Wrong Chord

Ed Nicholson trudged into the empty recording studio, sighing and hauling the borrowed guitar by his side.

This week had not gone well for the raccoon at all. It was getting dangerously close to his band’s first ever headlining tour, and the universe apparently had a cruel sense of humor as it decided to throw just about every awful life event his way.

It started with his brother getting into a car crash, and then Ed ended up getting evicted from his apart and having to spend a few days moving his stuff in with the band’s lead singer/his best friend, and to top it all off, Ed’s guitar ended up getting broken during the move.

Ed groaned as he thought about it while plugging the loaned guitar in. And while he was thinking, he recalled the conversation he’d had upon receiving the thing.

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*“Oh my fucking- We can’t be havin’ this crap man! It’s Vermin’s first reall tour!” Ed spat, dropping the splintered instrument on the floor.*

*Daniel DeMario (Lead singer, a mouse), who was pacing back and forth with his hands in the air, responded: “Okay- Fuck- shit- fuck- okay I- I got this spare ass guitar you can borrow.” Before bolting off towards a closet in the hallway.*

*Ed followed behind and watched his friend rifle through the closet momentarily before pulling out a well-used black guitar.*

*“…Well that’s pretty dang convenient.” Ed nodded, taking the guitar. “…Yeah it looks like it’ll work, thanks man.” He smiled.*

*“Oh but like one more fuckin’ thing though, it’s like cursed and shit.”*

*Ed stared at Daniel as if he had spiders crawling out of his ears.*

*“Dude trust me on this. My dad got it from like a Romanian hag or some shit and those Romanian hags know how to curse shit. Like my dad like fuckin’ played a wrong fuckin’ chord on it and he like turned into a fuckin’ pig.”*

*“…Dude I know a lot is riding on this tour, you don’t need to hammer it home any more.”*

*“Ed, I’m serious man, I watched that shit happen. Probably why I’m so traumatized.”*

*Ed sighed, deciding it was better to just let Daniel have this one.*

*“Anyway uh, thanks for the guitar, man.”*

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Ed snickered a bit, but then quickly focused. He needed to get some rehearsal in before the tour…

Ed spent a few moments tuning the guitar and making sure everything was plugged in properly, then he started to play a very specific guitar line: the one from When Worlds Collide by Powerman 5000.

Sure he probably should’ve picked something simpler like Wonderwall since he hadn’t practiced in so long, but he always defaulted to When Worlds Collide when he needed to ease back in. It was his and Daniel’s favorite song back when they were teens after all.

As Ed played, he absentmindedly imagined Daniel singing the lyrics along with the track in his nasally teenage voice. The memory of it inevitably caused Ed to snicker and chuckle.

And then his ears stood on end when he heard his fingers slap onto a wrong chord right as the chorus began.

Ed let out a small growl and took a few moments to recalibrate before starting from the top.

And as Ed strummed through the track…he couldn’t help but notice an absolutely INCESSANT itch in both of his hands. It didn’t take long for Ed to get completely sick of it, and he put the guitar down so he could scratch the itch.

But that wouldn’t make things any better.

As Ed scratched, he noticed that he ended up flinging a few strands of fur off the backs of his hands.

“…Weird.” He mumbled. “Not even close to shedding season…”

Ed reasoned that it must’ve been just THAT bad of an itch and tried to keep playing…only to immediately have to stop a few seconds later because the itching didn’t stop.

“Rrgh-! Fuck man-!” Ed started scratching again, scratching even more fur off his hands, now leaving a completely bald patch on the backs of his hands. Ed instantly knew this was not normal.

“W-What the hell…?” Ed spoke, his voice quivering. He tried to smooth the fur back over the patch, but with each motion he only ended up sending more stands of fur floating to the floor. It was like each strand had become stuck brittle in place, and any little brush knocked it right out.

“Th-There’s no way this thing is actually-!” Ed’s eyes glanced back and forth from the bald patch to the guitar. His hands had begun shaking by this point, and with each shake, the bald patch widened little by little.

“Oh fuck…Oh fuck…Oh fuck…!” Ed whimpered as he watched the patch expand more and more. Ed clenched his hands into fists in an attempt to resist it, but that only made him lose fur faster…and soon his hands would be completely hairless.

It was obvious what was happening to him by now…but there was still a question burning in his mind.

“What the hell is this thing turning me into?!” He yelped as he watched his claws shorten and dull, becoming weaker as they became mere fingernails. His fingers also grew longer and thicker, becoming more cylindrical…more alien.

And with his hands fully scrubbed of any bestial traits, that opened the floodgates for the rest of his body. A discomforting feeling washed over his entire being, a feeling that made him unable to sit still. It was like there was something crawling through him, determined to eliminate anything that made Ed, Ed.

It started out slow and gently, strands of fur falling from Ed’s arms and gently floating down to the ground and pooling around his (soon-to-be-ex) paws…but as the seconds ticked by, the changes became more aggressive. Massive clumps of fur began to fling themselves free from Ed’s arms as if being brushed aside by a feather duster. For every patch of brown fluff that Ed tried desperately to hold in one arm with the other, there was a patch on THAT arm liberating itself from his skin. Covering his paws in a pile of shed pelage.

Before Ed could even process it properly, his arms were completely wiped of fur. Ed began to chitter and squeak in horror, but after a few of them his throat suddenly seized up. Ed coughed and hacked, and then tried to keep his species’ sounds up…yet he couldn’t. No matter how much he manipulated his throat’s muscles and chords, those noises he’d known for all his life wouldn’t emit. They had been completely stripped away.

Ed covered his snout in fear (briefly cringing at the texture of his skin).

“Th-This can’t be real dude…! It can’t! There’s no way it. Was actually…!”

Throughout this whole transformation, Ed’s large, bushy tail had been swinging back and forth in distress…though now, suddenly, with every swish, Ed felt there was less weight behind it, and each swish was faster as well.

Ed forced himself to look at his rear, and what he saw nearly made him scream.

Almost all of the fur on his tail had been completely erased. Instead of shedding like the fur on his arms, it seemed to merely retract inwards, and now his once-bushy tail looked more like that of a dog.

Ed couldn’t even muster up any words to express the terror he was feeling. And it would only worsen when out of the blue, his tail just…ceased to function. All of the nerves in it seemingly died in an instant as it flopped into the chair pathetically.

“What?! Oh nonononno…c’mon c’mon!” Ed pushed his brain into overtime, focusing on the tail like he was trying to use the force on it, desperately trying to get it to move again. Any little twitch or flick would’ve been enough! Just any small movement to show that it was even still there to begin with!

…And then the tail began to shrink. Rapidly it retracted into Ed’s spine where it was sucked into nothingness. Like it was never there to begin with.

And before Ed could process it, a jolt of pain and itchiness suddenly shot through Ed’s paws. He cried out unreasonably loudly as he lifted his paws out of the fur pile that had accumulated. However, holding them in the air seemed to make the pain worse, so Ed dropped them on top of the pile.

“Please…Please no…!” Ed pathetically begged…who was he even begging to? God? The Guitar?

But who or whatever he was begging to, his pleas seemed to go unheard, as his paws slowly to pop and quiver. Ed could also feel his fur being scrubbed off his legs. He watched with quivering eyes as the clumps fell through his pant legs and onto his paws…which were now lengthening, widening. His toes conversely losing length, while still ballooning to sizes consistent of one another. Any fur shed off as his claws dulled and shortened just as the ones that used to be on his fingers, as well as the color shifting to a pale, peachy color. Finally, his heels slammed onto the ground as his leg structure became more linear and imprecise.

Ed whimpered again as he lifted his once-paws up again. They were wide, stumpy, and already looked horribly cumbersome to walk on.

Ed started trying to breathe deeply in an attempt to calm himself down…but it did very little, as with each exhale he could feel fur shedding…he could feel more and more skin pressing against the fabric of his top instead of the cushioning coat he’d known his whole life.

And soon, all of the fur on his upper body (Save for his head) was gone, all except for a few stragglers left on his belly.

Ed’s hands went to his face, his rubbery, thick fingers pressing against the remaining fur on his face, trying to savor what little remained before it to was gone.

And Ed’s time would soon run out, almost all of his remaining fur shed in an instant, and his triangular ears started to move down to the sides of his head, their shape rounding out and thickening as they lost anything that previously made them that of a raccoon.

Some fur DID remain on his head however, but it wouldn’t stay fur for long. It all began to coagulate into longer strands which hung on Ed’s head like a mop. It also lost its brown coloration in favor of a bright yellow. Fur, it was no longer, now it was simple hair.

Ed’s tearful eyes looked down to his last remaining raccoon trait: his snout. It sat there in his peripheral vision, still, almost like it was waiting…

And as Ed watched his whiskers curl up and fall away, he knew it was almost time for it to go.

He gently, shakily traced his snout with his hands as if trying to memorize its shape before it was lost forever, and with every trace with his hands, he felt the snout grow ever shorter, and Ed could also see his black, wide nose compact and stretch out into a rounded point, losing its black coloration entirely.

And as all of Ed’s sharp teeth dulled and shrank…his snout disappeared from his peripheral vision. It was gone.

Ed was a raccoon no more. He was a human.

The former raccoon sat completely still for a few moments afterwards, trying to process just what the fuck had happened to him…after around 10 minutes of denying the reality of the situation, Ed finally accepted it with a sigh and whipped his phone out, dialing up Daniel.

Miserably, Ed held his phone near the top of his head at first, only to remember his ears weren’t there any more. He grumbled and then moved it to where they were now.

Daniel picked up soon after.

“Heyyyy what’s up man?” Daniel answered cheerily.

“…Yo dude, we might have to get CoqueSuckour to reschedule the tour.”

Daniel’s cheerful tone instantly evaporated. “WHAT?! WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?!”

Ed, staring blankly ahead responded. “Y’know that guitar you lent me?”

Daniel took a deep breath, instantly catching on to what Ed implied. “God fuckin- I fuckin’ told you it was like, cursed and shit, man!”

“Dude you told me in 2nd grade that the moon was made of cheese. I can’t trust anything you say.”

“Ugh- Whatever man, what’d it fuckin’ turn you into?”

“Uh…a human.”

“Okay-“ Daniel said in a relieved manner, which caught Ed extremely off-guard. “Okay that’s an easy fix. I know this like… fuckin’ place that sells like, fuckin’ transformation stuff, we could probably find like, something to get you back to fuckin’ normal.”

“Oh thank God…” Ed sighed a massive sigh of relief.

“Meet me in like…a fuckin’ hour at the McDougals. I’ll drive us over there. I’d do it now, but Sheila’s over and we’re trying to fuckin’ fix her bass.”

“Alright, see you later, man.”

“See ya, bitch.”

Ed hung up after that and just buried his face in his hands. He doubted he’d ever forget the awful feeling of going through what he just went through…but at least it was temporary, right?

He hoped…