

The creature flees

By APassingMoment

The creature flees, desperately. It knows not what is happening, or why: it knows nothing. All it knows is the advance of death, destroying all in its path. Its home, its mate, its children are all gone.

The creature runs, and it can sense others running too. Its whole world is running, a mad dash, away from the tall ones and their promise of destruction.

The creature cannot run anymore; all the energy is spent. No reserve, no extra mile, no nothing, just dropping down where it stands, knowing only one thing: the end approaches. It closes its eyes.

And then it feels it. Energy coming back to tired limbs. It knows not why. It knows not it's impossible. It just rouses again, ready to dash away from danger once more. But something is wrong. For the first time, it knows that it knows not. And this breaks it; not the tall men, not the hunger, not the death of its pack, it is the simple knowledge of itself that breaks it. The creature begins to howl.

He contorts and twists on the ground. He knows now he is a he, his mate was a she, and she was and now is not, and it hurts.

He knows his forest is being destroyed. He knows what a forest is, now, and what isn't: he knows what the desert and the sea are, even though he has never seen them. He gets up and tries to run, to distract himself, to focus on survival once more, but it keeps on knowing more.

He knows the humans chop the trees, to furnish their cities of metal and stone. He knows they do not stop, ever: if not stopped, humans will consume until they have nothing to consume but themselves. He hates, for the first time. He has feared, he has loved, but it is the first time he truly hates, and knows it hates, and it erodes his soul. And as he runs, he starts using his front paws less and less.

He knows and keeps knowing as he keeps running. Not every human destroys, but humanity does. He knows the difference between human and humanity. Humans love nature, humanity destroys it. He runs on his hind legs.

He knows himself. He knows what is not himself. And he finally knows why he knows. He knows what he knows so he can fight back. He stops.

He looks around. His forest, on the road to destruction. Its creatures, doomed to extinction. Humanity, cursed to destroy.

And it speaks. "I will protect you."