I had been hoping for a fun day. Did I get one? No. Originally, I had wanted to go see a movie, get some lunch and maybe take a trip to the pier for some fun carnival games with my girlfriend, Jamie. Again, I say I did not get that. Why, you ask? Why did I not get this fun day? Because Jamie’s brother is a scientist and she had other plans for the day. She wanted to help him test out his newest invention.

I was a bit of a sucker for her and when she pouted, she got her way. So instead of having burgers and going to a cool action movie with explosions, I was being led by my girlfriend into a boring laboratory. Sure, there were scientific breakthroughs and I guess there were some kind of cool inventions in there, but it’s not really what I wanted to do.

Let me take a moment to introduce myself. My name’s Ash. Short for Ashley. Don’t ask me why my parents named me Ashley, because they still won’t tell me, other than they liked the name. I assume they wanted a girl. Well, they got a boy. A 24-year-old, six foot, three inch tall boy with dark brown hair and matching brown eyes. Not to mention a pretty well-muscled body if I do say so myself. I live near the beach, so I have to keep myself in top shape to look good and stay tan.

“So what is it?” I asked, staring at the weird machine. It looked to me like an electric chair.

“I don’t really know what to call it yet,” replied Jamie’s brother, Sam. “I’m bad at naming things. But it’s supposed to punch a small hole in reality and allow the user to peek through into another one.”

“Well that doesn’t sound like anything will go wrong in any way,” I said. “Looks like an electric chair to me. Planning on frying anyone?” I laughed, and Jamie elbowed me in the ribs. “Ow! Calm down, baby, it was just a joke!”

“If you think this is all so funny, why don’t you test it out?” She said, pretty much daring me to.

“Yeah!” Said Sam, excitedly. “I’m ready to test it, but wasn’t expecting anyone so soon. I have to work the controls out here, otherwise I would do it.”

“Why can’t you show me and let you sit in the chair?” I offered.

“Because I invented it and it took me months to get the controls right and program them to do specific things like fine tuning and finding the right reality?”

“Fair enough.” I sighed and sat in the stupid chair. They strapped my hands down and lowered the helmet down onto my head. “So what’s with the straps?”

“Don’t want you pulling the headset off before I pull you out. It could cause brain damage.”

“Great. Glad there’s no risk.” With that, they strapped the headset on and lowered the visor.

At first, I saw nothing but blackness. Then light flickered on and it fuzzed like an old television for a moment. They placed a headset over my ears and I heard static for a moment, before it started to sound like birds chirping. Then the viewscreen in front of my eyes started to clear and a forest came into view. It was like being there. And strapped to a chair. I could hear the birds and the sounds of the forest as well as see it. “Okay, this just looks like VR or something.” I could look around and see all around me. I heard a noise to my left and turned to see what looked like a dinosaur of some kind staring at me, large sharp teeth bared.

“Uh guys, I can’t get hurt in here can I? There’s a big dino staring at me…” It lunged and I flinched back, seeing the inside of its mouth before everything fuzzed again.

“Wow! That must have been a reality where the dinosaurs never went extinct and humans might have never evolved!” Said Sam.

“How did it see me? Was I looking through the eyes of someone there?”

“I don’t know, let’s try another reality!” Sam seemed excited. I felt Jamie’s hands on my shoulders.

“This is pretty cool, huh?”

“I guess it’s pretty cool, but I think I just got eaten by a dinosaur.” I heard her say something, but her voice was drowned out by the static as another image started to come in clearer on the viewscreen. I was a little bit shocked at the image of the same lab in front of me, but none of the same equipment in it. Though there was a bed. And a large android looking guy with no clothes.

“Sam? Why is there a naked male robot in your lab?

“A what?”

“You building gay robots, Sam?” Jamie laughed a little bit. I turned my head and suddenly got an eyeful of a very naked Sam as he approached the robot guy. I closed my eyes, but couldn’t pull the headphones off. I could hear them doing things that I most definitely did not want to hear.

“Change it! Change it now! You’re having sex with a robot and I don’t wanna hear it!”

I heard the static again and hesitated, but opened my eyes to see the static starting to clear again. What I saw was the lab. I looked over and saw Sam behind his console in his lab coat, obscured by shadows. They had turned the lights down so I wouldn’t get any light bleeding into the headset. I felt Jamie’s hands on my shoulder and saw her moving in the corner of my eye.

“I think you got it on the same reality. I’m seeing us. I’m seeing what we’re doing right now.” It was weird, because I was getting an echo of my voice in the headset. So I was hearing myself talk normally, and through the headset. It sounded weird and higher pitched, but that was what always happened, wasn’t it? You sound deeper in your own head than you do to everyone else?

“Really? Weird, I have it set to a different frequency than ours,” Sam said. I heard him, but also heard him in the headset. But he sounded a bit different too. Things started to get fuzzy, but not like static, more like things were blurring.

“Wait, it’s losing focus,” I said. Are you tuning it, or something?” I then started to feel a tingle in my head spreading out over my body. “Uh, guys? Is it supposed to tingle?” Suddenly, it started hurting. “Guys, get this thing off of me!” I struggled against the bonds on my writs and closed my eyes, freaking out a bit until I felt a strong shock to my head. Everything went black.

I woke to the sound of sirens. I groaned and rubbed my head. It felt weird. I felt weird. I shuddered a little bit and tried to sit up, still dazed. A hand on my chest pushed me back down.

“Don’t sit up to fast,” a deep voice told me. Who was that? “The equipment caught fire and was destroyed. We’re all safe, but you might want to go see a doctor. It’ll probably take Sam months to rebuild his machine. Some of the data is still intact, so hopefully he can see what happened and fix it for next time.”

I nodded, not really sure what this guy was saying, I just wanted him to stop talking. My head hurt and I reached up to rub myself, but somehow ended up smacking my chin. I thought nothing of it and rubbed at my eyes then pulled my hands down my face, encountering an odd feeling obstacle that seemed to be part of my face. I finally opened my eyes and looked up, seeing some kind of large dog man sitting next to me. I yelped and scooted back, jumping to my feet and swaying, dizzy.

“What are you? Who are you?” I backed into a wall, rubbing at my face and staring at the large dog man. Was I hallucinating?

“Babe, are you okay? It’s me, Jamie.” I stared at him, convinced I had heard him wrong.

“Jamie?”

“Yeah.” He nodded. “It’s okay, Ashley. Come on, there’s an ambulance pulling up, let’s get you looked at.” I looked over and saw the ambulance pull up and two men jumped out. No, not men. Two horses jumped out. Two horse men. I glanced over at the firemen, there were a few dalmatians in there and a few cats of some kind. What the hell was happening?

“Nope!” I took off running. We weren’t too far from my apartment, so that’s where I headed. I ran down the street, past the pier where there were so many different species playing games and laughing, having fun. Not a single human.

I finally made it back to my apartment and when I went to unlock the door, I noticed my hand. It was covered in fur. I unlocked the door, shut and locked it behind me and ran into the bathroom, screaming a little when I saw the mirror.

Staring back at me was another one of the animal people Other than that, the first thing that I could even see was the hair on my head. Even as some kind of animal person, I still had hair on my head. It was long enough to get into my eyes, now that I was paying attention My ears poked up out of it and twitched when I looked at them. The fact that I had hair wasn’t what made me stair at it. No, it was the fact that it was very colorful and dyed the colors of the rainbow. Was I just a colorful guy? Or had I been put in the body of some kind of gay dog person?

I was still freaking out, but managed to look away from my hair to see the rest of me. I looked like a German shepherd. A small one. I had been over six feet tall this morning, but whatever had happened to me, I had lost was appeared to be an entire foot in height. I couldn’t stop staring at myself, feeling the muzzle on my face and the cold, wet black nose. My teeth were sharp, good for tearing. I looked behind me and saw a tail coming out the back of my shorts. It was then that I realized I wasn’t even wearing shoes. I didn’t have feet, I had paws like a dog.

I had a thought and pulled my wallet from my back pocket and pulled out my drivers license. Right on it, there was a picture of what I looked like now. My weight of five feet, three inches. And a weight of 119 pounds. Less than half of my weight before. I was a muscle god, but now I was some kind of skinny little twig. What had happened?

I left the bathroom and looked around the apartment. It looked almost identical to what I was used to with some small differences here and there. Two people definitely lived here. I assumed it was myself and Jamie. But where was she? Then I noticed the pictures on the shelf. I recognized the small canine as me, but in every one of the pictures, there was another, bigger canine. I couldn’t place the breed. A mutt maybe? But it looked like the big guy that had called himself Jamie when I woke up.

I heard a key slide into the lock and the door opened. I turned to see the large canine who was apparently Jamie.

“What happened?” I asked. He started toward me as my headache grew more intense. It throbbed, and I didn’t hear what he said. I just lost my balance, fell into his arms and blacked out.