last few days.'

I lifted myself up a little, whipping away a couple of insects crawling on my flank with my tail. Strange how quickly I was getting used to that function.

'So? Go relieve it. That's what I do. I can go away for a little bit, if you want.'

'That's just it. I don't really have a way to 'relieve it.' It's way behind me and under me, and I can't exactly rub it easily against a surface like you can. It's getting hard to ignore, and I can't sleep.'

I harrumphed, feeling a little annoyed that this was his only problem. It was nice to keep irritated; it distracted from the image I had in my head of him using that thick penis on me.

'Okay, what do you want me to do?' There was silence for a moment. *'Well?'*

'Could you use your trunk?'

I rocked to my feet, nearly destroying the shelter around me. *'Use my what!?''*

'Your trunk? Please Connor, this is weird enough already. I wouldn't ask you if this wasn't serious. You know me. You said before that I'm decisive. Well, what does it say about me that I've hesitated to ask this of you?'

I sighed mentally. Darnell was right. And in truth, he had lifted and carried me this whole trip (figuratively, I was a fucking elephant now, so good luck with the literal). It had been him who had helped console me on my new femaleness, and had led us through the forest. He had broken me out of my malaise to get some jackfruit, and procured more for us when I wanted to be alone. Even as an elephant, he was a park ranger through and through, while I was distracted. I needed to think like a conservationist, and think about the strange biology of our new needs. Darnell was our survivalist. So I had to be . . .the maintainer, I guess. The one who could conserve us. It was a good enough rationalisation to stomach what I was about to do next.

'Okay, fine. Stand up, and I'll see what I can do. Just don't make this weird, please.'

'Of course, I wouldn't want receiving a trunkjob from my best friend after we've both been turned into elephants to become weird, right?'

I gave a mental scoff, and tramped closer, trying to find a good spot. His penis undulated slightly, as if in anticipation.

'Are you going to do it?'

'Don't rush me! I never thought I'd ever do anything like this. Sop moving your cock!'

'I can't help it. It's these instincts! They're getting me excited.'

They were getting me excited too, but I tried not to show it, though I realised with a bit of embarrassment that he could probably *smell* my increased heat. I lowered my trunk, and slid it under his grey penis. His large body shivered as I twisted my trunk around.

'Ohhhh, that's good. That feels good.'

Wordlessly, I began to massage it. Like a coiled rope around a pole, my trunk could slide up and down, but remained firm against his hardness.

'Geez, you're big.'

'I feel it too. That's so good Connor, can you go a little faster?'

I could, and I did. I lowered my forelegs to better see what I was doing, and wrap more of my trunk around his girth. It was a strange sensation: like having a really long nose that you could twist and bend as you please, and its fine manipulation came in hand here as I stroked and rubbed his shaft ever more powerfully. I could feel Darnell building towards a climax, and his words of encouragement fell away as he concentrated upon the pleasure I was giving him. My own heat returned, enhanced by my actions, and in particular the strong musky scent of his magnificent genitals, so close to my face. I closed my eyes and took a moment to enjoy the act, and imagine what it would be like to have this monster of a penis inside me, giving me little calves to grow. I rubbed harder, and Darnell groaned.

'I'm coming Connor! I'm about to come! I - NGGGHRRR!'

I maintained my grip, and held it tight, pumping him even as his dick become even further erect. Suddenly, with a great trumpet from Darnell, an enormous stream of semen

erupted like a fountain from the head of his cock, followed by another, and another. It smelled wonderful to my elephant senses, which should have disgusted me, but I could only feel instinctively that it was a 'waste' to have it all be spilled upon the ground.

Slowly, the ejaculation decreased, and Darnell breathed easier.

'Thanks Connor. Thank you so much. I feel like I can think straight again. Is there anything I can do for you?'

I was about to say no, when I felt that tingle of my mammaries filling up once more.

'Bring your trunk over here. I need you to drink from me.'

He complied, and despite my best efforts, I moaned like a whore as he milked me. He even deposited my produce into his mouth, enjoying the sweetness that I too had tasted. And while it was not as strong as rubbing my backside against the tree, I did orgasm from his ministrations, placating my heat once more.

We went to sleep that night with our flanks against one another. It seemed right, somehow, though I was determined still not to fulfill the role Mbokomu set for us. I was not having calves. I was a man at heart.

And yet, that night I dreamed about it anyway.

It was over a week after that night. During that time we had become more comfortable in our heavy bodies, and more proficient in finding food, as well as building the occasional unnecessary shelter. We had seen a great many sights of beauty, from clear river streams to vaulting forests filled with intricate vines, where bonobos played and leopards hunted. We also found some oxpeckers, who were still with us, picking at any ticks or mosquitoes we had gathered in a fashion that was surprisingly pleasant. It was like we had our own little personal groomers. All in all, we were becoming more and more accustomed to the bodies we would have for the rest of our lives. I just tried not to think about how 'the rest of our lives' potentially meant three hundred to four hundred years.

Our instinctive drives continued to pop up, and after that first awkward use of our trunks, we had slowly become more comfortable with allowing ourselves to please each other. As my heat never truly ended - a so-called 'gift' from Mbokomu - it was often I who needed attending to, more than Darnell. My feminine lips continued to moisten, and while I could usually ignore it, that need was always present. After much anticipation I had built up the courage to ask him to try something new.

'This time, could you use your tongue? Back there? I - I feel like my breasts or the tree aren't gonna cut it tonight.'

It had been a painful admission, but one that Darnell had treated seriously. I knew from the stirring of his penis that what I had asked him to do was lighting up his elephantine instincts, but instead he spoke as a caring friend.

'Sure Connor. Turn around. I'll be gentle, I promise. Widen your legs. Yeah, like that.'

I braced them, as if I was about to be mounted, and closed my eyes. I flapped my ears in anticipation and anxiety, and nearly started a one-elephant stampede when his great tongue licked at me.

'Oohohhh!'

He stopped. *'Are you alright?'*

'F-fine. It was just . . . more powerful than I expected. Please, don't stop, D.'

His tongue resumed, and I maintained my calm this time. I couldn't believe how sensitive my vaginal lips were; with every lick, his wet tongue mingled with my juices and caused stirrings of gratification in me. It was sort of like having my dick stroked, back when I was a man, only it was *within* me, and I was lubricating myself, and the build was slower but more enjoyable. I breathed heavily through my trunk as his paced picked up, and I became further slick with vaginal fluids. I took to panting, and in my mind and his, my voice had become that of a gorgeous nymphomaniac woman's, groaning in delight as her man went down on her. It was not, really, too far removed from what was happening.

'Keep that pace, uuhhh. I'm - ah - I'm close, D.'

'You taste delicious,' he replied in my mind. It should have been a comment too far, but it only increased how turned on I was, catapulted me towards orgasm as his tongue probed the depths of my passage. It rose and built, built and rose, and as his tongue lapped at my leaking moistness I suddenly seized, quaked, and trembled like a mountain, shaking my great flanks in a tremendous orgasm.

'OOohhhh MHhmmhmm AAaaAAHH!'

I settled, and turned, and should have felt embarrassed. But the truth was, I felt better than I had in days. Perhaps since we had changed. It was better than half the sex I'd had as a man, though I wouldn't tell him.

'Good?' Darnell said, licking at his lips.

'V-very,' I managed, whereupon I noticed his own firm penis. I licked my own lips, feeling that instinctive drive to please my bull, my mate. I pushed against it a little. There was no way I was letting him mount me. These little teasings and shared masturbation sessions were not on the same level as rutting like true animals. Besides, though my body wanted it, I refused to acknowledge the possibility of pregnancy.

But still, Darnell looked needy.

'Would you like me to use my own tongue?' I asked.

I could tell just from the way his thick girth undulated beneath his belly, that he had assented.

'Yes, *please*,' Darnell said, already turning around.

It had taken some effort to perform that act, and much like masturbating as a man, there was some post-coital regret and shame at that. My mind was still my own, I knew that, but my attractions, my instincts were subtly nudged to certain ends, and it was getting hard to resist that mental image of having my friend on top of me, that prehensile dick buried in my passage.

We walked ahead, having watered ourselves and fed, and avoided discussing just how utterly personal the acts we had committed an hour ago had been. Darnell's attitude toward me had changed; he was still my friend, still decisive and undoubtedly the leader of our herd of two, but he was also increasingly protective, and his forthright actions were centred more and more around making sure we were both provided for, that the way ahead was safe, that I had enough water or my heat was sated. I found it embarrassing, and yet I failed to put a stop to it; something about it was also appealing to me, to be taken care of so compassionately, and to have someone I could depend upon. Even in our new bizarre lives, where he was the bull and I was the cow, it was nice to have someone who could keep my confidence up. It also stirred certain . . . feelings. Feelings that were difficult to ignore. Not just sexual feelings either, but a sensation of comfort. Enough to make my big elephant heart flutter a little. Or even a lot.

'Did you hear that!?' called Darnell.

I was thrown from my lingering thoughts as my bull - I mean, as Darnell, called me.

'What? What is it?'

His trunk pointed ahead in the forest, where the land sloped up before disappearing down a hump. I listened again, and suddenly I found a good use for these enormous ears.

It was the sound of trumpets. The sound of elephants. I sniffed at the air, and I could catch their scent. The same scent that had lingered in the waters of the massacre.

'It's them!' I cried happily, 'the remainder of the herd! They're alive!'

Darnell wiggled his ears, which had sort of become our equivalent of a grin.

'Shall we go find them?'

I nodded assent, and we trampled up the hill, much faster than we normally went at our pace. Let me tell you, an elephant can be mighty fast when necessary, though only in short bursts. Our heavy bodies trampled the ground, feet largely insensitive to whatever foliage fell beneath it. We reached the top, emerging from the treeline to overlook a grand

vista; a distant lake about a thousand or more feet away, where the elephants grazed and watered one another. We overlooked it, as the hill ran back down ahead of us to a gully, and numerous trees and rocks were grouped in patches in the otherwise open region.

But we didn't just see the herd. We saw the hunters.

'Get back, get back,' Darnell communicated, 'and don't make a sound.'

I nearly questioned him, but it was foolish to second guess Darnell's decisiveness in a moment like this. And sure enough, as I trampled back through the bush, I caught a glimpse of them downhill.

The poachers. The murderers.

They were in a group, weapons slung over their shoulders. They stood a few hundred feet from their vehicles, having crossed some intractable terrain. They couldn't yet see the elephants further up the inclination and several hundred feet away, but it was clear they knew where they were, and were readying their equipment.

'Shit. Shit!' I said. 'It's going to happen again. And this time we're going to see it!'

'No!' Darnell said, 'it's not. We're going to stop it. I vowed once I would be a park ranger, and I'm going to be one again. That means protecting against poachers like that, especially figures like that Bartley. I saw him down there, leading them.'

'But what can we even do, D?'

He stopped, appearing to think.

'We've not got our bodies. We can't talk to anyone but each other. We can't use our hands, and we can't radio for help. The nearest ranger station is too far away, judging from what I remember of the maps.'

That's when I remembered something.

'No! You're wrong. There's a single outpost just west of here. Over that hill!'

'Are you sure?'

I tapped my head with my trunk. *'An elephant never forgets, ha! And besides, I'm good with data.'*

'Then we need to figure out how to draw that outpost's attention, fast. And make sure those elephants stay safe. We need a plan.'

I thought, but it was difficult given the high tension. Making clearcut decisions was Darnell's sphere, not mine. Still, one option did spring out to me.

'Darnell, we don't have hands, but we do have our trunks!'

'Yeah, so?'

'So . . . how many elephants know where the fuel cap on a truck is?'

His great grey ears flapped in excitement. *'And how many elephants know how to light a match? I think these poachers may just find out.'*

Moving subtly as an elephant is no easy thing, but not as hard one might assume either. Contrary to what movies will tell you, a herd of horses trampling in the distance won't make a loud thunderous drone. And so, neither will two elephants walking on soft grassy soil make immense quaking noise either. They just stick out. Thankfully, the poachers had parked their three vehicles close to a treeline down hill, right before a slight cliff-face that could easily be climbed but not driven over. It gave us some overhead protection.

Unfortunately, one of their number had also stayed behind, and was in radio contact with his friends. We could hear Bartley's voice over the receiver.

"The herd is up here, all right. Lots of good ivory, some prize parts for the exotic market too. We don't want to spook them into the treeline again, so we'll pull a wild circle. Just keep your eyes out for if the ranger's send up a signal. Or a damn helicopter, alright?"

"Got it, boss," the man replied in a thick accent.

It was also the last thing he managed to say, because the second the radio call was over, Darnell burst forth from the treeline in such a surprising momentum that the man had no time to react except gasp something in his native language. Darnell smashed against the jeep, causing it to rock heavily, jolting the man. He reached his long trunk out and wrapped it around the man's upper waist, lifting him up so rapidly that he dropped his gun and began to scream. I watched from the treeline as Darnell curled him even tight, almost crushing the man, and moving quickly as he pulled away from the vehicles. I kept a lookout: some of the poachers had heard a commotion, and Bartley was sending three of them back to check. We only had a few minutes. Shit.

I paced forward, accelerating the plan we had put forward. Darnell was manoeuvring towards a rocky outcropping that became a cliff face down to a lake. There was no real way back up, and we weren't even sure if the lake was deep enough, but my elephant friend hurled the man down anyway, trusting he would be too surprised to scream. We were half right; he managed a panicked yep before I heard a great splash. If he survived, he would be wandering the jungle for some time trying to figure out how to get back, and without any weapons to help him.

Meanwhile, I was already opening up the fuel caps on each of the trucks and their jeep. It was hard, and it hurt my nostrils, particularly since the stench of fuel was so toxic, but I was managing to get each one done. Next were the jerry cans, which smelled even worse. I winced as some of the run off went up my nostril, causing me to splutter. I took one and raised it, pouring it like a sprinkler can over the vehicles, forming a connective stream of petroleum to each one of them. I had no time to enjoy the victory, however; I could hear the radio crackling with Bartley's voice.

“Are you there? Goddamnit answer the radio? Stop taking a piss and call in! We’re about to move on the herd and you’re holding us up!”

‘They’re coming!’ I yelled mentally to Darnell as he rejoined me. I was scrambling, forcing my trunk through the jeep and the open windows of the trucks to find a box of matches or a tinder box or anything that could light these vehicles up. I could hear the poachers shouting out, and soon they would pass over the small cliff-face and see us, and it would be game over.

‘There’s nothing!’ I yelled, and was very aware of how I sounded like a helpless damsel in distress from the old serials. *‘There’s no matchbox!’*

‘I’ve got something better than a matchbox, Connor.’

I turned, and nearly trumpeted in shock. Darnell was holding a *grenade*.

‘Darnell, that’s a fucking grenade!’

‘I’m well aware. Help me pull the pin, then get to safety. I won’t have you hurt!’

I was terrified, but there were no other options. The pin was small, fit for human hands. I had to squeeze my nostril hard over the metal circle, and pull gently but firmly. It came away, much to both of our shock.

‘Fuck, D, that’s a live grenade now!’

‘Get to safety!’

I took a look at him, and ran, trampling back into the forest line. I turned to see that Darnell I hesitated, but there was nowas still gripping the catch shut, and preparing to hurl it into the pile of jerry cans I had left. At the edge of my vision, a number of the poachers were appearing in sight over the ledge, only seconds away.

‘Throw it!’

I gave a loud trumpet, distracting them just briefly enough for Darnell to hurl the grenade and run like hell. This time, the earth did quake, or perhaps it was just my big elephant heart. The men appeared over the lip of the ledge, calling for their missing friend, only to look up in shock at a rogue elephant pelting like a runaway freight train from their position and into the forest. One raised a rifle, another called something over the radio. A third was still checking for their friend. For a moment, as the figure with the gun aimed at my friend, my heart seemed to stop. And then -

BWOOOM!

The sight in front of me seemed to light up before my eyes, a series of fireballs erupting from the charred wreckages of the vehicles the poachers were using. The heat was incredible, and my ears flapped in fear even as Darnell reached me. I heard shouts of pain, screams of agony, and two bodies half on fire jumped from the ledge in desperation to the lake far below, where they might find their companion waiting for them. Another explosion rocked the

area, detonating several fuel cylinders. Screams and shouts over the ledge resounded, and I could just make out Bartley's roar of confusion and frustration.

'We have to run, it's not safe here!' Darnell shouted into my mind.

I ran with him, trusting my friend - my *bull* - with my life. He led the way, back around from where we'd come to the vantage point where we'd first seen the poachers. Several of their number remained, and were scanning the sky and the distance in fear. Enormous plumes of smoke rose, utterly unnatural, and the elephant herd they were tracking were moving away in alarm, spoiling the poacher's gains.

All except for one creature that still remained; a mother cow and her calf, moving slowly through the water atop the pass. Bartley was screaming orders, waving a gun left and right at the lip of the wreckage. I could just make out some words.

"Find out what the everloving *fuck* did that, then help me bag just one of these bastards! I'm not going home empty-handed after this clusterfuck!"

'Shit, he's a wounded animal in a corner,' Darnell said. *'And that mother and calf are sitting ducks.'*

'We've got to do something!' My protective instinct was up, and seeing the mother and calf agitated me on an almost biological level. Just staring at the young creature was enough to summon an almost maternal force in me.

'He'll see us coming!' Darnell said, trying to think. I could tell my bull was agitated, and I placed a trunk over his neck to soothe him.

'You can think of something, Darnell. You're a ranger, remember?'

He calmed, and I knew he had an idea, because he began to run through the forest, straight towards the poacher.

'What are you doing!?!'

'Creating a distraction. If he wants 'just one', then it'll have to be the one stampeding straight to him. You get the mother and calf to safety.'

'Darnell, no!'

'JUST DO IT!'

Looked to him as his muscular legs took him ahead of me, his trunk pointing to a line of forest that led around and up the pass to where the elephants were, out of sight of Bartley.

'Go!' he shouted, and I did. I couldn't help but admire how brave he was.

I ran around the forest line, up towards the calf and mother. They looked to me, unfamiliar with who I was, but my scent was female, and I was clearly trusted, because by instinct I gave several short, panicked trumpets that sent them packing ever faster. They still had a ways to go to the tree line, and I knew I should have gone with them, but my friend was in danger.

My mate.

I turned and ran back down the hill, now in open sight. Darnell had managed to successfully ambush a poacher, who was already running, screaming in fear at the mad creature that nearly bore down on him. Darnell has snatched his rifle in his trunk, and snapped part of the frame, buckling the barrel within his trunk. Unfortunately, Bartley was made of sterner stuff. He aimed his weapon, and fired.

There was a great keening trumpet of agony as a great chunk of flesh tore from Darnell's side, exposing wet redness. It took a moment to realise I had done the trumpeting, and I skidded to a heavy halt as Darnell collapsed on his side, even as Bartley readied another shot.

I trumpeted again, speeding up, tusks ready. I had to save my friend, and this was the only way I could see of doing it. But even as I started, I knew the distance was too great. Bartley saw me coming, turned, and aimed at me this time. There was no stopping, and no place to move to. I was a goner.

And that's when Darnell rose again, like a great mountain of stone pushed up by the quaking of the very earth itself. There was rage beyond reckoning in his eyes, and there was more beast than man in him. He launched towards the poacher, swiping the man's legs out from under him with a sweep of his trunk, sending the rifle flying. Bartley drew a pathetic little knife, but barely managed more than a small swipe through Darnell's skin before he was butted back against a nearby rock, with the elephant looming over him.

"Fuck, shit," was all he said, and then he was run through, gored upon Darnell's great tusk, straight through the belly. His eyes rolled into the back of his head, and he collapsed, dead. The other poachers were long gone.

Darnell rose, and I went to his side. He was stumbling, blood still pouring from his wound. He gasped, and it took him some time to find his voice.

'Pain,' he managed. 'Lot of pain.'

'You did it D. You scared them all off. And you got Bartley.'

'Mhmm, the elephants are . . . safe?'

'They are! They are.'

He stumbled up the hill, pressing against me slightly for support. He was heading for the watering hole the others had just fled from. As he made it to the lip, I could tell his strength was already fading. He collapsed in, the water rinsing the blood from his tusk.

'Then, I've redeemed myself a little. We helped save them. I'm sorry to be leaving you like this, Connor. I didn't mean it. I wanted to . . . fuck, you still smell so good. At least you're only leaking milk instead of blood.'

His comment helped me forge a connection I hadn't realised.

'Milk? Milk! Darnell, drink from me, quick!'

His trunk flapped uselessly, so I helped place it against my overfull chest, and he took in some of my produce. I placed my own trunk on my other breast, relieving some pressure, and with both trunks we deposited my milk into his mouth. We continued several more times, even as my heart beat faster in fear. I couldn't lose my friend. I just couldn't.

He groaned, coughed, and to my shock, his breathing became stronger. He fed a little more eagerly from me, and then again, and I aided his effort. I could see his wound slowly repairing, and indeed it was knitting back together. In moments it was little more than a scar, and in moments after, it had faded nearly entirely. If I were human, I would have wept with joy. Instead, I twined my trunk around his.

'Thank God! Thank Mbokomu! You're healed.'

'Holy shit Connor, you just used your magic elephant boobs to save my life. And wow, that is not a sentence I ever imagined saying.'

'Nor me being its subject! But I don't care, I'm grateful I'm female, if it means I can keep you alive with me. You saved my life too.'

We pressed against one another lovingly, still overcome with the events that had occurred. The stench of burning petroleum meant we couldn't stay, however, and so we moved together further into the forest ahead, until we reached a clearing where members of the herd - including the mother and calf - were seemingly waiting for us. An elephant never forgets, they say, and the fact that they accepted our presence so easily among them was telling of its own; somehow, they trusted the mother's attitude towards us.

'Well, I guess this is our herd for a while,' I said.

'Yeah, I guess it is.'

We took some time to acclimate ourselves, take a drink of water from a shallow stream. The events of the last hour were still with me, but even as the horror faded, it was the sight of Darnell's strength and power, his masculine protectiveness, that stayed with me. I felt my heat rise again, and several other elephants could scent it in the air also; I could see them sniffing at me. But here, surrounded by members of my new kind, I didn't want to fight it anymore. We had embraced what we were, and won. And now, I wanted to embrace the rest.

'Darnell?'

'Yeah?'

'Mount me.'

My elephant friend turned, and in profile I once again was in awe of his impressive size and bullish strength. And of his large, curling member. It made my passage wet with anticipation.

'Did you just say what I think you said?'

I walked ahead of him and raised my tail, widening my stance to prepare for him.

'Mount me,' I repeated. 'I want you.'

I could see his penis twitching. Extending. God, I wanted it inside of me.

'It's just the instincts talking, Connor.'

I flapped my ears in dismissal. *'The instincts are there, but this is all me, Darnell. I want this. I want this and I'm ready. It's time I fulfil my role, and you yours.'*

He let out a great exhalation, wandering closer and sniffing at my lady parts.

'Jesus, you're serious, aren't you?'

'We're a mating pair, Darnell. We're going to be for life.' I brushed against his side, and couldn't help but tease him by caressing his long penis with my trunk. His body shook. *'So let's start mating. I know you want it. Can't you smell me?'*

His intake of breath told me he could.

'But, right here? In front of the herd.'

'I don't think they care, D. It's natural. Just like a cow wanting his bull to mount her is natural.'

I walked ahead and resumed my stance.

'Oh God, Connor, you have no idea how much I want this. But you heard what Mbokomu said: you'll get pregnant.'

'Mhmm . . . I know. But this body wants that. It wants calves, and I've decided I want that too Darnell. You be my protector, like a good ranger, and I'll be the conservationist, like I've always dreamed: I'll give back to the world by birthing your calves. And if you want that too, then come over here big boy, and fucking mount me!'

He didn't need me to say it twice. My bull rose on his two great hind legs and placed his forelegs upon me. I was ready for his weight, but was still impressed by it. My tail pulled aside to give him access, and his penis snaked up, probing at my folds.

'Oh God,' Darnell moaned as his tip pushed inside me. *'Oh Connor, oh fuck!'*

I rocked my heavy hips a little as his large girth finally entered me, my heat rising as he parted my passage. I felt utterly filled, the sensation so alien and yet so, so right.

'Connie!' I stammered mentally, *'Call me Connie!'*

His penis thrust in and out, like a coiled viper. My passage hugged it, wetly clinging to his girth and sending shivers of ecstasy through my enormous body.

'C-Connie, it is. You're so fucking sex as my mate! I want to put a calf into you!'

I groaned with desire. I wanted that too. I wanted my friend's calves so fucking badly.

'Then do it Darnell! Come in me! Make me yours! Be my bull!'

He thrust again, and we passed beyond the ability to make words, each focused on our own pleasure and that of our partner's. Mbokomu had told the truth: our sexual congress was longer, more powerful, and vastly more intimate and pleasurable than an ordinary elephant mating. His great dick pounded my passage, each push pressing against

my sensitive lips, causing me to cry and pant mentally in my feminine voice. I managed to say some words again.

'You were s-so sexy, fighting those poachers off. I was so t-turned on. That was when I knew I w-wanted all of you. To have you as my m-mate ooohhhh!'

'I w-wanted you since that night you used your trunk on m-me. Ngh! I'm about to come Connie. I'm going to come in you!'

I trumpeted a little, overwhelmed with the pleasing rhythm of his cock.

'Come in me, D. Make me pregnant with your calves!'

And with that, he exploded within me. I felt his immense cock tense, and my own orgasm exploded over me, causing my mammaries to leak some of their milky contents. His member throbbed as it shot what felt like entire *gallons* of elephantine semen into me, again and again. Darnell's masculine mental voice gasped in my mind, and I responded with a long sensual moan that was impressively erotic, even turning me on by the sheer ecstasy it conveyed.

Finally, he dismounted, and the pressure on my back was gone, my heat abated. For now.

'Holy shit,' Darnell said, breathing heavily. *'I just fucked you.'*

'Mhmmm . . . You did.'

'Do you think I got you pregnant?'

I nuzzled against him, savouring the feeling of his come oozing out from my rear.

'Oh yeah. Like it or not, I am definitely pregnant now. You've knocked me up, big boy.'

'You sound okay with it?'

My breathing steadied, and I pressed more closely against his grey flank.

'I won't lie, I think it's gonna be weird. And I'm not exactly looking forward to birth. But yeah, I think I am. It felt good, didn't it?'

'It felt amazing. You felt amazing, Connie.'

I flapped my ears in pride, the elephant equivalent of beaming.

'You did too, my bull. I needed that. And now I get to do what I always wanted to: conserve and give back to the environment. My role is just a little more . . . involved, than I had assumed. But perhaps even more important.'

Darnell stirred, patting me with his trunk affectionately. *'I just can't believe I just knocked my best friend up with an elephant. Are you certain?'*

I wasn't, but something, instinct maybe, made me feel the answer was yes. That I was indeed beginning the process of growing life within my waiting elephant womb.

'Pretty certain,' I replied. I lowered my trunk, caressing his penis a little playfully in a way that made him shiver.

'But how about you mount me again in half an hour, just to make sure?'

Two and a half years later . . .

I moaned as our latest calf suckled at my swollen breast.

'Thank God, I was feeling like I was fit to burst.'

Darnell placed his trunk over me in reassurance, before stepping back on his great elephantine legs to appreciate the latest calf that my 'cow' body had produced just four months ago. He was suckling greedily at my milk, and it was obvious that the grey bags were far more swollen than they had been after her initial transformation: however much milk I was producing then, pregnancy had only made me lactate even further, perhaps twice as much. I certainly felt it, though I didn't mind: it just meant I sometimes had to ask (or beg) Darnell for help when I was feeling 'overly full.'

Of course, thanks to my handsome mate, I was 'full' in other ways too. My belly was swollen and distended with life, another calf developing at a magically increased rate. It made me tired and often quite lazy though I was always up for a good fuck. When in season, a few of the bulls liked to take their turn on me, and thanks to my permanent heat I was more than okay with being fucked by a number of the herd. But it was never as powerful or satisfying as with Darnell, and as I became more pregnant, my suitors general declined to just him, which was okay by me too. Darnell had found a similar pattern to me: he had enjoyed the pleasures of several cows from a number of the herds we'd passed through. It was instinctual, after all. But while he'd no doubt impregnated a few others, I remained his true mate, and the pleasure he got from me was greater. Especially since we were unique, holding to no herd but each other, travelling across the great Congo Basin as we desired, even maintaining a number of shelters we had carefully built for ourselves using our trunks.

'I saw our firstborn the other day,' Darnell said off-handedly. *'He's doing well with his herd. The females are taking care of him, but he'll strike out on his own soon.'*

'I'm glad. I want my children to flourish. All of them.'

'I have a feeling we're going to have a lot of grandkids in a few years' time.'

'Huh, wow, yeah, I never thought that. Meanwhile, I'll probably still be getting pregnant.'

'That'll depend. Will you still enjoy being my elephant girlfriend?'

Darnell turned, fixing his beady elephant eyes upon me. I raised a trunk to playfully push away his nudging.

'Oh, I'm your girlfriend now, am I?'

He snorted out his trunk. *'Well, you're definitely female, and you're still my friend. You practically beg me to mount you every day, and you've given birth to four of my calves, with a*

fifth on the way. We always hang out together, we sleep together, we walk and talk together. Sounds like you're my girlfriend to me.'

'Can elephants even have girlfriends?'

'I don't see why not.'

He nuzzled against me, admiring my body, the great swell of my belly where our next little calf was stirring, causing my formerly male, formerly human self to grunt in discomfort. Something about getting me pregnant with his calves always set off Darnell's elephant instincts in all the right ways; it must have been an intoxicating feeling, to ensure I was always bred. It was something that I still got a little red-cheeked about, even if I couldn't actually get red-cheeked anymore. But something about it also just felt . . . right. I nuzzled playfully back against him.

'Weeeell, maybe I could be good with being your big, sexy, grey elephant girlfriend. After all, I doubt you're gonna stop getting me pregnant in the near future.'

'I doubt it. I won't lie Connie, I love getting you pregnant with our little calves. And I know you do too.'

'Mhm, maybe just a little. The instincts are pretty compelling too.'

He probably knew I was lying a little. Even over two years on, I was still too embarrassed to admit I enjoyed my new role, even if birthing every six months was an agonising and stretched out affair. Seriously, elephant calves are *big*, and it was certainly an alien thing to have my elephant vagina stretch wide as I strained to push my firstborn out of me, and my other three calves since. Still, my hyperfertile body ensures that I practically need to be mounted and impregnated, pretty much just a few days after I've given birth, thanks to my own healing factor. And yes, maybe I did still find it awkward at times to be penetrated by that prehensile penis, to feel Darnell's five ton weight on my back as he snaked his thick penis deep inside me. And it was still a strange thing to be pregnant, or in labour, or letting our young feed from my prodigious chest. But all of that was worth it to be one with the great forest basin, and give back to its splendour and life. It was more than enough of a compensation for me, and there was something deeply special about being the mother of a great line of elephants, to know that while Darnell seeded them within me, that they grew in my belly and suckled at my milk..

Besides, I never failed to moan mentally in a wonderfully feminine voice when he mounted me. My womanly voice also never failed to turn my bull on.

'I know it,' he said to me, sensing my mood, *'you like growing our big babies.'*

I gave an elephantine harumph. *'Less so birthing them. I'd like you to see you deal with pushing a big elephant baby out of your vagina twice a year.'*

'Alas, that's your job, Connie. And one you do an excellent job of, mind. I don't know that I could do it. You have a mother's strength.'

I flapped my ears proudly.

'Well, someone's doing well with the compliments. And at least you've always been by my side when I give birth, like a good boyfriend should.'

'Ah, so I am your boyfriend?'

I wrapped my trunk around his, pressing my great head affectionately against his.

'Fiiine, we'll give this relationship a trial run. See if you can treat a big beautiful lady like me in all the right ways.'

I was having fun with him, walking ahead proudly as if I were a sexy girl at a club trying to pique his interest, instead of a fertile cow swollen with his progeny already. But the act was turning him on again, I just knew it.

'Just don't get me knocked up on our first date,' I joked.

He moved ahead and rubbed against my side, and I returned the affection. I could smell his musk, just like he could smell my heat, still strong even as far along as I was. His elephantine penis became hard, no doubt wanting me again: I could practically sense it. I decided to push against instinct, and instead lower myself to the ground, rolling partway onto my back to present my underbelly to him.

'No promises,' he said, and he mounted me, his right feet planted against mine as he lowered slowly, and entered me in the closest approximation to missionary position we could manage.

I moaned, my sultry voice communicating to his mind, and I spluttered more audibly with my trunk. As ever, I was overwhelmed by pleasure as his thick penis opened my wet folds and parted me. He began to thrust.

'Ooohh, fuck man, no wonder I'm always pregnant.'

'And I am to keep you bred like this, Connie, for many years to come. If you'll have it' It wasn't a bad thought. In fact, it rather turned me on. Call it instinct.

'I reckon - ahhhh - I will, Darnell. I reckon I will.'

As he continued to thrust, and I continued to moan, I thought of the many calves my mate would yet give me, and the many blessings my elephantine body would push into the world in the decades and even centuries to come.

All thanks to the spirit of the forest.