CJ poked at the ball of chickpeas in front of him, breaking off a little piece with his fork and dragging it through the mixture of tzatziki and hot sauce that remained on his plate.

He looked across the table at his giant moose of a girlfriend, flashing her a polite smile. “You know there are like a million restaurants around this part of the city.”

Kimberly nodded. “I know but this place means a lot to me.”

She picked up her pita wrap, taking a bite from it. In her hands it looked more like an appetizer than an actually complete meal. This would probably explain the two already empty tin foil wrappers that were discarded upon her tray.

“Been ages since we were last here,” CJ said, picking up his coke and taking a sip. “Two years at this point.”

Kimberly sighed. “Well with the whole plague thing going on there wasn’t really a chance to come down to Seattle last year.”

CJ nodded, looking out upon the street. Where they would’ve been deserted only a couple months prior, they were now littered with tourists, taking in the port city, and locals, taking advantage of them to sell their crafts and artesian goods.

“Still think we should’ve gotten sushi or something,” CJ said.

Kimberly reached across the table and gently booped the tip of his nose. “Noted but we can get sushi tomorrow. After all, we have an entire week in the city.”

“Well a good four days of that will be spent at a hotel attending a convention,” CJ commented, crinkling his nose at Kimberly’s very offensive boop. “But yeah, I guess we can always come down here tomorrow.”

Kimberly took another bite of her wrap, finishing it with concerning swiftness before placing the last empty wrapper upon the tray in front of her.

“At least they moved things to the summer this year,” she said, smirking. “I was fucking freezing the last time we did this.”

“Yeah? Well you were pretty underdressed for May,” CJ teased.

Kimberly held up a defensive hand. “I’m from Canada and it was May. I assumed the weather would be way more hospitable down here. That’s what everyone else in Canada does, heads to the States for better weather.”

“Yeah maybe in like Arizona or Florida or Vegas or something,” CJ said. “But not a whole lot of snowbirds setting up shop in Seattle.”

“Their loss,” Kimberly murmured. “Good food, good people, good weed…”

“Weed is very nice,” CJ agreed.

Kimberly smirked. “So nice.”

“I’m assuming we’re going to be hitting up a dispensary later?”

Kimberly nodded. “If you want to. The edibles back home are shit compared to the stuff you can down here. I really want to try out one of those sodas that has like fifty milligrams of THC in it.”

“Oh, so you’re planning to get stupidly high this weekend?” CJ asked, cocking a brow at her.

Kimberly shrugged. “Maybe one night.” She then wagged her finger at him. “Plus, my tolerance is even better than yours nowadays.”

“Yeah I couldn’t possibly imagine why…”

CJ smirked and Kimberly soon joined him. It wasn’t like they were both aware of the jarring size difference between them or anything.

“Are you just about finished?” he asked.

Kimberly nodded and stood up, towering over CJ as she grabbed her purse and pulled it over her shoulder. “I was thinking that we could go to the Space Needle next?”

“I thought we did the glass museum after this?” CJ commented, sticking his hands into his pockets. “Are we even allowed to deviate from the past?”

Kimberly snorted. “That museum is a little pricy and honestly do they even have any new exhibits?”

“I have no idea,” CJ said. “Though there were those pretty cool glassblowers the last time we were here.”

“You mean those ones that made me extremely gay,” Kimberly teased, sighing fond.

CJ snorted. “Dating an awful lot of men for a gay woman, babe.”

“I’m bi!” she interjected defensively. “But I think we can probably skip right to the Space Needle this time around. I mean… if that’s fine with you.”

CJ nodded and the two of them left the little restaurant near Pike’s Place, heading due north.

“I still want to see the Statue of Lenin one of these days,” he said, glancing up at her.

Kimberly smirked. “It was pretty neat getting a chance to see it the first time I was down here. Maybe we could head to the Fremont, tomorrow? They have some really good used book stores out there.”

CJ cocked a brow.

“What?” Kimberly asked, clutching her purse tight against her side. It was already burdened with all the books she’d picked up over the course of the day.

“Do you even need more books? You have like a million in our closet that you haven’t even touched yet,” CJ said.

Kimberly shrugged. “When in Rome do as the Romans do.”

“I thought that’s why we were hitting up a dispensary later.” CJ smirked and gently bumped into her side. “You did look really adorable in that shop though. Kind of like a kid in a candy store.”

Kimberly reached out with her hand and CJ looked at it. He held out his, as well, and soon their fingers interlocked somewhere in the middle. It was a bit of an awkward position to maintain, due to their size difference, with CJ having to hold his arm out at practically a ninety-degree angle.

“We’re also doing this a bit earlier than before,” CJ teased. “We didn’t start holding hands until we were done with the Space Needle, last time.”

“Yeah, well we’re also officially dating now,” Kimberly replied. “Weird how this all worked out.”

CJ shrugged. “I’m taking it as a blessing. Couldn’t be happier.”

As they made their way northwards, the buildings started to thin as they approached a public space that was a fusion of concrete, glass, and grass. The centrepiece of this diorama was a massive tower that struck up high into the air.

Anyone who had even heard of Seattle knew of this tower.

*The Space Needle.*

“We should do the Science Centre sometime,” Kimberly interjected, sighing remorsefully.

CJ nodded. “Too much Seattle, not enough time.” He ran a finger over her knuckles. “Seems like stuff is always falling through the cracks.”

“Think the cons going to be fun this year?” Kimberly asked. “We haven’t seen anybody in literally years.”

“The con is always fun,” CJ said.

“Going to be even more fun with you around,” Kimberly replied, smiling at him.

He smiled back.

They approached the base of the Space Needle, entering into the little tourism booth at the base. The lines were quite short. It was strange, compared to their last trip, but seemingly normal in a world where tourism hadn’t recovered yet.

Kimberly reached into her purse, pulling out her wallet. “I got this.”

“Are you sure?” CJ asked, tugging upon her hand.

Kimberly nodded. “You got lunch, it’s only fair that I get the tickets.”

She let go of his hand and approached the short line, waiting patiently as it slowly queued through. She bought the tickets from a bored looking jet-black leopard before returning to CJ and holding out one for him.

He took it from her, clutching it in his nimble little fingers.

“You know,” Kimberly said. “I saved the ticket from our last trip here.”

“You did?” CJ asked.

Kimberly nodded. “For the longest time I used it as a bookmark.” She blushed. “Because every time I would open a book, it would remind me of you. Kept me going through all those months when we were so far apart.”

CJ also blushed, letting out a nervous chuckle. “Dork.”

“Sadly, it got so faded that I had to get it replaced…” She sighed but then looked at her current ticket, offering it a warm smile. “Thankfully, it looks like I’ll have another one to replace it.”

CJ nodded and gave his ticket another passing glance. He then motioned towards the door of the little tourist booth. Together, they went back outside.

“We should get a drink while we’re up there,” Kimberly suggested.

CJ snorted. “A ten-dollar cup of wine?”

“I’m sure it can’t still be ten-dollars,” Kimberly murmured. “Tourists rates are still way in the hole.”

“Yeah I wouldn’t hold my breath,” CJ grumbled.

They made their way around the base of the Space Needle towards a ramp that led upwards in a spiral. There was another short line with a pair of employees checking tickets and giving out instructions.

Kimberly and CJ queued and waited their turn, nodding along as they were instructed to making their way up, read the facts, take photos liberally, and enjoy themselves. All relayed with the monotone efficiency of a worker who was about six hours into an eight-hour shift.

With that, there were allowed through, slowly ascending along the ramp. There were signs all the way up, giving information, historical factoids, and fun facts about the Space Needle. Kimberly read them with a passing glance, still remembering a good portion of the information. CJ was a bit more attentive, however, stopping every once in awhile to read. This also brought Kimberly to a halt.

“Huh it used to rotate,” CJ commented.

Kimberly nodded. “Powered by like a single horsepower motor, right?”

CJ smirked. “Did you do your research?”

“Moose have incredible memory.” She rested a hand on his shoulder. “Unlike bunnies, we have other things besides breeding on our mind.”

“Last I checked you had a higher libido than me,” CJ teased.

Kimberly stroked his shoulder with a single thumb, gently caressing him.

“You’re a bad influence?” she suggested, grinning from ear-to-ear and knowing how flimsy her argument sounded.

“Sure, I am,” CJ murmured, reaching up and resting his hand atop hers. “Ready to go higher?”

Kimberly nodded and once more they continued to ascend, rising at a lethargic pace so CJ could take in all the informational panels.

Eventually, they were brought to a halt as they neared a second, but equally short, line.

Kimberly promptly started to snicker, which made CJ’s ears perk up.

“What’s so funny?” he asked, glancing at her.

“The last time we did this we looked so fucking awkward,” Kimberly said, sighing at the memory. “Like a pair of high school kids with a mom trying to take a picture of them before prom.”

CJ snorted. “Well it was a weird spot to be in. Were we friends? More than friends? It was this weird nebulous grey zone that neither of us really knew what to do with.”

Kimberly nodded slowly. “Hopefully we take a better picture this time.”

The queue slow fed through until it was their turn in front of the camera. The camerawoman was a very colourful peacock who flashed them a cheery smile as she explained that photos could either be bought in the gift shop or they could be downloaded online using the code on their tickets.

They were then put in frame in front of the camera.

This promptly made the peacock look rather perplexed as she tried to angle the camera downwards and then back up again, then down again. She hummed and hawed to herself, until finally, she offered the pair a panicked grin.

“Uh…” she started.

Kimberly kind of figured out what her issue was as she took a knee beside CJ, bringing herself more on level with him.

The peacock mouthed a thank you before snapping a picture of them together. This time Kimberly was sure there would be very little awkwardness involved. She smiled nice and wide, leaning against her boyfriend.

The peacock nodded and her cheery smile promptly returned. “You two look absolutely adorable together.”

Kimberly smiled at that and glanced at CJ who just looked as reserved as ever.

With that out of the way, they gave their thanks and continued upwards, ascending the few final metres of ramp. This brought them to a series of elevator doors. A few other critters were also there, just milling about and waiting for their turn to head up to the top.

An energetic hawk was the attendant here. He went on and on, giving facts and details about the elevator, telling them how fast it went and how quickly it would make the nearly six-hundred-foot ascent. Until finally, one of the elevator doors opened and he ushered a tour group inside.

The group went in, though Kimberly and CJ weren’t in this one. Instead they listened attentively as the Hawk went on about his life in Seattle.

“Well when you can’t make a cup of coffee,” the hawk said, flashing a smile. “And you bombed all your programming classes in colleges, you’re kind of forced to talk to tourist all day if you want to make it in this city.”

Finally, a fresh elevator opened and Kimberly and CJ entered with a few other creatures.

A fresh tour guide then took over, giving them details and answering any lingering questions that the patrons may have had.

The door closed and they took off, shooting straight into the sky.

Kimberly was taken back by the view, looking out upon the gleaming water that seemed to stretch on for infinite. She was a moose from the depths of Boreal Canada who had never even seen the ocean until four years prior. It always managed to catch her off guard whenever she saw it.

Just this endless expanse of shimmering blue with delicate little boats upon it. It was alien, foreign, majestic, and beautiful all in one.

She felt CJ’s hand brush against her own and she gave it a tender squeeze back. As she glanced at him, she saw that his expression was cool and reserved, looking out upon the ocean with the same unflinching gaze.

“A whole lot of water,” Kimberly murmured.

CJ nodded. “Wish I lived near the coast.”

“Same.”

The elevator eventually made it all the way up to the observation deck and the door opened.

Kimberly and CJ left with all of the other animals, spilling out upon the window lined deck.

Most creatures went for the doors outside, though Kimberly and CJ simply started to walk around, looking out the many windows that littered the platform.

“Do you remember that family from the last time we were here?” Kimberly asked.

CJ smirked. “You mean that Filipino family whose photos you ended up in?”

“I mean they weren’t going to step out onto the glass without someone else proving that it wouldn’t shatter under them. And well, I mean…” She looked down at herself, motioning to her body. “If it can support like two-hundred-pounds of moose, then it could support a pair of tarsiers.” She flashed a cheeky grin. “Maybe I can even get you out on the glass this time?”

CJ chuckled. “Don’t hold your breath.”

Together they made their way down a flight of stairs to a second observation deck. This one had the fabled glass floors which had a fantastic view that looked straight down for all six hundred feet of artificial elevation.

There were two kinds of animals here. Those who strolled upon the glass without a care in the world and those who sheepishly toed at it but refused to tread hoof or paw upon it as their hackles rose in self-defence.

Kimberly approached the glass but as she stepped over that line, she felt CJ tug upon her hand. He was bolted firmly in place. While he was still difficult to read, and seemed calm, there was a frantic energy that wafted off of him in a miasma of discomfort. It was apparent in his ears which stood bolt upright, twitching with a familiar anxiety.

Kimberly let go of his hand and elegantly treaded upon the glass, even doing a little pirouette to prove that it was more than capable of supporting her.

“Come on babe, if it can support me, it can support you,” she said, motioning for him to approach.

CJ shook his head. “But can it support both of us at once?”

“I mean…” She shrugged. “Probably.” She then grinned nice and wide. “Come on, there’s only one way to find out.”

Still CJ stood firmly in place, looking at the glass with a concerned skepticism. Finally, he drew in a breath and inched forwards, taking a delicate first step. As his paw touched the surface, he immediately tensed. Though as he still remained on even ground, he took another more confident step, and then another.

Before long he was a good metre or two away from the *‘safety’* of the carpeting and on the dangerous sea of glass.

“I knew you could do it,” Kimberly beamed, making her way towards the railing off the side.

She leaned against it and looked out upon the city. The view was something else from up here.

Seattle wasn’t like home. Seattle was what a proper city should’ve looked like. Vibrant, green, and with plenty of tall buildings. It made Winnipeg feel third rate. Though that pretty much summed up what Winnipeg was in the grand scheme of things. A third-rate city where people simply existed.

CJ eventually made his way over, practically falling against the handrail. As Kimberly looked over, she noticed that he was shaking.

“Everything alright?” she asked.

CJ nodded slowly. “Just… just give me a second to get used to this.” He chuckled nervously. “My fight or flight reflexes are kicking in.”

“Would it help if I picked you up?”

CJ went pale. “Yeah let’s get even further away from the ground, I’m sure that will do wonders for me.”

Kimberly reached over and rested her hand a top his own. “At least if we fall, we fall together?”

“Yeah that uh…” CJ barked with nervous laughter, “that isn’t especially helpful at the moment, babe.”

They lingered like that for a moment but with every passing second, CJ seemed to calm. Until finally, the quivering stopped and he let out a pent-up sigh of relief that he seemed to be holding onto for quite awhile.

“Not going to fall to your death?” Kimberly asked.

CJ smirked. “Not going to fall to my death.” He sighed, drumming his fingers against the railing in front of him. “You know, I sometimes kick myself that we didn’t get a chance to kiss up here.”

“Well we were just nervous kids back then.” Kimberly reached over and touched his cheek. “And I was going through some pretty intense shit on top of that.”

“Kids?” CJ snorted. “Babe it was like three years ago. We were both in our late twenties.”

“Childhood is a state of mind?” Kimberly suggested, flashing him a smile. “And I mean there’s nothing stopping us from fixing that right this second.”

CJ nodded and turned his head towards her, smiling. “I suppose there isn’t.”

Kimberly learned closer and so did CJ, the two of them reaching that fateful point, their lips mere inches apart. Though just as they were about to kiss, they both halted, their eyes widening as they reached a collective realization.

“We just ate Greek food,” Kimberly whispered.

CJ crinkled his nose and nodded.

Both of them promptly jerked away from each other. Kimberly reached into her purse and CJ his pocket, both of them producing a packet of gum. They popped a piece of spearmint between their lips and rapidly chewed, doing away with the lingering villainhood of garlic that was left behind upon their tongues.

Then, with that dealt with, they gave their kiss a second attempt. However, instead of leaning down, Kimberly instead turned towards CJ and placed her hands under his armpits.

“What are you doing?” CJ asked, a panicked look in his eye.

Kimberly smirked and picked him up, bringing him to her level. She then dipped forwards, before he could protest, and pressed her lips against his own.

CJ gasped but succumbed to the kiss, closing his eyes and leaning into it. They lingered like that for a good couple of seconds, creating a moment that was a couple years passed due.

Eventually they parted and there was a look of wonderment in CJ’s eye. A look which Kimberly knew for a fact she shared.

Then CJ chuckled, reaching up and poking the tip of her snout. “I’m still going to beat your ass for picking me up like that.” He pouted, though there was no real anger within his eye. “You know how much I dislike that.”

Kimberly stuck out her tongue. “It’s not my fault that you’re so short.”

“Short!” CJ exclaimed, faking his offense quite well. “I’ll have you know that I’m actually tall for a bunny rabbit.”

“I’ve met your sister and she’s taller than you,” Kimberly chided.

“Female rabbits are naturally bigger!” CJ exclaimed.

Kimberly smirked and very carefully placed him back down upon the glass. As she let go, she reached up and tenderly scritched him behind his ear. “Sure, thing babe.”

CJ snorted and rapidly tapped his paw against the glass, clearly irritated. Though as the sound reverberated, he promptly stopped, his face going pale. He likely didn’t trust the surface he was standing upon.

“Want to check out the view a little more?” Kimberly asked.

CJ nodded and reached out, grabbing her hand. “Though maybe from the safety of a carpeted floor?”

Kimberly smirked and conceded to his suggestion, allowing him to lead her away from the glass and to the stairs that led back up to the primary observation deck.

“We should hit up the gift shop after this,” she suggested. “I need to pick up some things?”

CJ chuckled. “Those magnets that you left behind at your old place?”

“Yeah…” She sighed. “I still feel like an idiot for doing that. They were really nice magnets.”

They were now back on the primary deck and CJ led them towards the doors outside. Once there, they immediately went over to the nearest unoccupied stretch of railing.

Kimberly smirked as she looked over the edge and down at the nearby art centre. It had massive statues of spiders on the roof. She remembered that CJ wasn’t very fond of them and he proved this by looking at everything but the art display.

“Did I ever thank you?” she asked.

CJ looked over. “Hmm?”

“For the first date that we ever had…”

CJ shook his head and leaned against her. “You don’t need to thank me for dating you, babe.”

“I know, it’s just… I was in a really bad place with all of the shit going on in my life…” she explained.

CJ nodded solemnly. “I could only imagine. That break up didn’t seem particularly pleasant.”

“And then you came into my life…” She smiled and ran her hand along his arm. “This little knight in shining armour to rescue me. And you took me on such a wonderful little adventure through a strange and exotic American city. That was one of the greatest days of my life.”

CJ’s cheeks warmed. “Knight in shining armour, eh?”

“Knight in shining armour,” Kimberly repeated, chuckling. “I think we’ve done pretty good together.”

“I mean we’ve gone this long and we’re still going pretty steady,” CJ agreed. “And you know what? I don’t think there’s another moose in the whole world who would make me happier.”

“Are you sure about that?” Kimberly asked. “There are some extremely handsome bucks out there who would be more than willing to ruin you.”

CJ bit his lip and let out a single amused note. “That might bring me temporary euphoria. But in the long run, I’d say you do the job much better. Plus…” He playfully bumped into her. “You are quite the bunny ruiner yourself.”

“When the mood presents itself,” Kimberly teased. She then glanced at him. “Hey babe?”

CJ looked up at her. “Yeah.”

“I love you.”

CJ paused, then allowed himself a dopey little smile.

“I love you too, Kimberly,” he said.

They stayed like that for a moment, leaning against each other and looking out upon the harbour, the city, and the mountain scape far off in the distance. This was the kind of view that won photography awards and there wasn’t a rabbit she would rather share it with.

“Hey Kim?” CJ asked.

“Yeah, babe?”

“Do you want to go buy some weed?”

Kimberly smirked. “Hell yeah.”