

The screaming of birds out the window woke John up a few minutes before his alarm, causing him to groan his irritation. Ten minutes left was not long enough for him to fall back asleep before it was time for him to get up for his shift. And as tight as he left things already, there was no point in trying, using the extra few minutes to browse on his phone, though not finding anything of note. Save the usual political crap, things seemingly worse every day and leaving him wondering why he ever bothered. At least his own life in his small town was in order, and as long as he stayed here in the summer, it felt like he could leave the rest of the world behind.

As much as John hated the early shift, and working at his local fast food joint beside, he'd held the job in some capacity since he was sixteen, more than ten years ago. Having little ambition and unsure of what direction to take his life, he'd spent the first few years working there out of high school, at least consistent employment, if not very lucrative. It was enough for him to save for college, and now he was three years into his computer programming degree. Still, he home each summer to stay with his parents and picked up shifts he could to keep his merger savings afloat.

Not for the first time, a side view glance in the mirror made him lament his chubby physique, jiggling a little as he walked. John was always on the heavy side, not helped by the fact that he led a sedentary lifestyle on his computer, only leaving for work or to see his girlfriend. That, combined with how much he ate from his fast food job contributed to his less-than-desirable weight. However, with going to college, he had the desire to do something about it. Still, there was little free time for such during his studies, as much as he wished. His plans to eat better and work out were thrown out the window the moment he tried his favorite fast food dishes from the local diner once more.

His weight hadn't been too much of an issue in her personal life, at least. His girlfriend didn't mind, always having been on the heavier side as well. It was never a hindrance to their relationship, having been together since high school. Their similar interests in games and media kept them together, and the two of them eventually hoped to move out of town and get married once John had finished his degree. Such had been something stable for him all his adult life, and their relationship was something he always found himself thankful for.

Heading downstairs, his mother greeted him with a pleasant good morning, having breakfast on the table. In truth, she doted on him too much, their family having moved from Puerto Rico more than ten years ago, wanting a better life for their son. As an only child, they tended to spoil him quite a bit, something John immediately took advantage of. Still, both his parents loved him dearly, and leaving them for school was one of the things he truly missed.

Replying with a good morning of his own, John sat down for breakfast, eating quickly to make sure he had time to get to work. He had been a little late the past few days, and while he wouldn't be fired for it outright, he thought it better to be on his boss's good side. The man was a neighbor of theirs, and treated John well, often giving him free meals and the like. John, if he was being honest with himself, was always a little lazy, but he didn't want to take the man's generosity for granted, feeling a little guilty as of late for his sloth.

Sending a text to Layne, wishing her good morning, her response of a heart made him smile, even after all their years together. He was looking forward to being off shift later when the two of them would play a new online game together. It would be a long shift, but in the end to get to play with her, and that was an insensitive to get through it quickly.

Work started as normal, a little slow and tedious to prepare the store for opening. Setting booths up, peeling potatoes, washing dishes, and the like were all part of his chores. Not that John usually minded, lazy in general but still eager to help out where he could. It didn't help that he was naturally easily distracted and forgot things easily, even after the ten years he'd worked here. But he was certainly earnest, and got along with his boss Bill, for the most part, and was satisfied when his boss was satisfied, even if he had to try especially hard to make sure he kept up to task.

With the size of the town he lived in, there were few staff working, and many of the cleaning, serving, and prep tasks fell on him, while his boss took care of cooking and operating the fryers. Not the most social of people, John had to train himself to make small talk, eased by the fact that most people knew him. It had been embarrassing his first few years, having come from so far away and trying to fit into a close-knit town. Eventually, he'd come to be accepted, and seen as a staple in the restaurant, and he was able to interact with customers as much as was necessary to do his job, even if he was sometimes awkward.

His first two customers were two middle-aged women he recognized who came here about once or twice a week for lunch. Much to his chagrin, they were the type to come out to gossip loudly as much as John was able to overhear. Most of the town gossip didn't appeal to him, and he largely let their talk go in one ear and out the other, so to speak. Today was no different, John took their order and waited a few minutes for Bill to prepare it, with no other customers to wait on, and all his prep and cleaning finished already. When it was ready, he moved to take the trays to their table, the two of them sipping sodas and lost in their conversation. Yet, the moment he approached, one of the women turned to thank him, before an odd expression crossed her features and she let out a rather large belch right in his face. John was a little bit taken aback, not exactly disgusted, per se, but rather perplexed by the sudden and somewhat rude outburst. But it was the fact that she didn't even bother to excuse herself, rather went back to talking to her friend as though nothing had happened.

Thinking it weird, John decided to head to the back, figuring they didn't need anything from him at the moment. Yet, no sooner had he turned around than the sound of a high-pitched fart hit his ears, followed by a rather abhorrent odor. More akin to a barn than anything that should have come out of a middle-aged woman, John found himself moving quickly to the back, not sure what the woman could have eaten but not wanting to know. It was beyond rude, but something about the situation didn't sit right with him. The other woman with her didn't seem to react to the sound or smell, and much as it bothered John. Maybe her senses were dulled with age? But with the dozen or so other tasks John had to tend to that day, he was at least somewhat able to put it out of his mind

Yet, the longer the day went on, John found he was starting to become plagued with a pain in his own guts, one that came with a bit of belching itself. Working by himself in the dish area, he was able to mute the sounds and save himself the embarrassment. Soon, the ache in his guts grew so heavy that he couldn't hold in a fart of his own, one that smelled more like the woman's than he wanted to admit. At least he was able to hide it, but there was no denying the relief it caused, John was thankful that he felt better. Maybe there was something in the water that was causing their flatulence to smell so bad? Or, simply a coincidence?

As his shift continued, John found such was harder to deny. The sound of belching was more frequent than he was comfortable with, and more than once he got a whiff of those same rancid farts, something that shouldn't normally come out of a person. John's own farts were rather pungent as well, but at least not as bad to his nose as those of his customers. He was tempted to ask his boss about it, though the same stinky gas around the man-made John thought better of it. It could have been the food, though surely his boss would have said something about it, right?

John did his best to ignore it as he made his way back home, hoping that it was a one-off event and wishing he could rid his nose of the smell. Much to his shame, he was starting to get used to it, the stink of a barn something that had no place in his restaurant but seemed to linger there as the day went on. Even the customers that hadn't yet eaten seemed gassy, leaving John no clue as to where it was coming from. He couldn't think of anything he had eaten to make his guts churn like that, much less something that would have affected everyone to come into their restaurant. In the end, with nothing he could do about it, John decided to put it from his mind and go home to dinner, finding despite his gut pain in was actually starving.

Yet, the moment he sat that, that same cloud of stink came over him, his father having farted as nonchalantly as anyone he had seen today. Any other time, he was sure his mother would chastise him for it, but the occasional belch from her lips seemed to denote the same lack of concern. Eventually, with the smell in such close quarters, John found he needed to excuse

himself, unable to stomach it and needing a reprieve. What the hell was up with everyone today? Was it really the entire town that was affected by a stomach bug and a lack of manners? Or was it something more?

Eventually logging on to game with his girlfriend, it was everything he could do not to call her out for her own bout of belching. He couldn't hear her farts, though there was every chance she was just as gassy as everyone else he met. John, for his part, was able to repress the urge to belch, though his stomach hurt fiercely if he resisted the urge to fart. Even using the bathroom wasn't enough to stem the discomfort, as though something in his gut fauna had been disrupted. Asking Layne if she noticed anything off today, she simply replied with a no, asking him why he seemed so concerned. John wanted to protest, though in the end did his best to repress his stubborn streak. It seemed highly likely that no matter what he tried to say, she didn't seem to get it, and didn't want to get into a fight over his frustration. And soon enough, it was time for bed, as much as John was frustrated with the whole affair.

Sleep was precarious at best, not only from the smells his body made against his better inclinations. It troubled him to think that he was in a dream of sorts rather than the natural world as he'd come to understand it. He couldn't put it out of his mind how everyone's manners seemed to have been thrown out the window, so to speak. Everyone was acting like their actions were just...normal. No matter how much John tried to rationalize things, he couldn't wrap his head around it. All he could do was to hope that it had been an imagining of sorts and that the world would return to a sense of normalcy by morning.

Yet, much to his chagrin, that was not to be the case. The first thing John noticed when he woke up was that his belly seemed even more bloated than the gas imbalance could have accounted for. While already chubbier than he was comfortable with, seemed even more distended as much as he could tell as he tried to don a shirt with little success. It had been a long time since he had used a scale and figured such would make him feel worse than it might have otherwise. At least he didn't have to go to work right away, but the fact that he was stuck in the kitchen with his gassy parents was not something welcome. Noting had changed since last night, his father belching before bidding him good morning, and the stench of flatulence stinging his nose as he got down to eat. Strangely, he didn't seem to have much of an appetite, though he couldn't be sure if it was from the frequent stink or something tasting off about his bacon and eggs. Either way, he was left to put most of his food in the garbage, starving but not able to eat what was on his plate.

Taking his coffee and turning on the news, John found himself following, a certain curiosity making him wonder if there would be any reports about a stomach bug that might explain the strange bodily functions. Nothing he knew of would excuse the lack of manners unless everyone was simply comfortable with them that they didn't require further comment.

Still, it was a little surprising to notice that even the news anchors were belching frequently, and the sounds of distant farts picked up on camera were ignored with whatever local fair they were reported on. It was not just those in John's circle that seemed affected, but those in the town at large. And this was only the local news...

With no one else finding any fault in their lack of manner or the smells coming out of their backsides, John figured there was nothing else he could do but go to work. Questioning his parents about it gave confused stares, looks of introspection crossing their faces for only a brief moment before going back to what they were doing. Feeling a little shy as he was, John didn't want to make waves. However, he couldn't help but fixate on the reality that he might be the only one who legitimately found something off about their bodily functions. And that, more than anything else, gave him cause for alarm, even if there was nothing he could do to act on it.

Getting to work, the first thing his boss did after saying good morning was turn around and let loose a rather disgusting fart, perhaps even more rancid than anything he had smelled before. John couldn't help but let out a "What the hell?" which was met with a look of confusion and slight irritation. It was obvious he had no idea what John was talking about, and John left it there, at least able to breathe as he moved away to start with the morning dishes.

The almost animalistic scents of flatulence were present as restaurant customers came and went, though even with their potency, John was thankfully starting to get used to it once more. He did his best, no one else seeming to be bothered by how gassy they were, or the frequent belches that dotted their speech. It was beyond bizarre, John wondering if he was part of some dream or was otherwise imagining things. The dissonance between his perception and reality was beyond his ability to register, and the best he could do was focus his attention on something else, anything else, and get through the day without taking much of a headache.

That was hardly the only thing to confuse him as the day went on. Orders of burgers and the like were common, though John couldn't help but notice the sour faces on some of the diners as they ate. It was as though the meat was tainted, some people either spat in their napkins or picked off lettuce and tomatoes and ate only those. One of the customers even yelled at him, pissed off for the poor quality of the meat and demanding a free salad. Taking the request to his boss, Bill only shrugged, telling him to make one with a distant look of confusion on his face. John did as told, not really caring about the loss in earnings. Still, he figured it was best to avoid taking his usual lunch of a burger himself, just to be on the safe side.

Normally, John would be allowed to go home in the afternoon, the crowds dying down and his boss taking over until the supper rush came in. But for some reason, the restaurant was full this afternoon, even some repeat customers coming in and asking for the same custom salads they had eaten earlier. Fewer and fewer people were asking for burgers and the few who did

demand something else in its place. The next time John went to inform his boss about the state of the burgers, Bill gave him a disgusted look. “Why would we even sell something so gross?” Bill asked, moving to the freezer and looking at all the preweighted frozen beef. With a look of repulsion, Bill asked John to throw it out, and between serving customers and taking their complaints to the owner.

Even John found that the smell of the last few burgers he’d brought out smelled a little off to his nose, making him feel a little sick to his stomach. He couldn’t imagine the meat would go bad so soon since they had gotten their order several days ago and had been serving burgers successfully up until yesterday. There had to be something in the water that was making everyone sick, but then why was no one else talking about it? It was like everyone’s head was in the clouds, so to speak, and anywhere he looked, the same confused expressions on everyone’s faces made him wonder why he was the only outlier. Nothing he could think of could explain what the hell was going on, as much as it was starting to frustrate him.

Getting home late, a text from Layne, which usually excited him, made him irritated, knowing she was in much the same state as the rest of the town. She wanted him to come over, something that usually lead to some welcome sex. But given his repulsion over the smells he had to deal with all day, John opted not to, citing feeling sick as the reason. Layne was, of course, more than understanding, wishing him to feel better and offering to be there for him if he needed her. John felt nothing but love and gratitude for her, though with everything going on at large, it was hard to focus on anything else. That, and the scents wafting from her changing body would surely be as unpalatable as the ones he’d had to contend with all day. It was bad enough he had to deal with his own regular flatulence or the frequent belching that made his ire grow. At least he had some time alone to try to decompress, but it was a brief respite in the grander scheme of things.

The persistent feeling of bloating annoyed him as he went to bed, and it seemed only to get worse as he woke up the next day. His belly seemed even further distended, enough that his shirt rode up an inch more than he was comfortable with. Surely he shouldn’t have been more than even what his overweight stature could equate. Even using the bathroom, something that took longer and several more flushes than he was used to, could not alleviate it. It was as though something was fundamentally wrong with his insides, and no amount of gas from either end could manage to clear it.

Met with the same consistent belching and flatulence from his family, John was hardly aware of anything else being off, at least at first. Part of him was inclined to check his parents to see if their own bellies were distended from what he was used to seeing. He didn’t think it would be evident if he hadn’t been paying close attention over the past few months, and at first glance, there was little he could see that was out of the ordinary. His mother seemed a little concerned

and went to ask him if anything was wrong when John's eyes went wide. It seemed that her ears, while never anything he had focused on before, drew his gaze as they started to move out of reflex. It didn't seem as though his mother was conscious of them, though they were clearly twitching somewhat regularly, as though reacting to sounds that John couldn't pick up himself. It was all he could do to look away as she asked him if he was OK, assuring her he was fine and just spacing out for a little bit.

Getting ready to head out for his shift, John took much more time than usual to check his body for anything similar wrong with himself. His ears, as best he could tell, were still human-shaped, and other than the bloating in his guts, there didn't seem to be anything out of the ordinary. Yet, with how nonchalant his parents and the rest of the town seemed to be over the changes thus far, John couldn't deny the possibility that somehow he might not be aware of any changes from how he once appeared. It was a little jarring to think of, but there was no denying the possibility, as much as he was learning to open himself to in the past couple of days.

Work was the same as it had been the past couple of days, the stink of gassiness hanging like a miasma over the restaurant and making John wonder how everyone was able to stand it. It was becoming so unbearable that he had to breathe through his nose, leaving his boss to ask him what was wrong. It was almost as though his outburst the other day was forgotten, as though Bill couldn't recall what had been bothering him. Hell, it was almost as though he couldn't even comprehend what might be wrong, leaving John to have to hide his frustrations. It was certainly becoming trying, but there was nothing he could do but work his shift and hope things got better, not worse.

That was not to be the case as he took orders, did dishes, and dealt with the same rather obscene number of customers as they'd had the other day. No one bothered to order burgers anymore, or in fact any meat, including chicken and seafood. It was a little bizarre, as though not only did they have no way to know their freezers had been emptied of meat, but it didn't even seem to occur to anyone that beef was an option. John was somewhat thankful for that, given he didn't think he could stomach even the scent of cooked meat today. Any memories he had of enjoying it made his stomach roil, and he almost craved the same types of salads that everyone was ordering. He figured he could at least settle for some fries, the sight and smell not too offensive. It was strange since he loved the food there so much, but it didn't bother him to throw out the remaining frozen meat if they tasted as bad as John thought they might!

Reminded of his mother's ears, John kept his eyes out for similar odd traits as he scanned the room of diners. Sure enough, several seemed to sport the same sorts of pointed ears, stretched slightly to the sides of their heads and twitching ever so slightly as though trying to listen to other conversations. John tried his best not to stare and attract attention, but it was hard when people's ears looked so out of place for what he was used to. Stranger still, many people were

wearing clothes that were a little too small for them, showing off guts that were becoming as bulbous as John's own overweight belly. A few people seemed uncomfortable in their shoes as well, as though their toes were too big to fit in them. Hell, John was almost sure he saw something twitching in the back of one guy's back, and for a moment worried the flatulence had come with some unwanted incontinence. Thankfully, that didn't seem to be the case, though John was left to wonder what he was looking at. Surely, it had to do with the bizarre alterations and behaviors he'd observed thus far, but what the hell was the end game?

One thing was starting to become clear as the lunch crowd came through and John had to run plate after plate of greens to the gassy and bloated customers. With everyone seeming to be ordering from their vegetarian menu, they were quickly running out of supplies, and Bill, seemingly rather confused, called one of his relatives to make a grocery run. The notion seemed to truly perplex the man, as though throwing out all their ordered meat wouldn't be a shortage of anything else. He even made the comment about having just ordered a delivery a few days ago, confused they would be out already. John went to comment, though Bill only shrugged, that faraway look in his eyes a sign that he was having a harder time rationalizing between what he thought was real and what John knew was objectively true. It was almost enough to make John wonder if his own perception of reality was somewhat tainted and if it was he who saw everything as wrong, rather than the rest of the world. It was easy to think that, in any case!

It seemed the biggest shock of the day was yet to come as John moved to one of the last tables from the dinner rush, a pair of middle-aged women sipping coffee and chatting about something John couldn't quite make out. One of them had the same twitching ears that John had come to see on several of the guests at this point, but that was hardly the worst of it. John was not in time to escape smelling a rather rancid fart, followed by the woman standing up, as though she figured it was a prelude to what was to come. Yet, instead of making her way to the bathroom, as John might have expected, she proceeded to pull her pants off right there, asshole exposed and making John reflexively look away. The reality of what she was doing left him confused for a moment until the stench hit his nose. John couldn't look away as the woman proceeded to defecate right there in front of them, her waste falling on the chair and the floor as she only grunted slightly as she did so. John wanted to yell at her in disgust, yet, it seemed the woman with her saw nothing wrong in the act, not even stopping the story she was telling as her friend emptied her bowels in the middle of the restaurant.

Backing away from the stench, more akin to manure than anything, John made his way to the back, trying to figure out the best way to tell his boss. Rather than find the action odd, Bill went to give him a shovel, asking him to clean it up as though he would any other mess. John was aghast at the notion, though given how callous Bill seemed to be about the whole affair, he didn't think there was any point in trying to argue. It was beyond disgusting, the stench awful and the quantity more like manure than anything he'd seen coming out of a human. And he had

to clean it up, throwing it into a pail and into the dump behind back, before getting down and scrubbing until his sense of smell was all but gone. He couldn't believe what the hell was going on, more pissed off when Bill seemed annoyed with him for taking too long. How long was it supposed to take to clean up someone's literal shit off the floor, anyway!?

The end of his shift could not come soon enough, John walked home with disgust, body sore and reeking with shit. It was all he could do to get out of there, and hope the action was a one-off thing and not indicative of what his town would find acceptable at large. Hell, had everyone not been so undisturbed by the act, the smell, or the unsanitary nature, John would have told her to get the hell out of the store. Yet, such would have made him the odd one out and might have gotten him fired for it. What the hell was wrong with the world?!

Thinking the stench was stuck in his nose as he headed out to his car, John was a little slow to realize that the scent, while much less pungent, was still in the air, reminding him of being close to a farm. Having never smelled it this close before, or in his small town at all, John didn't clue into the reality of the situation. And much to his disgust, he almost stepped in a pile of what looked more like manure than human waste, though given what he had seen already, he was pretty sure it came from a person. How many people were pulling down their pants and going where they stood for it to even smell in the air outside? And more to the point, why did their waste smell more akin to a barn animal's?

Thankfully, the scent wasn't present in his house as he hopped the door and his mother greeted him. At least they hadn't had an accident yet, though it was a small reprieve given everything he had experienced thus far today. His mother went to speak to him, though it was hard to understand her over a bout of belching accented her speech. John simply nodded, walking up the stairs to go to his room. Yet, all of a sudden, his bowels gurgled intently, and John was shocked to realize he had only moments to get to the bathroom himself. It took everything he had to hold it in, and despite the relief of relaxing his bowels over the toilet, the smell that hit him woke up alarm bells. His own waste smelled as bad as the manure, assuring him that the same was likely happening to him, as well. Why was he the only one that seemed to find fault in that? It didn't make any sense!

Another concern crossed his mind as John tried to flush away his shame, figuring the quality would flood the toilet. At least he was able to manage it, but only just, something that worried him was to continue with whatever illness was coming over him. Would he, too, have to shit on the floor if he wasn't able to make it to the bathroom in time? Would he soon cease to care as much as he'd seen the woman today as well as everyone in the restaurant with her? It was almost too much to think about!

Remembering his mother's ears from the morning, John went out to look once more, curious if there had been other developments. To his shock, they did seem to be a little larger, twitching more nimbly now as through a reflex. Finding him staring, John quickly had to come up with an excuse, saying he liked the way her hair accented her ears. Yet, his mother didn't comment in response, rather confused by the words and reaching up to touch them, flicking them in response. For a moment, John found himself hoping she would question the growth, find fault in it, and validate what seemed only John had fault with. But to his disappointment, she eventually seemed to shrug, going back to work on supper like nothing had been wrong.

John went to head back to his room in disappointment, though soon found himself catching sight of something strange. Parted as her hair was, it seemed as though something was sticking out from her scalp, something John at first chalked up to a hair clip or something similar. Yet when his father walked in later, the same minute protrusions sticking out of his hair leaving John to ruminate over what was happening to them. He hadn't seen the growths on any of the customers all afternoon, though he hadn't been paying attention, as grossed out as he well by the events thus far.

It was all John had not tried and observe his parents while not keeping them out of place. They were eating a little oddly, chewing widely, and stopping to burp frequently. Each of his parents had the same pair of stunted growths on their heads, what John should be obvious though escaped him in the context of being on his parent's head. A few times, his mother stopped to scratch the skin under her collar, and John couldn't help but notice a patch of hair that shouldn't have been present, a little white from what he could see, though he didn't want to ask her directly. And getting up to put his plate away, John was sure he saw something twitching in their pants, not something he could place without asking and leaving him to wonder what was going on. They hadn't relieved themselves in their pants, at least, the smell would have given that game away. But what then did they have growing?

Worried about his own fate, John made it back to the bathroom as quickly as he could, looking himself over for the same alterations. So far, there was nothing in his pants, no growths over his forehead, nor any extra hair. Yet, with how oblivious everyone else seemed to be, how could he be certain? His nose did seem to be a bit larger, reddened as though inflamed or irritated from being sick. He certainly didn't feel ill, save for the bloating in his belly and the strange bowel moments in tandem with his annoying flatulence. He was even starting to belch more, something that he hadn't given thought to given how normalized those actions seemed to be. But he wasn't sick, as far as he could tell. Unless everyone else in town was ill, though it was hard to classify the bizarre nature of the changes, or where they would end.

Thinking surely he couldn't be the only one noticing something was off, John browsed the internet, looking for videos or threads that mentioned unusual growths, flatulence, or even defecating in public. Yet, his searches led to nothing substantial, at least not labeled as such. All of the videos showed people burping and farting without so much as an 'excuse me' for their bizarre behavior. There was even the odd person who moved from the camera, removing their pants to drop a load without even seeming to think a bathroom was an option. From the expression on some faces and the uncomfortable way they moved, John was convinced some of them didn't even think to remove their pants before relieving themselves. And no matter how bizarre the acts seemed to be, no one appeared any the wiser.

John watched video after video in stunted silence. Anything from live news shows to taped late-night shows to stage shows depicted people behind the camera acting the same way, stupefied about their bodily functions. Worse, the same bumps on their heads, bulges in their pants, and pointed ears seemed present. Hell, John couldn't help but notice that many people, even the men, seemed to have larger chests, rubbing at them somewhat frantically as though irritated against the fabric of their shirts. Yet, had that not been the case, there were no pauses in the reports to indicate anything was amiss, people stopping only to belch before carrying on without any regard for what they had done.

Eventually, John turned off his computer, the implications of what he'd seen difficult to parse. He couldn't be sure how far spread the changes were, or what the end game was. Most of the shows he'd seen were based in the United States, which led credence to the likelihood it was happening to everyone in the country. Was it a virus? Some sort of attack? Aliens? Nothing was off the table. Why John seemed to be the only person to notice anything amiss, he had no idea. But no amount of searching could alleviate his concern about that fact. No there existed any confusion over the changes themselves. Other things, perhaps, such as a distaste for meat or wondering about the types of clothing they wore. There seemed to be some dissonance between what people remembered and what the changes made them perceive. Other than that, no evidence existed that John could find for anyone questioning the changes. Hell, even conspiracy theorists were not immune, fixated on the same obscure links between events that could only make sense to a troubled brain.

The sound of ringing in his computer prompted him to click on a video call coming in from his girlfriend. As much as he didn't want to see her right now, he accepted, not sure what else to do. Lost in his own world where he was the only one he perceived as sane. There was no reason to hide from the world, as much as he wanted to avoid it. It was a Herculean task to pretend things were normal while not starting at her once familiar face for changes. But he did, forcing a smile and trying to relax.

Still, it was difficult to look past the rather bulbous, red nose, something that looked almost bovine on her face. The realization hit him all at once, finally drawing on all the changes as seeing the pattern. Horns? Tails? Cow ears? Gassy from both ends as though digesting from multiple stomachs, and seeing nothing wrong with relieving themselves, something they would have to do with more and more frequently.

“Honey? Are you feeling better?” Layne asked, and John did his best to shake himself from his trance. “No, I'm still out of it,” John lied, though it wasn't much of a stretch. He didn't know what to say, and it took him everything he had to focus on more mundane topics of conversation. Layne was eager to talk about the game they were playing, future builds where they could level, and similar things. And John was happy for the distraction, unable to come to terms with objective reality.

Yet, the sound of a rather wet belch drew him from his attempt to distract himself. Rather than continue to talk, Layne's mouth started to move from side to side in heavy motions, as though she was chewing something. Without thinking, she opened her mouth just slightly, and John was treated to the rather disgusting sight of predigested food. She had belched up her food and was chewing it again like...some sort of cud? Gross!

Fringing illness, John got up quickly, unable to prevent himself from throwing up at the sight. Rather than be angry at him, however, Layne simply told him to be better with the same loving tone she always used. And despite her obvious changes, it was still her, still the loving partner he had been with for more than ten years. And yet...

John was able to keep himself from throwing up, if only just. The implication the whole world was turning into cows was more than he could come to terms with. He, too, wasn't immune, though at least he was aware that he hadn't always acted like a cow. And the changes were coming slowly, gradually, as much as no one else seemed aware of them. How far would they change? Would the entire world turn all the way into...cow? Down on all fours, grazing, raising their tails to drop their cow pies and shoo flies away? It was more than he could stomach, and yet there was nothing he could do to stop it, least of all discover what was causing it in the first place.

In the end, there was little left for him to do but to go to bed, the constant feelings of despair rather exhausting. To his dismay, the discomfort in his guts did not go away, and he found himself frequently farting in his sleep, the stench of manure waking him and making him feel ill. It was a wonder every one else in the world seemed relatively immune to the smells from their own bodies, and if the changes continued, John could only hope the same became of him. Of course, the best bet was for him to wake up and realize it was all a bizarre dream, or even

better, revert back to their human selves. But there was little chance of that, and John figured he would be forced to get used to the changes, and whatever would be their enviable conclusion.

Eventually, sleep did come for him, even through his stress and fear. Yet, he was once more woken up far too soon, rolling over and yelling out from the pain of something stuck under him. Adjusting himself in the bed, John reached back, a little fearful for what he would find. The sensation of a sizable lump sent a shock through his system before he recalled what was happening to him and the world at large. While his hefty frame couldn't turn around to see what he was feeling, John was sure it had to be the start of his own tail. It was always large enough that he was sure it would stick out of his pants, though at least he could pull them down around it to alleviate the discomfort. That was something the rest of the world didn't realize to do, though John could only hope that wasn't an issue as much as everyone's own changes were repugnant to him.

Of more alarm was that the changes were happening to him as well, perhaps more gradually, though he had no metric from which to compare. He didn't want to change, his body literally betrayed him to become a...what? A disgusting cow? A dumb animal grazing and shitting in a field? Or something else? What did it mean for the future of humanity? Trying to rationalize things made his head hurt!

In the end, being powerless to stop it, John resigned himself to go downstairs and eat breakfast, stomach rumbling desperately and leaving him feeling somewhat weak. He hadn't noticed his appetite changing with so much else hitting him all at once. But given the frequency of people coming to the restaurant, John had to conclude that everyone's guts were growing, possibly with the extension of further stomachs. It mattered little with how much he needed to eat, going without making him almost ill. He was not expecting the scent of hay and grains to waft into his nose just then, causing his belly to rumble even further. Rather than background scents, they stirred his appetite, and John nearly dove down the stairs in a bid to save his stomach. He was greeted by a pleased smile from his mother, a wider grin than he was used to, though with a feast before him, John hardly had thoughts to spare. A variety of dry grains were placed out in stores for them, and John's father had his head in a bowl, crunching his breakfast with no regard for his surroundings. Against his better inclinations, John sat down to do the same, nearly inhaling his breakfast as he showed down, eager to fill the pangs in his belly.

A passing thought made him wonder where his mother had gotten all this stuff. Surely, he couldn't eat bacon and eggs, the mere thought of such making his stomach lurch. But then what had she done with all her food stores? And when did she go out and buy all these grains? Was more changing in the world than simply their physical bodies? It was hard to focus on such with how much substance, and John was compelled to eat, not raising his head until he had to release

a hearty belch, followed by an embarrassing bout of flatulence, one that caused the lump at the back of his pants to raise as he did so.

Patting his belly for a few moments, John was a little distressed to find it was larger than even his previous girth could account for. He had generally resigned himself to being overweight but this was a little too much, even when it seemed the rest of the world was gaining weight as well. The grains would be healthier for him, and he was able to eat them with ravenous intent. It was a small drop in the ocean of what was happening to himself and his humanity, but it still bothered him somewhat all the same.

John was distracted by his father coughing for a moment, before belching up a massive wad of barely digested food. As much as it made John sick to his stomach, he did his best to ignore it, figuring it could just as well be him soon. As revolting of a bodily function as it was, he knew he would have to deal with it sooner than later, leaving him to sweat his concern. Thankfully, his father didn't see anything off about John's reaction, a faraway expression on his face as he did so. Was he steadily losing his intellect as well? Would John become dumber, too? Even his mom was oblivious, head down in her own bowl, chewing with gusto.

As much as John didn't want to go outside, there was little point in hiding from the world when even his whole household was changing. The persistent stench of manure hung in the air, akin to being downwind from a farm field. Only this was the entire town, if not the entire world, even as much as people were in mid-change. As much as he wished to avoid it, there were an uncomfortable number of manure piles on the ground from those who already couldn't control their bowels. That can with its own concerns, John already having a harder time with his flatulence and worries about his own control, especially with a grain-heavy diet. Just another layer of shame to come with the entire world devolving before his eyes.

John was not the only person out and about, of course, and he couldn't help but look out for any signs of change. No one seemed comfortable in their own clothing, shirts looking to be a size or two too small and pants tight without even belts. People were constantly adjusting in them, and John found himself wondering how many of them had patches of fur that were irritating the skin. At least they were still wearing them for now, but with the gradual rate of change, John had no idea how long it would be viewed as necessary.

Getting to work, John was rather surprised to see how frustrated Bill was, and not simply from rubbing the spots atop his head where his horns were growing. It seemed that most of the salads and greens they'd run through in the past few days, supplies were low, and the customers were getting restless. He had gone to the store, a little disgusted that meat and supplies were still there, while fruits, veggies, and cereals were almost entirely sold out. Trucks were coming in, and it seemed a great emphasis was being put on getting "edible" food into stores. Some of it

was coming already, Bill having grabbed some grains from home when John knew for a fact that he did not eat healthy. He had yet to understand it, but there was nothing about the whole thing that made any sense. Where was it going to stop!?

As frustrated as the customers were for the lack of dining options, they did not stop coming, causing John to work harder than at any time in his life. It was all made far worse by the fact a few customers couldn't hold their bowels, and cleaning up manure piles in the middle of a rush was nigh impossible. Customers viewed such a mess as a minor inconvenience, and John had to stop his cleanup several times to make things up to the impatient clientele. Thankfully, most clients had the sense to use the bathroom, though John didn't even need to go into it to know it was as much a mess as the tables where customers let go of their bowels beside where they ate. The whole place stank like a barn, though John hadn't even been in one, not since his youth. There was no avoiding it now, even if it was taking John all he had not to throw up, let alone get used to it.

Even over his disgust over the smell and the unanticipated yet expected additions to his job, John was still attentive to the other changes to the townsfolk at large. Naturally, there were plenty of people with horns, lumps in their pants, and even a few with patches of brown or white hairs noticeable over their skin. But before today, John hadn't noticed the intensity at which people were rubbing at their chests, not caring who was watching as they adjusted their bras and teased their breasts through their shirts. It was hardly the most egregious thing he'd seen in the past few days, but it did draw his attention enough to notice the changes. All of the women who came in seemed to have larger assets than he might have expected, especially since many were regular patrons and people he'd known since moving here ten years ago. And perhaps most thankful was that people were too distracted to notice John's stare, focused on their own bodies rather than John's questioning of what had happened to them.

It was more than just the women who seemed to have issues with their chests, as much as John was able to see. A few of the men that had come through seemed to be rubbing their chests as well and even some smaller guys sporting girth in their chests. John couldn't hide the blush on his face as he gawked at his clientele, but at least with everything happening no one seemed to care much what John's reaction was. It was made even worse with Jon frequently rubbing his own chest, wondering if the same changes were occurring over his own chest. He had always been ashamed of his weight and how it settled in his chest, but the idea they would grow was more than a little daunting. John did his best not to rub at them, even if their size seemed to irritate his chest. He couldn't be sure if they were changing or if he was imagining things, but John was sure, against his greatest wishes, he would find out the hard way.

With all happening around him, John found himself working in a trance of sorts, not sure what to do or how to stop it. There was nothing he could do the stem the tide of change, and no

one was aware of what was happening to help him. It was impossible that of all the humans in the world, he was the only person aware of what happening but had some memory of what things should be. And the loneliness was maddening to the point that all John could do was keep his head down and let things happen. If there was no way of stopping things, then what was the point of worrying about it, right? And yet...

As much as he wanted to go with the flow, the flow of things was powerfully discomfoting, especially since the thing in his pants started to twitch of its own accord. He knew it was a tail, but hated the fact he owned one now, and how little control he had over it. And it served to be a constant reminder of what was happening and where he might end up if the process was to continue to its conclusion. Worse than that, a constant gurgling in his guts left him farting up a storm, the stench of which was almost akin to the manure around him. It was maddening, given everything else he was forced to deal with. And what was the endgame? The fact he might be a dumb animal grazing on a field left him to fall into despair. What was the point in anything if that was to be his fate, one embraced by the rest of the planet as far as he knew?

The worst part, perhaps, was how hungry John found himself, unable to get enough. He wasn't a biologist by any means, but he had to assume that any changes to his body would need sustenance. Salads might not be the best way to get that required protein, but any thoughts of past foods just didn't carry the appeal as they used to. And as much as his past self wouldn't eat a salad in his wildest dreams, it was actually tasty to the point he was left licking his plate and asking for seconds. Even the grumblings in his stomach, sure to lead to more unwanted flatulence, were worth it at the time!

Yet, there was an obvious problem, one that Bill seemed not to anticipate though one that didn't alarm him as much as it might have. All their salad supplies soon ran dry, and with all the townfolk knocking down the door for lunch, Bill was in the unfortunate position to have to close. The local grocery store seemed out of produce as well, even though a trip there revealed far fewer meat-based meals than before the world went out of wack. The gradual changes to reality left John gaslighted, though either way, it was obvious there wasn't enough food in the here and now. Oddly enough, Bill was less worried about closing the store, rubbing his guts and his chest in equal measure. John had it under good authority one of the messes in the bathroom was a result of his boss, and was a little relieved not to have to worry about work for a while before things sorted themselves out, whatever was happening.

It certainly didn't help things that, even after two helpings of salad at lunch, John found himself starving as though he hadn't eaten in days. He didn't want to add to the manure piles he had to avoid, even if it was accidental and shameful on his part. But regardless of the outcome,

John needed to eat, and even the drive home wasn't soon enough to alleviate the discomfort, assuming his parents hadn't eaten them out of the house and home already!

Driving along the expanse of the field outside town as he made his way home, the sight of something in the field almost made him do a double take. The field was hardly empty, with no less than twenty people in the span he could see. Perhaps more, given that people were on their hands and knees, likely pulling up grass and hay like it was the most delectable meal they had ever consumed. The sight of it made John shudder. He couldn't possibly imagine getting down and eating grass like... a cow. Surely, the fact he had stopped and was staring should have drawn their attention. Yet, either they were so hungry nothing else registered to them, or as with all other facets of the change, it had somewhat become natural for them.

Perhaps the worst part was that the more he stared, the more hungry he got, as though the idea of eating grass might stave off the rumbling in his belly. The smell, under the cow odors he was becoming slowly accustomed to, was actually appealing, almost as good as the salad he'd had earlier. It was nothing more than a field of grass, yet the longer he stared, the more he could see himself eating some as well. Perhaps not on all fours, but maybe there was some precedent to pull some out and give it a try, to see what the appeal was.

Before he could reflect on it further, his gurgling guts caused him to belch frantically, followed by a sensation of vomiting. Yet, he was shocked when a thick wad of something reached his mouth, followed by a taste that wasn't nearly as offensive as he might have thought. Rather, it was almost pleasant, and John found himself chewing without thinking, the right thing to do in such a scenario. And as much as it should have disgusted him, John couldn't deny how hungry he was, and how much the act of chewing a cud appealed to him. Part of him had to suspend his gag reflex, though given his inability to do so, John was left with the repulsive reality this might be his life going forward.

Eventually, John was able to pull himself away and drive back to his parent's house, though the sight of a manure pile in the ground left him a little concerned. The smell seemed to carry into the door as he went inside, though by this point John couldn't bring himself to complain too much. It was starting to become part of the background, and while John was sure he didn't possess the thickened nostrils of some of his contemporaries, he was at least unable to remove it from his nostrils regardless of where he was. And that forced his acceptance of such, as much as he should have been displeased.

It wasn't the stink that concerned him upon seeing his parents in the kitchen, much as they would be before the changes encompassed the world. It was the sight of their twitching ears, as large as they might be on any born bovine, that left John stunned. They had been pointed this morning, but now with the size and way they were twitching, there was nothing to distinguish

them from any on a farm cow. It was all John could do not to stare at them with some fright, though thankfully, his parents didn't seem to notice, eating as passing gas as though such was proper etiquette.

With how ripe the house had come to smell, John opted to stay outside for a while, the air at least removing the stench from his guts. He'd been able to use the toilet, at least, though it was obvious one of his parents had an accident and John was only able to clean the bare minimum to use it himself. Still, with how much he needed to eat afterward, his body was still inclined to pass gas without his ability to help it. He was belching up a storm as well, worried that such efforts would inadvertently bring up some cud, though he had no control over it, as with many of his bodily functions. It was maddening, especially with how little he had to do while outside. But it was better than nothing, John sitting on the porch and enjoying the evening air what brief reprieve it gave him.

Of all the things he was expecting, it was not to see his girlfriend walking toward his house from some distance away. She usually walked over, especially in summer, though usually not without some warning first. John felt himself shivering with concern, not wanting to see her and bring attention to all the changes he found repulsive. Yet, with her here in person, there was little John could think to do to have to leave, bracing himself to make the best of a bad situation.

It took John only a few moments to see what changes had come over her in the interim. Like his parents, her ears were fully bovine, twitching this way and that as she approached. That bulbous nose seemed darker than the red shade he had seen over the webcam. She was clearly larger as well, even over her already overweight human body, and she paused a few moments to rub at her chest, which seemed to be leaking more than sweat from the walk could explain. And while it was confined in her pants, John could still make out the same of a twitching tail, though at least he found himself hoping that's all it was, given people's new penchant for messing themselves.

Though her smell was a little strong for John's nose, he allowed her to approach, taking her in an embrace and even letting her kiss him. The taste of her breath, at least, was pleasant, having eaten the same greens that he had come to enjoy. Yet, John could not have expected that the moment she pulled back, Layne started to pull off her shirt, giving him a familiar look that John had come to enjoy in the bedroom. Yet, certainly not outside where anyone could see!

“Fuck me...I've been so horny lately...” she moaned, huskily as she did when they prepared to have fun in the bedroom. Yet, it seemed she had no concern for their location, and John felt there was likely no point in protesting if she simply thought such was normal. So, all he could do was feign disinterest, body surely able to become aroused from the sight of his girlfriend's bovine features and habits.

Yet, it seemed the words did not register as she started to pull down her stained pants without any regard for her surroundings. Immediately, her hand went down to touch the outer edge of her folds, moaning out as she did so. “What are you doing?!” John called out, not really sure how to act in the face of something so objective and absurd. He was unable to keep up his usual charade of pretending to find the changes natural. She couldn’t want to pleasure herself out in the open like this!

“Oh, I’m just...what are you talking about!?” Lyane demanded, rather incredulously. She was never shy about bedroom affairs, and in a normal scenario, she would be affronted by John’s disgust. It was hard for him to parse between his reality and the one the rest of the world seemed to believe. But he had been forced to adapt to so many new scenarios over the course of mere days that it made his head spin. And having sex in the middle of his yard was the last straw!

“I mean...fuck, I don’t know...” John said, not sure what to say. He didn’t want to upset anyone, as much as was possible given he didn’t know how anyone would ask. But what could he do to settle this situation? “Sorry honey, it’s not you. I’ve just...I haven’t been myself lately...I’m not confident...” He added, with some truth to the words. Surely, Lyane wouldn’t be the outlier on this one thing, not with how everyone was acting.

Perhaps thankfully, Layne moved toward him, though not bothering to pull up his pants anymore. Giving him a tender kiss, John allowed himself to move into the moment. It was a small bit of comfort with everything going on, and John allowed him to take it. With everything going on in the world at large, at least it was obvious he would still have his love. His parents, as disgusted as they made him, were there for him as well. Would everything work out OK, in the end? Did John have any choice in the matter regardless?

The scent of arousal was in his nose now, and John had to admit, it made him a little aroused. Despite his shame about doing such outside where someone might see, John found himself lowering on his knees, examining what should be her familiar sex. There were obvious signs of change, which came as little surprise. Lyane generally kept herself somewhat clean-shaven, which was obviously not the case now. And rather than her usual pubic hair, there were patterns of white and black that looked out of place against her usual beige. He almost wanted to rub it to be sure, and he doubted Lyane would have minded.

Yet, it was the sight of something else above her cunt lips that gave him pause. Four pronounced nubs sat just above her groin, almost obscured by her rather large belly. They were obvious, however, four patterned red nubs he had never seen them. It was a little harder to see them especially as Lyane reached down to rub at them, almost moaning from their sensitivity. The pattern looked a little familiar with thoughts of cows in his mind, John was sure. And as

much as he didn't want to touch them in case they were contagious, he couldn't help but need to conform to what his eyes were seeing. And, if he was being honest with himself, the sight of them sent an unexpected shiver through his loins, almost as though they were making him aroused...

Without thinking, John reached down to rub at them, surprised at how warm and soft they were. "Oh...John..." Lyane managed to moan, encouraging him to continue. They were small enough that he could rub the flesh in between and get at all four at once. The flesh seemed to jiggle just slightly, though Lyane didn't seem to mind, rather grinding a little against his touch. Without thinking, John couldn't help but reach down for her sopping lips as well, wanting to bring her release. He couldn't quite do anything so brash to himself outside, but it seemed Lyane wanted nothing more than the chance to do so. Her bellowing cry was a little alarming, and as much as John knew her body, he was sure such play would take some time to reach release. Yet, she seemed to quiver in a way that signaled she was to orgasm. John was mostly doing it for his own fascination, but even he couldn't deny the urge to play with her, to make her cum and give her the pleasure he so often enjoyed.

After a few moments, Lyane pulled back, and John got up, an obvious erection in his pants. She gave him a knowing look toward his groin, as though willing to help him out as well. John wasn't quite ready for that, thinking he couldn't imagine being seen outside. He blushed, and Lyane moved to give him a kiss, something he allowed himself to return. "Thanks, honey," she said with a wink, and moved away, as though leaving. Such seemed a little abrupt, as though she was more scatterbrained than before, or any person he had meant. Part of him was glad, her smell was a little strong and he wasn't sure he could get used to the bovine sting of it. But there was no denying her scent, at least that from her sex, was doing it for him. Enough that he couldn't manage to have his boner go down.

As much as he couldn't do anything outside, worldly inhibitions lowered or not, John couldn't deny his need. Heading inside and upstairs, John was quick to pull down his pants and underwear, the scent of his cock strong in his nose. Yet, he was barely able to repress a scream at what awaited him. He had never really bothered with hygiene to keep his groin clear, but now it was entirely covered with soft, white, and black fur, more akin to what Lyane possessed. It had spread to more of his groin, however, thick enough he couldn't see the skin. The texture was strange, something he couldn't help but rub over and over, alarmed by the texture.

Much to his alarm, his fingers were quick to report something else that his chubby belly made hard to see at first. John would have been frightened by the reality, but the more he rubbed at them, the more he was soon aware of what had to be the same nubs his girlfriend possessed. Despite the fact they were likely udders, something that should not exist on his maleness, John couldn't deny the pleasure they seemed to grant him. There were four in a set pattern, the skin

around them inflamed and sensitive. And the more he touched them, the more his dick rose to the point he thought he might cum from that alone.

Still, despite his disgust over the scents in the house and the world at large, John's arousal wasn't stemmed in the slightest. Reaching down with his other hand to rub his erection, he couldn't deny that despite his arousal, he didn't seem to be as long as he once was. He was never the biggest man or anything of the sort. But the sensation of his cock in his hand wasn't nearly as large as it should be. Still, much to his surprise, its head was much more sensitive than before, and it wouldn't take long for him to reach his end. Rubbing the new nubs in tandem, his end soon drew near, and he was unable to stifle a bellow as his cock spasmed and blew a load over his hand and groin.

The smell of his cum, much to John's relief, was able to drown out some of the other scents that had been stinging his nose. His sticky semen was a little uncomfortable against the fur of his groin, though John could hardly bring himself to care or clean it up. He was beyond exhausted at this point, and even a series of belches, carrying a scent of grass, couldn't bring him to clean up. As much as he should have been concerned about the lumps or what it meant going forward, John simply couldn't muster the energy to care. He needed to go to bed, needed to pass out from the fatigue from the changes he was going through. As much as he could tell, his parents were already passed out as well, as much as he wasn't sure it was a result of the changes. He had to think, whatever force made such possible would take a fair amount of energy. Even the ability to think about this was difficult with the need to pass out!

Barely having the energy to open the window against the smell, John soon passed out, thankful he didn't have to go to work in the morning. His dreams were, surprisingly, drawn to sex, hormones coursing through his body. Even though it was obviously a facet of the changes, he wasn't able to get his mind off sex, images drawn to Lyane, and their past lovemaking. But those memories were peppered with the physical changes he had seen over the past few days. Sporting horns, a tail, and, best of all, a massive udder, turned John on like nothing had a right to. And it was almost enough for him to cum in his sleep, something he hadn't done in years but unable to hold back on with the intensity of his dreams.

A strange weight on his groin was the first thing he noticed upon waking, and John reached down to rub his nipples, not thinking anything of it. Yet, the soft, spongy material his hands brushed against was enough to jar him awake. His nipples had been somewhat smaller last night, though had grown rather abruptly, much to his disdain. It was the idea of change that truly made him worry if he was being honest with himself. The nipples themselves sent shivers of pleasure through his being, as much as he didn't want to admit it. With everything the changes were doing to him and the world at large, John couldn't imagine actually liking any aspect with

all the disgusting bodily functions that came with it. But there was no denying how horny this new growth was making him, to the point it was hard to think about anything else.

In the end, John was able to get up and into the bathroom to check himself out. His gut was growing steadily larger despite his all-plant diet, but that was hardly what had been bothering him. Rather it was the fact he could actually see the bloated skin of what was likely an udder poking out from underneath. The flesh was warm and spongy, and even the surface of it elicited a tingling of pleasure from touching it. A part of him would have been disgusted by the presence of such a thing in tandem with all the other changes taking over every human in the world. But it just felt too good, an experience that defied his understanding. Surely, he didn't want to have an...*udder*, if that was the consequence of the process. But then why deny its pleasure when everything else was inevitable?

In the end, he was able to resist the urge to play with himself again, albeit barely. Staring, John made his way downstairs, a little stunned to see obvious lumps under both his parent's pants, as much as he was glad they continued to wear them. Both seemed to absentmindedly rub at them from time to time, though otherwise didn't seem to be bothered by their presence. One other thing of note was that his mother's breasts, while not something he usually concerned himself with, with perhaps a little larger than before, certainly larger than what her usual bras would contain. He was sure she wasn't wearing one, though would never ask something so overt. What really brought his attention was that his father's own nipples seemed larger than what a man would possess, even larger than something overweight like John. And they seemed to be leaking something as well, his shirt stained even over the heat of the room should have been able to make them. There was a strange scent in the air, and as John's father rubbed at them, the fluid seemed almost stuck against his touch, if that was possible.

Reaching up to rub at his own nipples, John was thankful that, while they weren't as small as they had been, at least they weren't leaking anything. It was a small reprieve in the grand scheme of things, he reasoned. The scent of cow was still strong in the air, largely from their frequent flatulence and belching. For once, John wasn't immediately repulsed from the smell, though figured it was largely due to his nose being used to the smell. Wait, was it larger? Reaching up to touch it, John seemed aware its contours were a little larger, something he hadn't bothered to check in the mirror. It likely mirrored his father's nose, though John was thankful his own wasn't leaking snot, something that was sure to happen soon.

It wasn't until John reached the bottom of the stairs that John realized the scope of the situation. He hadn't been expecting it, but his parents were not eating the usual oatmeal or salads from the previous day. Rather, it seemed they were both reaching down and chewing from massive piles of sod, dirt still attached as they pulled up chunks of grass. It seemed like it would take considerable effort to bring so much sod into the house, but his parents had done so, eating

greedily. And, perhaps worst of all, was that John's usual place at the table was set with the same, massive piles of grass with some dirt still attached. It was as though his parents were expecting him to eat it!

Yet, the mere sight of it was enough to leave John's stomach to grumble. Surely, if there was nothing else to eat, he would have little choice. Not really sure what to do, John made his way outside, the scent of grass more palatable to his nose amidst the breeze. He was starving, and as much as he couldn't imagine doing such a thing, the temptation to get down on hands and knees and graze was all-consuming. Surely, the entire world craving greens when processed foods had been the norm days ago had effects on availability. So in the end, he had little choice but to do it if he didn't want the shakes from starving!

Knowing at least he wouldn't be ostracized for doing so, John moved to the field beyond their house, seeing the spots where his mother had pulled up chunks of sod for their breakfast. The fact she had dropped a pile of cow shit while doing so was not lost on John, but he was able to ignore it. Moving far enough away, Jon looked at the grass, almost salivating from the smell. At least his changed physiology was amenable to the idea, even if his mind wasn't. And surely, it wouldn't taste too bad, even if he didn't want to. Then, if he was being honest with himself, what was he waiting for?

Biting the bullet, John got down before reaching with his mouth to pull up grass. In reality, he figured he should have been using his hands to make it easier. But there was something about the act that made more sense, even if using teeth was inefficient. He was starving, and it was so easy for him to fall into it. The taste was surprisingly satisfying, and the sensation of it being swallowed into his gullet seemed to draw him on. All he could think of was crawling forward, eating more, only watching out for cow pies as he did so. Even the sounds and smells of the world around him faded away, and all his worries seemed distant, something to focus on after his stomach, or perhaps *stomachs* were filled.

It was only a gurgling in his belly that could bring him from his feeding, John passing gas and belching himself without the ability to stop it. The gurgling in his guts became alarming and insistent, however, and John was sure that efforts to get up and get inside in time were moot. It took all he had to get his pants off before his bowels relented, and he was forced to defecate with all the control of a farm animal. It was disgusting, especially the flecks that clung to his asshole as he emptied his load, adding to the already present manure piles in the field. Getting up made him feel even dirtier, but his belly was at least full enough that he no longer needed to graze. At least his parents made no comment, but by the smell in the house, one of both might not have been successful in getting their pants off before dropping his own load.

John's efforts to wash the stink off him were for naught, even a soapy shower was unable to rid him of it. His flatulence was ever present, and he couldn't help repress his frequent belching, worrying his efforts would bring up his lunch. Toweling off, for what might be one of the last times in his life, John was a little worried to discover the hair from his groin had spread, poking up from over his hips and right around his pucker. Touching the area reported a texture that left him shivering. It was leathery, though also sensitive, making him moan. Still, as best he was able to see, the fur was splotchy white with black patches, more a dairy cow than anything. A prelude to his fate, something he had no control over.

His exploration discovered something else new, though, in the midst of everything else, it had gone unnoticed. Right above his puffy anus was a noticeable lump, one that twitched slightly as he moved to touch it. A jolt ran through his spine, making him tremble at the implication. Given the more bovine tails that everyone in town seemed to wear, it was all too likely he was growing his own. Yet, its discovery amounted to little more than a drop in the sea of uncertainty that came with the changes. It was almost impossible to find fault in anything when his entire life was being turned upside down!

Of course, his nipples, what might just be the start of an udder, were still weighty on his crotch, and the urge to play with them was ever-present. He resisted, though it was obvious the notion sent a shiver through his crotch. As much as he loathed the idea of playing with himself in their presence, it was clear they had an effect on him. And, much to his concern, it seemed his cock's flaccid length was shorter than even last night, the implication obvious but not something he wished to reflect on too much.

Looking in the mirror, John couldn't help but notice how bulbous his nose had become, likely the cause of increasing levels of bovine stink. His ears, while normal for now, would likely not be spared. And the noticeable bumps of horns seemed present under his hair, though John didn't bother to touch what his eyes could confirm. It was all too much, even if the changes weren't uniform for everyone, they were all headed in the same direction.

With little to do on his day off, John moved to the computer, mindlessly browsing news sites in the hopes that something could explain the anomalies. Yet, it continued to appear as though John was the only person in the world who thought anything was amiss. Other than talk of widespread food shortages, nothing seemed to be in crisis. That was problematic, of course, yet a large quantity of food seemed to have already converted to supplies bovine-friendly. John couldn't be sure, the changes to their bodies and the world at large so gradual it was hard to follow. Like his mother having grains in the pantry when he was sure she wouldn't. Still, it was hardly enough in the long term, and governments were working on plans to combat the coming crisis.

That wasn't the only thing on the news, though it was largely undercut by the present emergency. People were complaining about clothing being too tight, and too itchy, and there was little manufacturers could do to save their products. Some people even wondered aloud why they were bothering to wear clothes in the first place. A few times, people mentioned how much money they would save going naked, those listening agreed as though it was the most sensible thing that had ever been suggested. It seemed that to those just hearing about it, it had never occurred to them before just now, and any attempts to think on it further were meant with vacant stares before they came back to their senses and talked about something else. Confusion seemed to be the word of the day, rather than alarm. Why things were the way they were mattered little with everyone's minds focused on solving the problems. And, with the way people were talking, these few problems seemed to have just occurred to them, a clear contrast with their current physiologies and attitudes.

Perhaps strangest of all was the fact previous broadcasts of TV shows had people looking entirely human, as though nothing had changed. No one thought it strange their past cohorts or even themselves lacked the flatulence, horns, tails, or udders that everyone on earth seemed to now possess. At least it was a sign John wasn't going crazy, though it meant little in the end, he figured if he was the only one. Would it be better if he was oblivious to the world's alterations as everyone else seemed to be? He couldn't say for sure, but either way, it seemed to be his burden, until he met someone like-minded. And either way, it was obvious there was nothing he could do about it.

Not sure what to do with his day, John found himself heading out for a walk. It was hot out, and John was quickly soaked through his clothes. They were already far too tight, but John wasn't confident to take them off. That would likely change in the coming days but for now, he was eager to maintain whatever dignity he could manage. At least his shoes fit for now, but how long they would last, John had no idea. It left him to wonder about the end result of everything would be, though other than being a mindless, grazing cow, John couldn't even wrap his head around it. And forget entirely about the why!

Making his way downtown, John soon found he was avoiding more manure piles than he was comfortable with. It did occur to him that, perhaps from the size of them, it was for the best. Anyone would clearly clog a toilet trying to do so, and despite the buzzing of flies, there didn't seem to be any immediate consequence. Maybe to the amount of methane in the atmosphere, but that was a problem far beyond John's ability to imagine. Hell, the possible implications for the world at large were far beyond his ability to imagine!

Though his town was relatively small, with only a few thousand people and hardly an adequate sample size, everyone he saw had some degree of obvious changes. Horns were visible on their heads, tails freely flicked behind them, fur-covered ears twitched back and forth, and

bulging bellies were not enough to hide the starts of udders. While everyone's chests were larger as well, John wasn't sure. He couldn't tell about his own due to his larger frame, but that might not be the case for much longer. The stench of barns and cattle was everywhere, just as much by people's sweat and spreading cowhide as their waste. Other than the strength of the smell, John paid it little mind, getting used to it by now as much as possible.

“Hey, John!” Came a familiar voice, and John felt his ears twitch in the direction of a high school friend, Greg. He was one of the few friends he'd made, other than Lyane, and though they no longer hung out regularly, they still spoke whenever Greg saw him in town or at work.

Of course, Greg sported the same ears, horns, and tail as did the rest of the town. And as he approached, the smell of him made John assume he might have soiled himself, though had not made the decision to discard his clothes. Still, John couldn't bring himself to be repulsed, given he was the odd person out about such things. As he recalled their former friendship, an odd thought came to him then, figuring he knew what the outcome would be but was unable to resist trying all the same.

“Hey, do you remember the time we headed out east to the big theater? The burger place was amazing, wasn't it?” John asked, though even remembering the taste of such was a little repulsive, as much as he'd enjoyed them at the time. Surely, such would create a dissonance between memory and reality. But maybe, just maybe, he was the only other one who -

“Yuck! I wouldn't be caught dead eating that shit!” Came the reply, and John felt his heart sink. He hadn't expected any better, of course. It was silly for him to think anyone else recalled the world before or even the start of the oncoming changes. And his hope was equally silly, especially with reality hitting him in the face. But that reality did little to ease the ache in his heart from being alone. And gave him little hope for the future.

Eventually, John found himself heading into the grocery store, not really having a particular destination in mind. The sight within was shocking, had he not had some idea of what to expect. Naturally, the meat had all been removed, much of the freezer bare as though it would never be used. The produce, too, was all but barren, the few shoppers within milling around without purpose. The buzzing of flies was worse in here, perhaps due to the number of customers who had emptied their bowels on the floor. Someone was gradually cleaning them up, but other than that, the employees were bored, with little left to sell. “Can't get a shipment scheduled,” one woman with floppy ears to a man who had opted to go without pants. John couldn't help but notice the man's small, flaccid cock, almost overtaking his bulbous udder, larger than John's own. The man didn't care John was staring, belching wetly before moving to chew his own cud.

Much to his dismay, John felt his belly gurgle, a little disappointed he had to eat again so soon after grazing. He still hadn't brought up any cud, much to his relief, as the sight was still enough to make him wish to vomit. But he was already starving and had to admit to himself such might soon make up much of the rest of his life. And going outside into the summer heat, the only thing he could think of was to look to the grass around town and start to graze once more. As much as he hated the idea, there was no denying the pain that came with his hunger, or that he hadn't really minded getting down and grazing like a cow. His pants were still covered with grass stains from his morning feeding, and he was sure he would have to get down on them again. All it took was for him to find a spot in relative privacy. Such was a little harder with as many people who seemed to be grazing around the edge of town. John was only thankful no one had mowed the grass recently, and almost chuckled at the notion people wouldn't ever need to do so again if they all became cows. Even he had to admit that was a little sadder than he'd intended. Still, there was little else he could do but to find a spot and get down, pulling up grass with his mouth and falling into what he was discerning was a blissful pattern.

This time, the weight of the thing under his guts seemed to weigh heavily on his groin, as though it had grown somewhat and was hanging downward. John did his best to ignore it, as best he could.