

## Call of the Outback

You were in the bouncing buggy of a tour on the outskirts of the Australian plains, the border between the hot deserts and the arid brush. The open savanna was your road as you and four others, not including the driver, held on as the vehicle jiggled with its poor suspension, hoping to see some natural animals here on this island continent.

Koalas, wombats, Tasmanian devils, those spiders which are bigger than people's heads. You were here for all of them. Echidnas, emus, wallabies, and who can forget quokkas with their cute snouts and those adorable black noses. Everyone had their cameras out, whether those used for professional photography or their smartphones, the car driving slow enough to be able to take the seldom snapshot at an impressive bird or a dingo.

But there was one animal you were here for, not that the others were any lesser. It's just that if there was *one* beast you'd kick yourself for returning home without ever witnessing in person, it'd be the traditional creature of the nation - a Kangaroo. The oddities of its entire frame was enough to drag you over here along with all of the touristy city spots. But you were here now, in the brush, wanting to see its weird shape for yourself.

Its hunched back, lengthy tail, elongated paws, the pouch all the females had on their front. This place really was a marvel in terms of how... unique the world could be.



After all, you were just a human, one in eight billion souls on this planet living side by side with nature. Typical height, weight, the color of your eyes and hair being irrelevant. You knew what they were, you didn't need a refresher. Male in both sex and gender, this place strangely felt more like native to you than your home an ocean away was. The blue sky without a single cloud in sight. A layer of orange on the horizon with the yellow-browns of the ground and grass and... so many other things. It felt like home.

Everything was moving in flashes. At first the car had stopped near a plateau that was roundish near the top instead of the typical hard lines that might be found in the rich, crimson deserts of the United States. You weren't sure if it was the sun, which had started to set, that affected your awareness. It'd been awhile since you were around any shade, your eyes going blurry, your mind unsure of what was going on. A puff of brown smoke surrounded you, causing your lungs to fill with irritation. You coughed, and with a turn of your body, you saw the buggy leave you behind, the dust now your only companion.

Nothing... made sense? You shouted out, waving your arms as you were being left behind without any way of taking care of yourself. The outback was a dangerous place, especially without bottled fluids, or even any knowledge of how to find clean water.



You let out a sigh of relief as you saw the car turn to the right and stop, everyone staring at you. In your mind, you thought of them profusely apologizing for leaving you behind, no doubt a terrible fate in store for you had things gone that way. Yet... they continued to stare, the driver parking the rugged automobile as each pair of eyes gazed upon you. You moved forward, trying to shout, trying to figure out what was the matter. In the sudden amnesia that had afflicted you, you never remembered even getting out of the car to begin with.

They started aiming their devices towards you, smiles and laughter as you jumped up and down, yelling words of confusion, running after them in order to understand why they were treating you like this. However, you took one step too far, and fell to your knees in both horror and shock as the vehicle reinitiated its engine, and only seconds passed before they were a dusty dot on the deadly vista that was the view in front of you.

None of this made any sense at all! Your mind was puzzled at the people you trusted! They weren't like you, they weren't people you could've... depended on. You were human. They were human. But if that's how it'd be, with them taking photos of you in distress, in your delirium, then what was the point? Why trust... anyone anymore?

Your hands were on your knees as they rubbed into the dirt, the cargo shorts you wore only shielding so much. The granules cut into your skin; you did not belong here, or



at least, your body. A snake slithered behind you. The feral hogs a mile away dug deep into the ground to burrow their new dens. And to your right, a mob of kangaroos, the animals you were here to see, what felt like now the *only* animal you cared to see, hopped along the land.

They were red in fur, thick and scruffy. Fleeced like a lamb with a hide as soft as wool, and muscles underneath the pelt that could give a human a run for their money. They were slightly larger than you, with one in the throng stopping to stare at you, just like the others in the car did. Would everything with a brain cease their comings and goings to watch you slowly wither out in the wild?

Although, this treatment was different. Firstly, it was merely an animal; it watched. It did not have a camera to simply record your fate, and it did not laugh. It did not have expressions, but its body language was not hostile, more so — *curiosity*. An outward stomach on its form put knowledge deep into your mind, your consciousness, you knew the beast was pregnant.

Life was always precious to you. A man you may be, but a touch of motherhood was enviable. You imagined maybe all men had similar wants, similar ideas, *probably*. If you were going to find your end out here, why couldn't you just... exist as something else? Things die, and things are born. Some people believe in reincarnation, and



sometimes the concept intrigued you. To be reborn, as something else, with the ability to experience a new life.

You never expected to get so philosophical so close to the end. Every thought on your current predicament pushed out another change, this one starting with your ears. They grew... vastly different. They were wider, fuzzy, like big flaps that twitched at the feeling of their own changes. The physical properties of your brain were touched upon next, the center of your being, your soul, your identity, shedding as the skin does for a reptile. An entire, internal shock spasmed the core of your body like a defibrillator activating at the highest charge, permanently altering your sense of self, not that there was much to change.

You *wanted* to be a kangaroo. You've **always** *wanted* to be one. You didn't know that until now but there was just *something* about them that made sense. This place, this whole land, it was a land you *belonged* on. You planned out this entire trip, bought the tickets, arranged the tour, and prepared to come out with nothing... to finally attain that dream.

The pregnant kangaroo was right in front of you now, she had walked all the way over here, recognizing your scent. Taking your nose near your armpits, it... wasn't what you last recalled in your memory. A specific brand of deodorant, some honey scent mixed with the salt of the sea. Now you were given the natural musk of the outback, the



hair in your pits thickening with a pair of massive tufts, red-brown fur growing in the crevices.

She was so close to you now, her muzzle along with your shorter one growing in, nuzzling against the sides. Where her fur touched spread your own, your snouts quivering in the understanding of each other. A hand with sharp talons reached out, and around the back of your head, while the other went to your belly. You don't remember being nude, but that was okay.

As the nails got closer to the underside of your stomach, a tinge of fear almost made you want to back away, afraid that the other kangaroo was going to slice into you for some reason. It would be a betrayal from an animal you thought you had spent a lifetime with even though you had truly been around them for a few minutes. However, your suspicions were misplaced, as her first finger, while sharp, found a hidden place that you *needed* to know about.

The claw found a long slit moving from left to right, just above your groin. Opening it up, it was red, moist, fleshy in color and material. *How* could you have forgotten about your pouch? The same scrappy hairs that were now appearing all over your form heightened like wheat in a field, filling out, stretching up to the setting sun. The female was behind you now, her arms wrapping around your front, holding your gut with her hands.



You gave a slight moan. It wasn't erotic, but plainly made from the pressures pushing out in your abdomen. A small glow was emitted from her hands as your tummy swelled, the miracle of life being granted to you as you dismissed so many other duties you had in your life. It's not that they weren't important, or that your humanness meant nothing. It's just that you had a womb now, and it was increasing in size, the litter in you now ready to mark you with maternity.

The female and her paws both disappeared faster than you could realize, leaving you by yourself with your hands similar to her own. It was difficult to notice at first, but... were they your own hands? The glow, the perspective, the way they swathed and enveloped you. It felt stupid in hindsight, but this was you, it was *a/ways* you.

Thanks to a small dirty puddle near your large, and impressively long foot, with an even *more* magnificent set of nails on each toe, you saw the face of the animal you were. A kangaroo. You could see from the angle that you weren't male around your nether regions, and you hoped that was the case. It would've been odd to have the belly you had and not be a female.

Your back scrunched, passively and gently forcing you down into a hunch. An extended, splendid tail that began as a huge chunk of fat and fur at the base, like a miniature barrel bigger than most containers you could think about. It stretched



downwards like a stalk from a flower, slowly but surely. You could feel the bristles of your reddish pelt pet the strands of the yellow colored grasses.

Warmth was all around you, but it wasn't like wearing a coat in a desert. It was like a blanket around a naked body. You came out here with clothes on, and this fur was no different. It was your clothing, covering your skin, giving you the signature style that was *meant* for a person- for a *beast* like you. An animal, a cute, beautiful girl with a healthy pack of joeys on the way.

In the distance was the pack you were a part of. Your head felt as fuzzy as the rest of your body, and some things didn't make sense. Scraps of cloth and brown fabrics on the ground had meanings attached to them that you couldn't recall. You remembered everything from before, your life, your body before. Even as you skipped towards your new family, with your newest ones safe within you. But the words were just things that you were going to leave behind along with various other human notions. You wanted to leave them behind, you had to make room for what your brain was now, and what new knowledge it would need to compete with living out on these wild lands.

A small puff of smoke showed itself in the same direction as where your tour vehicle once went, but now coming closer. It was the same car as before, with the same people. Six people were on board, the driver, the four co-tourists you had embarked with,





and a smiling face that looked a lot like yours. It wasn't aiming devices at you like the others, but taking in the sight of you and the others.

The scents of all the kangaroos around you wafted around your snout. A few touched you, making sure you knew that they were moving. One placed his paw on you, bringing his muzzle to kiss it. The one responsible for your cherished condition. He was larger than you, and he was the one escorting you by being the closest, and by being the softest towards you.

You and your new body jumped in the opposite way as the humans. Nothing was lost, yet everything was gained. Nobody would lose you or who you were, you were just something else, you had *a/ways* been something else. You sprung towards the sun, content in the life you had now even as you felt the kicks of your offspring within. A sign of things to come within the next week. Their small lips around the teats inside your pouch.

As much as this whole journey was unexpected, it was all the more appreciated. You were home. You were safe. You were loved. Everything would be okay.

For now, and *a/ways*.

