

FUJITSU

The Gangster Centaur

A Polly Centaur Story

Snore23

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“Well, lookie there! That crank looks ripe for tha pickin’!” The sharp nasal voice of Darcy “Bloody Bitch” Barson cut through Pauline’s thoughts like screeching nails on a chalkboard. She sighed and looked up from the park bench she was currently sprawled across. The others were already looking up from their places, seeming more like starving jackals eyeing a lone wildebeest than human. Pauline shook her head slightly, peering at the man that attracted everyone’s attention. It was hard to make out details in the gathering gloom, but she watched him approach.

He was wandering down the paved trail, head thrown back, staring at the sky. Polly rolled her eyes at his naiveté. What was this fool even doing here in the park? Didn’t he turn on the news? She thought everyone knew that this place was dangerous, especially after dark.

“I wants’ta cut him, that arrogant prick, wandering down here like he own’s da joint.” Snarled Billy. The boy was sitting next to Greg, the leader. He had a vicious snarl on his otherwise sweet face.

“Easy boy, easy.” Greg murmured nastily as he eyed the sap. “Can’t afford any more cop attention. We’s gotta play it cool for now. Just rob him.” His scarred face tightened in a frightening grimace as he smiled at the expected payoff. He looked over.

“Polly, Mary, get ‘ta work.”

“You got it boss.” Mary smiled nastily. She was dressed in leather that looked sprayed on, matching the thirty pounds of black makeup she had caked on her face, Polly thought privately. Of course, she actually looked like she belonged in the group, unlike Polly.

Once again, Polly wished she could change her outfit into something that looked less...innocent and provocative. The white dress with the low neckline and the lack of piercings and tattoos meant she didn’t look like a gang member. She was the bait for the crew, luring people in close with her helpless routine, where Mary figured as the bitch haranguing her. The bystanders often tried to find ways to help, only to have Billy snatch their purses or wallets while they weren’t looking. It was enough to turn her stomach.

As she uncoiled herself from the park bench to get into position, Polly briefly wondered how she had gotten here. She had been a “good girl” once, gotten good grades at school and had even been “Miss Frankstein High” one year. It had been a good time. She had started hanging out with Greg then, he had been cool. He hadn’t cared what she wore or how she acted, he only seemed concerned with being himself. That had attracted her a lot back then. Before she knew it, she was hanging in the park with him, thinking about getting tattooed. Then she saw him rob a man, and she wondered how she could get out of there. She almost had it solved too, until someone kidnapped Emily.

Her little sister hadn’t come home in more than a day, she waited anxiously for any news from the cops, but they were baffled and confused. Their only lead was the thought that it might be a professional ring that had opened up in the area to supply the overseas sex trade. Polly had been horrified, and run to Greg, sobbing the story. Greg said he would take care of it. The next day, Emily had been home. Polly was so grateful; she knew she would do anything for Greg, no matter how bad. It was only afterwards that she heard how a group of unknown people had attacked a warehouse in the middle of the docks, killing seven people and vanishing after calling the cops.

When they arrived, they found cages for dozens of girls and women, as well as shipping containers bound for China.

Polly pulled herself back to the present. She would honor her debt to Greg, he had helped her when no one else could, but that didn't mean she would have to like it!

As she drew closer to her target, she could finally make out more details. He was about as tall as Greg it seemed, so perhaps six foot then? He was wearing black slacks and a black turtleneck. He looked *way* too well-dressed to be out here. His movements were sure however, and the fact she couldn't see his face yet disturbed her for some reason.

"Oh, help! Help me please." Polly shouted slightly. She pitched her voice high, nearly a scream but low enough not to attract attention. The man snapped down to her, but he had stepped into the shadows of a tree, where the lights couldn't illuminate him. Dammit!

"How can I help?" his voice was deep and warm, comforting and at the same time...amused! He was amused that she needed help! Probably thought she had seen a spider or something. For some reason she was annoyed that he had apparently thought her so weak as to be terrified to death of spiders. She threw herself into the role, she would show him!

"She's crazy! She keeps attacking me! Please I—Oh no!" her voice turned to a gasp as she caught sight of Mary strolling down the lane after her, a terrible look of fury on her face. Polly hoped he couldn't see the slight tugging at Mary's mouth that meant she was trying to keep from smiling or laughing. Dammit Mary, she thought, don't spoil it now!

"There you are, you ***** bitch! How dare you**** run off afore I'm finished speakings to ya!" She continued to rant and curse as she closed. Polly plastered herself against the man's front, wishing she could see his face to see if he was buying the ruse.

"Now, now," he spoke quietly. "What started all this?" Behind him, Polly could see Billy getting into position.

"She's crazy!" Polly cowered, making sure to press her breasts against him. She wasn't sure she could angle her neckline anymore so he was captivated by her soft mounds, so she stuck with pushing them so he could get a feel for them while seemingly not noticing.

Mary continued to rant with surprising creativity, discussing her and his probable ancestry as well as their future bloodlines. Polly couldn't help but be a little impressed at it all, though she flushed a deep scarlet at some of the things Mary said!

"I see." The man said calmly. He whirled faster than a striking cobra, grasping Billy's hand and hurling him into Mary while Polly watched dumbfounded. The boy squalled in surprise as he flew, only to land with a muffled grunt against Mary. The tattooed woman folded over and sprawled onto the pavement.

Time slowed nearly to a stop. This time, Mary could see his face, the rugged features, the icy blue eyes that surveyed the situation calmly. They seemed to glow as Polly strained forward against the

molasses that seemed to hold her. Behind her, she could see Greg and the rest of the gang rushing forward from their places, snarls twisting their faces and stretching their ink, some pulling out knives, bats, and here and there the glint of a gun barrel. Polly threw herself on the man, hoping to bring him down, only to receive a casual backhand that snapped her head back and sent her flying. The last thing she recalled was the ground rushing up to meet her and then blackness.

Cold dampness soaked into her dress, bringing her to wakefulness. As she tried to get her bearings, she realized she lay face down on grass, and it was the evening dew on them that was soaking her dress and skin. Her head rang like church bells, making her swear viciously. She hoped Greg had gotten a piece of his hide for that backhand. He looked up and froze.

In the clearing stood her gang, all of them seemingly frozen in midstride. Mary and Billy looked up in terror while Greg and some of them had expressions of hatred. The others had a range of expressions depending on their locations. The ones closest to where she had been had bloodlust written on their faces, bloodlust that quickly turned to horror and finally terror as the charge apparently broke and they had fled in whatever direction had afforded escape. It was hard to tell, but Polly thought all of them were there, caught.

"I wondered when you would finally wake up." The voice from behind her made her jump. She scrambled to her feet and turned to face the attacker, swaying slightly from dizziness. The man stood there with folded arms, staring hard at her.

"How—how did you do this?" Polly managed.

In answer, he moved his palm to face her, and a ball of blue flame appeared a foot above it, dancing eerily in the night. It vanished a moment later. Polly stayed frozen, unsure of what she had seen.

"Well, now that you're awake, I can get down to business." He remarked. He waved his hand, and she found herself on her feet, frozen stiff. The only thing she could move was her eyes, which followed the other man closely.

"Now," he paused in front of Greg. "You are clearly the ringleader of this little...band." His derisive sneer practically *dripped* scorn. Greg's face didn't change, but his eyes burned hot. "Yes, what a pity your helpless prey bit back." the man was smiling now, clearly enjoying himself. "As you can imagine, I work above the law, no one can see you now, or know what is about to happen to you." Polly felt awakening terror in her soul as fog began billowing around them, quickly enclosing them in a world of their own.

"The trick," the man spoke musingly as he eyed the tattooed man, "Is to turn you into something useful for society, rather than the waste you've managed to achieve this whole time. Hmm, what to do?" His face cleared and a small smile blossomed on his face.

"I know *exactly* what to do with you." Greg's eyes flickered worriedly.

"Oh, sh-sh-sh-sh." He said gently. "Don't worry; everyone will get a chance to enjoy your pretty self, or rather, your scales! Magic most foul grant my wish, turn this fool into a fish!"

Before Polly's astonished gaze, Greg shrank out of his clothing, his skin turning hard and shiny, before his eyes moved to the side of his head. A series of flashes falling to the ground turned out to be his earings and piercings falling to the ground. Long feathery fins sprouted from his shriveling arms, and his legs melded together to form his tail. His ink ran across his skin like water, becoming great spots that turned from black to orange. A moment later, his transformation was complete. Where Greg had once stood, there was now a pretty oriental fish the length of Polly's arm from her fingers to her elbow, a koi, if Polly remembered right.

"There we go." The man said, very pleased. "I know the park has been discussing getting fish for their pond for a while, particularly some pretty fish. I guess I've just saved the community several hundred dollars." He looked around at the silent figures. "Just need a few more to do things properly, and ensure a good population for several generations. Luckily, you have a good mix of people here." And a few minutes later, there were ten more fish. With a wave of her hand, the fish were lifted up into the air and vanished in the direction of the lake closer to the center of the park. That left Mary, Billy and about eleven more people.

"Now that the matter with the lake is finished, that leaves the rest of you. I'm pretty sure the park doesn't need any more squirrels!" He grinned at the looks of relief in the various eyes. "But there are all manners of animals out there! Don't worry! I'm sure there are plenty of things we can find that are useful if we put our minds to it!"

He pretended to ignore the pleading looks that were leveled on him. Polly had to do something! She focused, trying desperately to wiggle, to shift her weight, to make even a *whimper*! He was walking around in front of everyone, clearly enjoying himself. He slowly came around to Polly and paused.

"What is this?" he asked. "This one seems to be trying to escape! Or at the very least attract attention to herself. I wonder why? Well, let's find out everyone, shall we?"

Her mouth sprang apart, letting her speak. "Please, please, please, don't hurt them!" she heard herself beg. "They've learned their lesson, I'm sure. Just please don't hurt them, and turn the others back!"

"Demanding little minx, aren't you?" he interrupted as her pleas grew more desperate. "Why should I? Do you think they would grant the same mercy to their victims? Well, do you?"

"Well, umm...I mean..." Polly stammered.

"I thought not." He gloated. That look alone filled her with anger, and she spoke forcefully, catching him by surprise.

"Hey, these may not be the nicest group of people around, but they're sure as hell better than you! They've helped me before, when my sister was taken when *no one else* did, not even you! They've stood by me when I was low, as I do them! They at least steal honestly, and most of the time our targets don't get hurt! Your just torturing yours, you sick, demented—"

"Yes, that may be." He interrupted her again. Damn him! Didn't he know better than to interrupt her when she was ranting? She felt fresh anger and husbanded it, she'd need it to get through this and keep her fear at bay, because deep down she was terrified. She paid close attention to his words, hoping to find a weakness she could exploit.

"That may be, but do you think their victims would agree? What about young master Billy here?" he asked mockingly as he went around behind the kid and placed both hands on his shoulder. The sheer animal rage coming from Billy's eyes made no effect on the man's cold blue ones. "This man would probably disagree with you. If I remember correctly, the last man you targeted nearly had his brains beat in, and ended up in the hospital for a week. See?" he continued as Billy's eyes nearly glowed with pride. "This young man craves blood. Demands it. He wants it so bad he can practically taste it. There's more vampire in him than man now." He looked right into Polly's eyes. "Do you think just a slap on the wrist and some community service will fix him? He'll progress rapidly to murder soon enough. And you still want to save him from his fate?"

"Yes!" Polly cried, though privately she had her doubts as well. "He's just a kid!"

"Not anymore." The man said softly. A moment later fangs sprouted from Billy's mouth, armor plating replaced his skin. Billy looked excited for just a moment until he began shrinking. Amazement turned to fear and back to rage as he shrank more and more. Extra legs sprouted out of his chest. Polly shuddered as she realized he was turning into a flea. A moment later the transformation was complete, and the speck was sent hurling into the fog.

"Don't worry about him." He remarked casually as he turned back to the others. "He's nearly indestructible, unless he attacks a human."

"But you'll kill him!" Polly shrieked.

He shrugged. "Probably." He agreed. "He shouldn't attack any of those though, if he does, it's his own choice."

"But that's still murder, and you know it." Polly said bitterly. "He's just a kid."

"There's far less of a kid in him than you realize." The man said quietly. "You didn't want to see it, but he's had blood on his hands long before he came to see you for...employment. He came for blood, and now he will get it, although he will be destroyed in getting it."

He looked at the others, and sighed. "I can't really decide what to do with the rest of you, so I guess I shall simply turn you into more fish. Perhaps a catfish or something, to help keep the bottom of the lake clean. There should still be enough food there to support at least a small population of you." A few minutes later there were eleven catfish zooming resignedly towards the lake. A muffled splash told her that they had made it to their new home. That left her and Mary.

"Now, what to do with you two?" he mused quietly. He walked over to Polly and examined her closely. He used his thumb to peer into her eyes, and then raised her lips to check her gums and teeth. He leaned over and picked up her feet, taking off the shoes to examine her soles closely. Polly

just closed her eyes and let the tears from her humiliation flow. They dripped down her face and fell to the earth at her feet. A minute later he was finished and stood up.

"You'll do most nicely." He announced to no one in particular.

"For what?" Polly asked dejectedly. She'd given up all hope of retaining her form, and now wished he'd get on with it and finish with her so she could live out the rest of her life.

"A ride." His words made her jerk her head up in horror. She opened her mouth to beg, but he was already casting the spell, waving his hand without bother to speak again. She was briefly surprised, but then she was too busy fighting the feelings invading her body. There was a brief moment of being *stretched*, like playdoh in the hands of a toddler, and a strange itching sensation that crawled across her skin. A moment later, the feeling died away, and she breathed hard.

"Well, now that's perfect!" the voice interrupted her thoughts and she looked up and saw...nothing? Where was the, well, she could be safe and say he was a warlock, couldn't she? As she swiveled her head to keep looking, she had a disorienting moment where she saw the park bench seemed a lot lower than she remembered it, then it clicked and she looked down. Sure enough, she was taller than she had been before; the warlock was peering up at her naked torso.

"What did you do to me?" she asked terrified, rearing as she slapped her arm across her chest. Wait, she *reared*? Turning behind her, she saw the body of a sleek horse stretched behind her. With her free arm, she reached tentively behind her and touched *herself*! She could feel the touch of her hand on the horse's back. Yet her upper body was still a girl, until she felt something twitch on her head. Reaching up, she felt a horse's soft ear twisting around on her head! Polly felt like fainting, puking, or wanting to run screaming. Or maybe all three. She wasn't sure what. Mary was staring up at her in fear.

"What have you done to me?" she screamed again.

"Simply turned you into a centaur dear. Now be quiet, or I will silence you." He said calmly. Polly turned to run, but realized she wouldn't get far. The power she was facing here was too great. So, she settled for re-crossing her arms across her torso, and waited.

He turned to Mary. "Final person." He said softly. Mary stared up at him in defiance. "I guess I should see what you want to be turned into." He waved his hands.

"Go to hell you *****ing bastard!" she snarled. "Or get it the **** over with so's I can tear you a new one! You only do this because you can't find it with both hands, and it's too small for even a finger!" she continued her verbal abuse, though Polly could see the resigned terror in her eyes.

His face slowly turned a mottled purple. He waved his hand and cut her off midstream. "Why you impudent, callow, bestial harridan! I will turn you into a fly! A toad, so you can hop around the lilly pad covered in slime and be tortured by young boys with sticks! I'll turn you into a dung beetle and let you loose in the barn!" His hand glowed ominously he pointed towards her, quivering with rage.

"NO!" Polly shrieked, running forward and leaping in front of him. She dared not strike him. "Please, please, don't turn her into those things. Please, she's my friend." Polly dropped to her knees, but only achieved making herself as tall as him. She bent her forward half so she was lower. "Please, I'll go with you willingly, quietly. Just please don't hurt her." Internally, she wondered if she could get away with the lie. She hadn't known Mary for long really, but she didn't want to see her suffer like that. No one should.

He stared coldly for a minute, then shrugged. "For your agreement to my service, I shall spare her. You have spoken out of turn when I specifically forbade it however. I shall have to punish you, in a moment." He turned back to Mary.

"Your 'friend' here has pled for your life. I suppose I *should* spare it." He spoke thoughtfully, tapping his finger against his chin.

"Go to hell, and leave Polly out of this." Mary growled defiantly. "I'm no one's personal....kitten!"

"Kitten!" He grinned like a kid handed a piece of candy. "That's perfect Mary! Except we'll make it a little different, so poor...Polly was it?...won't be lonely."

"What are you..." Mary began. But it was already too late. Soft downy fur began replacing her pants, seeming to grow out of them as her rear bulged and extended backwards. Three bumps appeared and rapidly grew, becoming a long pinkish tail with two rear legs that ended in...paws? Polly stared. In seconds the fur had caught up, covering the now changed portion of her. On her human half, the tattoos that she had been covered with ran down to her white half, covering it in large spots. The tail had immensely thick, fluffy fur on it. A moment later, thick short ears appeared ontop of her head, replacing the two human ones she had before. Long hair grew to cover the missing ears, though it looked strangely...*normal* for that.

"Wha—?" Mary asked dazedly. She looked behind her, and turned on the sorcerer with a snarl of rage. Her fur bristled and great sharp claws extended from new paws. With her contorted face, and angry slitted eyes, she looked wonderfully like a cat who's had its tail trod on.

The sorcerer took no notice. Polly envied his ability to stay cool. Had she seen Mary like that, she would have picked a direction and started running. She shrank back with wide eyes as the Sorcerer approached. She tried to control the rising fear in her heart that stole her breath and locked her muscles. She knew, without really knowing, that something terrible was about to befall her because of her resistance.

"Now Mary," he said sharply, cutting the other woman off before she could pounce. "I want you to understand exactly the cost of defying me. Polly here kept speaking when I told her to be quiet. And for that..."

Polly's tongue suddenly locked. She opened her mouth and tried to speak, but a strange whinnying caw sounded. Unable to believe it, she continued harder and harder, terror overpowering her defenses as she realized she couldn't form *words*! He had taken her speech away!

A thunderclap next to her ear jolted her, and she nearly fell to the ground dazed. Shaking her head to clear the ringing, she looked at the Sorcerer, no she corrected herself bitterly. Master. She looked at the Master and trembled. What else would he do? Beside him, she could see Mary staring at her in utter horror. She realized the Master was speaking, and quickly listened.

“As you can see, I have taken Polly’s ability to speak away from her. I’m sure that given time the two of you will find a way to talk. You will be her only way of communicating to...well, anyone. That is, as long as you behave and follow my rules. Break any of them, and I will take your ability to talk, and Polly will lose much more. I promise you.”

Mary stared at Polly. Polly wished she knew what was going through her mind. She hadn’t worked with Mary long; she had been a recent addition to the gang, there for only three months or so. Would she try to make a new deal for herself, or would she simply try to run? Polly had no idea, though her life hinged on that answer. She forced herself to wait, hoping.

“Fine. Sir. What do you want?” Mary finished sullenly, hanging her head.

“That will do for now.” The Master said amusedly. “I am tired of all this. I have completed my job here. For now, we will retire, and let the city baffle at the loss of one of its more notorious gangs.”

So he hadn’t come here by accident! Polly took that kernel and filed it away. He had specifically targeted them, much the same way hers had set up their victims, she admitted ruefully. She wondered what they had done to bring about his specific ire, filing that question away too. All she could do now was wait and learn.

If I learn enough, then I can figure a way out of this mess and back to Emily. Hold on Emily, I’ll be back, I promise! Polly wondered if that would be a promise she could keep. It didn’t matter though, she had made it, and would do everything in her power to try and make it come true.