

## [Missing, Presumed... ?](#)

Published by: [Darryl](#) on 31st Jul 2012 | View all blogs by [Darryl](#)  
(Reserved, at the current moment, for Darryl, Malicia, and Kachka.)

There were very few things that would prompt Darryl to put himself in the way of trouble in the most reckless and irritating way possible.

Actually, that was a lie. It took nothing to make him do that. But it was still an odd and unique occurrence that caused him to be banging on Malicia's door and no doubt attracting all sorts of dangerous and unsavoury attention. And this was BEFORE she'd even answered the door.

The reason for this was very simple.

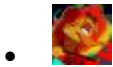
Lilly was missing. She never went missing. She got into trouble, out of trouble, and into all sorts of danger, but everyone knew where she WAS.

This was different. He couldn't find her anywhere.

And it was very worrying indeed.

## Comments

### 79 Comments



by [Malicia](#) 2 years ago

The steel door slid open rather quickly. Apparently Malicia had been expecting someone else, because without even looking she burst into a rather irritated (and yet oddly innocent-sounding) defense.

"Officer I *told* you, I know nothing about the-- oh, Darryl." Whatever facade of innocent law-abiding citizen she had been portraying seconds ago was immediately thrown in the proverbial trash.

"What brings you here? Tired of that unshapely creature you've been canoodling with already?"



by [Darryl](#) 2 years ago

"This isn't the time."

Nor would it ever be the time, but Malicia seemed incapable of understanding that. Shaking his head, he slipped insed and shut the door behind him.

"What brings me here is I can't find Lilly anywhere. Have YOU seen her?"

The implication probably being that if Lilly had gotten into trouble of any kind, it was probably Mal's fault.



by [Malicia](#) 2 years ago

"She was here a few days ago, made me a rather delicious sandwich." She motioned for him to follow her inside. "I haven't heard from her since but it's not like I expect her to keep in constant contact with me. Maybe she's just holed herself up in a library somewhere and gotten herself lost in a book. Don't you think you're being a bit paranoid?"



by [Darryl](#) 2 years ago

"I am NOT being paranoid," he said hotly. "I wanted to get a book out of her for a project, but she's not at the shop, and she's not in any of the libraries. Believe me, if anyone knows where she'd hole herself up, it's me."

And he'd been looking in every metaphorical (and sometimes literal) hole since morning with increasing franticness. Paranoid? HAH. He had every right to be paranoid when she appeared to have VANISHED without saying anything.

"I. Can't. Find. Her."



by [Malicia](#) 2 years ago

Mal raised her hands defensively. "Fine, calm down. Do you have an article of clothing or some other belonging of hers? I can have Pringles track her. She probably hasn't wandered far."

Or floated, as the case may be.



by [Darryl](#) 2 years ago

"This might sound odd, but I don't usually carry my cousin's clothes around with me." He really didn't mean to be scathing. Alright, maybe he did. But at this point, he felt he couldn't be blamed.

"... I have one of her books? Will that help?"

It hadn't been in the lab long enough to pick up any of those smells, as far as he knew. All it would probably smell like would be bookshop and owner. That and knowing Lilly, she'd petted Pringles so many times that picking up her scent would be no problem.

"Here," he added, handing it over. "Try that."

Worried, he figured, not wanting to waste time while she called Pringles from wherever on earth he was.

"I'm just going to call someone while you do that," he muttered, flipping open his phone and dialling a number he didn't think he'd ever have to. It had always been more Canna's department, after all.



by [Kachka](#) 2 years ago

The call was answered almost immediately.

"What."

Well, if Darryl didn't recognize the voice or the accent, that charming attitude would do it.



by [Malicia](#) 2 years ago

Malicia took the book and wandered off to find Pringles, who was scuffling around in the backyard as per usual. It didn't take him long to give the book a good, long sniff, and then he was howling and rearing to go.

Returning to Darryl, she had the beast attached to a tiny, sparkly, rhinestone leash. "He's picked up her scent. Quite an advantage since he has three excellent noses."



by [Darryl](#) 2 years ago

"Hang on," Darryl shot over his shoulder to Mal before turning back to the phone. "Kachka? It's me, Darryl."

No time to talk, three-headed dog howling in my ear.

"Listen... Lilly's missing. It's gotten to the point that I'm asking Mal's dog to get on the case..." THAT'S how bad this is! "Could you... I mean, another person would be a great help... how soon can you get to the warehouse?"



by [Kachka](#) 2 years ago

"*That's* how bad this is?" Kachka groaned with her usual tact. "Fine, I will come and help. I can be there in fourteen minutes, eighteen at most, tell Malicia to make sure there are no guard-dogs, clowns or horny skanks roaming about."

With that rather cryptic remark she broke the connection and went in search of a cabbie to bribe.



by [Malicia](#) 2 years ago

"I'm not sure how Kachka can help, unless you plan on blowing up something or smoking a pack or two." She gave the cerberus a pat. "But whatever floats your boat."



by [Darryl](#) 2 years ago

"Just in case," Darryl shrugged, preferring not to bring up how attached Lilly was to the one-eyed duck, and a friend that close deserved to know. "Fifteen minutes or so. Soon as she shows up, we'll start looking."

Yes, it was rather odd to assume Malicia had nothing else to do but agree and follow, but

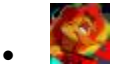
he couldn't hear any demonlings (which was a relief), and certainly no short-tempered masked mallards (which was an even greater relief). It was rather natural to guess she had a lot of free time on her hands.



by [Kachka](#) 2 years ago

It was indeed only fifteen minutes later that someone - this someone being a gaunt, one-eyed duck - banged against the door and, without waiting for answer, let herself in.

"...anybody want to jump me? No? Oh boy am I lucky," she muttered, mostly to herself, before turning to Malicia and Darryl. "Hey. How nice to be seeing you. Where do we start looking?"



by [Malicia](#) 2 years ago

Pringles seemed particularly distressed now. He was emitting a high-pitched whine and tugging frantically on the leash. The smell... he could smell Lilly alright but it was mingled with something very bad.

"We just follow him." Malicia explained to Kachka. "Onwards!"



by [Darryl](#) 2 years ago

"Onwards. Sure," Darryl said rather gratefully, following along quickly as soon as the door was open wide enough for Pringles to get through. "Well, he seems to know where he's going."

Operative word being 'seems', but one could hope.

"You haven't seen her recently, have you Kachka?" He was trying so hard not to sound worried, bless him. It just didn't work.



by [Kachka](#) 2 years ago

"No. I was kinda laying low the last few days, with everybody going crazy..."

As it turned out Malicia hadn't been too wrong with her earlier assessment of Kachka - while she hurried after Pringles she rummaged about in her pockets for a cigarette and a lighter.

"There is no chance she did sensible thing and did the same and is still hiding?" she asked Darryl, but from her tone and expression it was clear she didn't really expect the answer to be a Yes, or even a Possibly.



by [Malicia](#) 2 years ago

Their (mis)adventure led them straight into the heart of downtown St. Canard where overturned cars and fallen street lamps were the least of their worries. The city had gone completely nuts, by this point. While it was rather convenient that nobody seemed to care about the three-headed fuzzy beast the size of a monster truck, they also didn't seem to mind playing hot potato with grenades and lobbing toxic waste at one another.

And that didn't even take into account the lurid acts of public sex that were happening all around them. The duckubus was at least getting her fill of tantric energy from the surroundings.

They came to a halt near the police station, where a few squad cars had been carelessly abandoned, keys still in the ignition. The heads seemed to be in disagreement about where Lilly had gone from here, which led to the beast pulling itself back and forth in three different directions.



by [Darryl](#) 2 years ago

"Now which one're we supposed to follow?" Darryl groaned. It was unlikely Lilly had managed to split herself into three separate pieces and gone running off, so the trail must just be confused.

There will be no talk of splitting up. he refused to split up. It could, and would, only end badly. But at least it was confirmed that she had been here. That was something, right?

"Maybe we could ask someone? Houses in the area, shops? Someone must have seen something?"

That's my suggestion. Can't think of anything better. Anyone else want to give it a try?



by [Kachka](#) 2 years ago

"Yeah, sure," Kachka said dryly and jerked her head towards a pair of slightly dishevelled looking managers who were noisily making out on the hood of a crashed limousine. "You go ahead and ask them. I bet they paid lots of attention to who walked about here."

With a frown she looked about to look at the abandoned cars and general signs of mayhem.

"If only we knew why she was here. Looking for help, for hiding place, for some person... Say, you think police-station's parking space is under video-surveillance?"



by [Malicia](#) 2 years ago

"They'd be complete buffoons not to. Do you know how many criminals in this city end up peeing on their cars after Happy Hour at the Old Haunt?"

Fortunately, the doors to the police station were left wide open and the building was, for the most part, abandoned. The remaining officers appeared to be engaging in some off-duty nooky with the receptionist -- complete with police handcuffs.

"All right then, let's see what we can see. If we at least get a general direction, Pringles should be able to pick up the fresh trail."



by [Darryl](#) 2 years ago

Darryl paused for a moment, looking as if his brain was trying to kill him from the inside in an effort to forget what it was seeing.

"Right, to the security room," he muttered, flipping open doors as he passed in an attempt to actually FIND that room. "I hope nobody decided it would be a fantastic idea and do something with the security tapes. That's ALL we need."

Pause. Blink blink.

"Is that the place?"

There were tapes pouring out of the doorway like the aftermath of some terrible avalanche, after all. It was highly possible.



by [Kachka](#) 2 years ago

With a groan Kachka pushed past Darryl to wade through the heaps of tapes, picking up random tapes to try and find some sort of method to this madness and discarding them again when she found none.

"It will take hours, searching all these," she complained, but frowned when inspiration struck. "Unless..."

As fast as possible for someone who's stuck up to their calves in security tapes she went for the surveillance console.

"Unless they were too busy going crazy to replace cassettes since earlier."

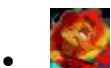
Everybody knew, the recording medium you were looking for *was always* in the device. With a triumphant smirk she noticed that there was indeed a tape stuck in the machine and pressed replay.

"There we are. Now we can see where Lilly went to."

The screens came to life.

There was a moment of awkward silence.

Apparently Lilly was off to the land of the Cute Little Bunnies. That or the guards had felt a sudden hankering for watching cartoons.



by [Malicia](#) 2 years ago

A visible shudder ran through Malicia and she paused to smooth down the feathers that had prickled with disgust.

"There's probably a button... thing... knob to change it to the surveillance. I don't know! Kick it a few times, that usually works for me when I want the technology to listen to what I say."

That certainly explained the pile of broken, discarded plasma televisions and computers dumped behind the warehouse.





by [Darryl](#) 2 years ago

"And you wonder why you and technology don't get along," Darryl muttered, reaching over to fiddle with a few knobs. "Alright... that's the parking lot... hang on..."

Frowning, he cleaned off his glasses and leaned in further to read the numbers on the corner of the screen, then looked down to glance at the tapes. "Right. There's labels on all of them. But god forbid they be something NORMAL like dates or times... we're looking for this number code." He pointed, starting to rummage already.

"And if they were stacked kind of... this way... and someone... on this order... Here!"

Triumphant, he tossed Kachka, who was nearest to the player, the tape. "This has to be the one. Play it, let's see."



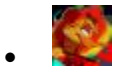
by [Kachka](#) 2 years ago

Kachka reached out with both hands and after a brief impromptu juggling performance - "Darryl! No depth-perception!" - she got a hold of the tape and put it into the recorder.

"So, here is parking lot, there is crazy people... Ah there is Lilly."

There was a brief pause while events unfolded on the screen.

"...look at that," she remarked dryly. "Malicia, it's your stud."



by [Malicia](#) 2 years ago

"HE IS NOT MY STUD!" It didn't take much to send her temper soaring.

But she paused, watching the rest of the tape. Or what they could see before Lilly and Negs were out of the camera's line of sight.

"At least we have a direction."



by [Darryl](#) 2 years ago

"Anyone else have a bad feeling about this?" Darryl said drily. "Or am I the only one getting that from seeing someone being chased down by a speeding car? Come on, let's get Pringles going in the right direction, then."

He cast one final, worried look at the screen before tuning it off. "It looks like they're headed for the bridge. Maybe she's in the old warehouse district just off to the side of it..."

That would be excellent, wouldn't it? Even if it meant that she was probably knocked out or trapped, and thus incapable of coming home, she was at least AROUND.

"Shall we?"



by [Kachka](#) 2 years ago

"Trouble in purgatory, huh?" Kachka muttered darkly, but didn't press the matter. Malicia's and Negaduck's current relationship status wasn't really a pressing concern for her.

She didn't comment on any bad feelings she might or might not have about this, but her posture stiffened and her face hardened at the sight of the screen.

"...yeah. Let's go."



by [Malicia](#) 2 years ago

It didn't take long for them to make it to the bridge and Pringles seemed to have picked up the scent at that point. The three heads seemed to agree on the trail at the very least, and followed it in a straight path. So far, so good.

.....Until they reached the broken barrier on the bridge. And the police car, abandoned with airbags fully deployed. And then Pringles poked his three large noses over the barrier, pointing down down, toward the murky waters below.

And then the beast let out a long, mournful, bay. Multiplied by three.

"Hm." Malicia sucked on the inside of her cheek. "I don't mean to the Negative Nancy here, but this really does not look promising."



by [Darryl](#) 2 years ago

"Really, Nancy?" You couldn't blame him for snarking. If he didn't snark, he might start losing it to anxiety. "Come on," he added, pointing. "That's the fastest way down from where we are. Pringles, stop HOWLING. Put those noses to more use! Just... just spread out and yell if anyone sees her."

And without bothering to check if anyone was following, he turned and set off with surprising speed, scanning the surface of the water almost before he would be near enough to see anything properly.

'don't be in the water don't be in the water don't be in the water'

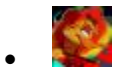


by [Kachka](#) 2 years ago

Her beak clenching, Kachka hurried after Darryl to check the water in the other direction. Why oh why couldn't the girl wear something more colorful every once in a while? Neon yellow might be helpful now, for example. So much easier to see in the water than black or dark blue or...

...*white feathers*...

"Hey!" she barked, already wading into the bay to get the poor girl out of the water. "Over here!"



by [Malicia](#) 2 years ago

Pringles took Darryl's suggestion quite literally because the beast leaped off the bridge and spread his massive furry body, hitting the bay with such force that fish, old boots, and skeletons with cement blocks attached to their feet were all sent sky-high. When gravity took hold, the uncovered treasures were deposited across the bridge where a few citizens were slapped in the face by panicked herring.

Malicia preferred to stay dry and trailed down the side of the bank, until she heard Kachka calling. She stood by the edge, watching the agent drift into the water. Yeah, no. Not going *inthat* disgusting cesspool.



by [Darryl](#) 2 years ago

Starting, Darryl raced to Kachka's side to help her, grabbing one of Lilly's arms while she took the other. "Oh God. She's cold as anything."

Trying to keep himself calm, reminding himself that it was more likely to just be the coldness of the water than the coldness of... well, he pulled, struggling to get her to the bank even with Kachka's help, as her soaked clothes conspired to drag her back down. Dammit, Lilly. Next time, no more long skirts. And all that HAIR. It was a death sentence.

I thought we agreed we weren't going to use that word.

"MALICIA MACAWBER," he yelled, realising, as he turned towards the bank with much effort expended but very little progress made, that she hadn't made a scrap of effort to help. "Get into this muck and help us or so help me I'll cover you in adhesive gunk even YOU can't burn off! Put that stupidly exaggerated strength to useful purpose!"

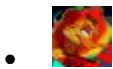


by [Kachka](#) 2 years ago

"Useful. As if," Kachka snorted and dug her heels into the mud of the bay to get a foothold. "Darryl, take her legs, I have this."

She grabbed Lilly under her armpits with, the girl's long hair wrapped around one of her forearms to keep her head from lolling about.

"No breath! We have to get her on stable surface, for chest-pumping."



by [Malicia](#) 2 years ago

"HEY! DON'T YOU BOSS ME AROUND!" And yet as she was saying it, Malicia's legs subconsciously drifted into the water. Her tail swatted at Kachka in response to her derision.

Then she tried to fit herself somewhere inbetween the two Normals. Fortunately all she needed was two fingers to lift Lilly.



by [Darryl](#) 2 years ago

With Malicia adding her strength to the mix, they managed to carry Lilly over to the bank so fast that Darryl nearly fell over. Regaining his balance, he directed their combined efforts to a place they could lay her down properly.

"Here. Set her down." Kneeling next to her, he tilted her head back. "Kachka, my arm strength's pathetic, can you?"

There was absolutely not way he'd be able to get her breathing again by physical effort, and they knew it. So, while Kachka hopefully moved forward to take her place, he hastily rummaged in his pockets for what looked like a small wristband with a box attached. "If this doesn't work... this might..."



by [Kachka](#) 2 years ago

"Move! *Move!*"

Shooing the other two aside Kachka moved poor Lilly's head backwards and began to pump her chest before anybody else - specifically Malicia - could give it a try. The duckubus might have the arm-strength to bend ribs, but she also had the arm strength to punch right through them.

"...breathe, damn you..."



by [Malicia](#) 2 years ago

Standing back rather awkwardly, she watched the scene unfold. She would've offered to give Lilly a couple pokes, but the longer she watched Kachka, and the longer Lilly failed to respond, she realized this was getting far more dire a situation. She shifted uncomfortably, and decided to direct her attention to the frazzled boy genius next to her.

"What are you looking for?" She asked Darryl.



by [Darryl](#) 2 years ago

"My portable stasis generator," Darryl explained. Finally yanking it out, he began flipping switches and turning dials. "In case she can't get her to breathe... just in case. We can at least keep her from getting worse."

Because at this point, worse is dead.

Darryl may not have had the arm-strength, but he knew as much as Kachka no doubt did that if there was no breathing after a certain point, then there really wasn't much to be done. He waited, though, for her to try, and when that point was reached, and it was a very nasty moment when he realised it HAD been reached, he quickly clipped the machine onto her wrist and tapped it for a few frantic seconds.

"Stasis," he breathed out, checking her pulse and breathing again. "Nothing... but she's still there. Just very, very barely... until I can figure out what to do..."



• by [Kachka](#) 2 years ago

"How long can you keep her like this?" Kachka asked tensely. "Can she be transported?"

She was used to functioning under extreme stress. At least as long as there was something to function doing.

"All hospitals are useless with coffee-junkies right now, or swamped. And we don't know how things are in Duckburg, even if there was way to get there."



• by [Malicia](#) 2 years ago

"Well I suggest we bring her to my place. I doubt leaving a stasis-fied female unattended in her bookstore won't end well, considering the increase in libido around here. Some of them might even *prefer* their women cold and lifeless."

Like the idiot responsible for this whole mess.



• by [Darryl](#) 2 years ago

"Yeah, she can be transported," Darryl sighed, trying to lift her up again. "Sure. Malicia's place. Why not."

It wasn't like it could make anything worse.

"Not GOING to leave her unattended, Mal. Not even at your place," he added. "Anyway,

this will last as long as necessary to keep that tiny thread going until I can figure out a way to yank it back. I hope..."



by [Kachka](#) 2 years ago

"Why not?" Kachka repeated, incredulous. "Maybe because we have no idea how long she will be like this and it's only a matter of time until the guy who did this to her waltzes back in there? That sounds like very good reason to me."

Turning around to Malicia she added, "And don't you start whining that you are over him. I wouldn't even bet bloody rubles on that, I won't bet Lilly's life!"

The anger had come as sudden as a storm and she held on to it. If she stopped being angry she'd start being afraid.



by [Malicia](#) 2 years ago

Rounding on Kachka, she shoved her face into the Agent's, fangs bearing.

"Just what the FUCK are you implying Kachka? That I'd be so irresponsible and stupid to leave her open and exposed for his easy access? That I'd let my former boy toy inside because I'm that *weak* all it would take is a few coy words from his silver tongue to change my mind?"

Her hand shot out and locked onto Kachka's neck, and she began to squeeze. Hard.

**"I AM NOT IN THE MOOD TO BE TRIFLED WITH RIGHT NOW, YOU ONE-EYED CUNT."**



by [Darryl](#) 2 years ago

"Kachka, look, we won't leave her there overnight, but she might be able to- Mal, DON'T we need her he-"

Darryl tried reason, he really did, but it seemed to fall on deaf ears, and it served only to make him increasingly frustrated. Growling, he delved into his pockets and brought out what looked like a metallic glove, which he slipped on before getting in between the two women and grabbing Malicia's arm.

"Shut UP. And let GO of her," he snapped, pulling at her arm just enough that she was no longer able to apply as much force to Kachka's neck as she would quite have liked.

Dear God, what was that glove made of... or maybe it was anger that was giving him some sort of boost, because he certainly looked furious. And slightly shaky, because while the glove might have given him a demon-grade grip, he still had his own arms to work with.

"BOTH of you, I don't care what issues you have going on, and I ESPECIALLY don't care what issues you currently have with that maniac, because guess what? **MY COUSIN IS NEARLY DEAD, WHICH IS ALSO NOT A TRIFLING MOOD. DO YOU UNDERSTAND THAT?!**"

Maybe he was talking to Kachka too. It was hard to tell, because he was still facing Malicia and shouting louder than his scrawny frame would give him credit for. Or maybe he really was just unloading on the woman whose boyfriend had done this in the first place. It was a fitting reflection of how badly Lilly had freaked out when she'd found Darryl nearly dead in her shop.

"Do me a favour, both of you, and stop jumping down each other's throats long enough to get her inside. *Please*. You can do whatever you like otherwise. Hell, I don't care if you rip out his silver tongue just to prove a point, I'd be glad for it, but... don't leave her out here right now. Crows are circling. We need to get her in *right now*."



by [Kachka](#) 2 years ago

Darryl might rue his intervention, since an unfortunate side-effect of keeping Kachka's larynx intact was just enough air to snarl back at Malicia and - worse - be coherent about it.

"Yes that is what I'm implying you-" *gasp*"-stupid shrew! You are irres-" *wheeze* "-possible, self-centered and a moron about-" *cough* "-that psycho! And if you're happy with that, fine! But you are **useless** caretaker! Now-" *hurk*"-**let me down!**"

And since Malicia didn't seem in the mood to listen to this very politely phrased request Kachka emphasized it with a straight punch. Right on the nipple.



by [Malicia](#) 2 years ago



*Ka-thwack!*

That was the sound Kachka makes when being used as a blunt weapon to bludgeon Darryl. The more you know!

"It seems you've both forgotten just exactly who I am!" The demoness snapped back. "I've clearly spoiled you both, so allow me to emend that."

Kachka was deposited in a heap next to Lilly's body as she turned to regard her warehouse on the opposite side of the river. Quite a bit of a trek with a corpse in tow, to be sure. Her eyes passed over Lilly and there was, if only for a fraction of a second, some hesitation.

But raw anger and sheer stubbornness won out in the end. "You're on your own. Come back to me when you two whelps realize just how unworthy you are of even being in my presence."

And that was that. With a burst of flames, Malicia was gone.



by [Darryl](#) 2 years ago

"Well," Darryl said, his tone oddly flat and calm after his outburst, not to mention the outbursts of everyone involved. "Glad to see you were right about her. I'll be sure to tell Lilly all about it."

And we might even be able to do something about it. Maybe aversion therapy. That might be good for when she wakes up. Or if...

Shut up shut UP, snapped another part of his brain, not wanting to think about it.

"If that's spoiling, I'd hate to see her just pleasant," he muttered instead, looping an arm under his cousin's shoulders and leaning her top half against his knee so he could lift her better from there. She'd poofed away without her dog, too.

"Pringles, go home. Lilly can't play with you right now," he said, though privately hoping the dog would stick around to help get her back. Especially if Kachka didn't have enough breath to help as much as she could have.

Jeez, nearly had two bodies on my hands there.

"Can you breathe okay?"



by [Kachka](#) 2 years ago

Still wheezing Kachka worked her way up to her hands and knees, hacking up words in between coughs and gasps - mostly rather unflattering terms for Malicia in general and her mental faculties, her taste in bedfellows and her table manners in particular.

"Just-" *wheeze* "-a sec," she managed at Darryl's question and stood on rather shaky legs. Whether she could breathe properly again or not, clearly she didn't believe in staying down.



by [Malicia](#) 2 years ago

It is said that a Witch's Familiar can gaze deep into the soul of his or her mistress and know their true feelings. In fact, a Familiar knows their mistress better than she knows herself, for they can see past the surface and down into their subconscious where fear, guilt, and other forbidden emotions conceal themselves.

Perhaps this was the reason Pringles did indeed remain by Lilly's side, one giant wet nose nudging her limp body. When her head lolled back like a rag doll, the cerberus began to whine in a high ear-shattering pitch and he paced nervously, circling the group.

Finally, as Darryl began struggling with the body, the beast dropped to the ground with a earth-shaking *thwump*. "Aroo?" One of the heads tilted questionably at Darryl. *Would you like me to carry her?*



by [Darryl](#) 2 years ago

"What?" Darryl looked up at the massive dog as the ground shook, and managed a bit of a smile. A little ray of sunshine after all. "You want to help? Good boy. Alright, get her up. We'll stay on either side and make sure she stays in place."

And so, refraining tactfully from muttering something about how even Mal's dog had more or a heart, or possibly sense, than she did, he urged her up a little so Pringles could reach her better.

"Need a shoulder, Kachka? Or you could lean against him a bit..."



by [Kachka](#) 2 years ago

"No need," Kachka growled hoarsely. "I'm fine."

From the way she staggered along, every now and then wincing when she drew breath, it seemed this was code for *I'm having a horrible day anyway and I won't make it worse by accepting help for walking a straight line dammit.*

"Unless you have better idea... I have this friend who never drinks coffee and-" *cough cough* "-is strong enough to beat off crazies. Or we take her to... bunkhole of mine, but that is cold and unfurnished..."

A little hesitantly she gave Pringles a careful pat. "Good boy? ...s?"



by [Malicia](#) 2 years ago

The pat was like the universal 'on' button for the beast's tail, which thumped eagerly against the ground.

Two of the heads steadied Lilly's body while the third nudged her up on to his back; an excellent example of teamwork that took the cerberus many, many years to master (and when presented with only one steak, was a skill that immediately went out of the window).

Belly still to the ground, he waited for directions from the two Normals. It seemed unlikely they would be going to Mal's warehouse now.



by [Darryl](#) 2 years ago

Darryl looked at Kachka, half-blank, and for a moment the only movement from him was his fingers engaged in the impossible task of trying let go of Lilly's hand, twitching a little erratically as they attempted it.

"I don't have any ideas," he admitted quietly. "Not a single one."

Tell me what to do, he wanted to beg. Just tell me.

"Out of the two, what do you say? I don't know how long we'll need to keep her, wherever we take her..."



by [Kachka](#) 2 years ago

The tailwag coaxed a tired little half-smile out of Kachka. Embarrassing as it was for someone in her line of work, she had a soft spot of pets and puppies of any kind. Pringles being hostile towards her after the spat she'd had with his mistress would have smarted even without taking his sharp teeth into account.

"Depends. My friend's would be more comfortable. And easier to call actual doctors to when there are any to have again. But I don't want him in trouble with cranky demons..."

She glanced at Pringles, looking uncertain - she'd never quite worked out how much of what was being said the cerberus understood.

"What do you think, hm? She going to blow up stuff over this?"



by [Malicia](#) 2 years ago

Three heads tilted to the side inquiringly and one of heads let out a soft yip. Overall, Pringles didn't seem terribly concerned about Malicia's wrath.

He stood slowly, careful not to jerk Lilly around too much. For such a large beast, he could be surprisingly gentle when the situation called for it... definitely a stark contrast to anyone who had been on the receiving end of those teeth the size of stalactites.



by [Darryl](#) 2 years ago

"He's not going to get in trouble with any cranky demons, don't worry," Darryl shook his head. "If she really wanted to come after us, she wouldn't have told us to come crawling back." It stood to reason. Going to them would negate any possibility of crawling.

"She's probably just gone home to sulk and mutter about how everyone's so ungrateful." Rolling his eyes, he put a hand on Pringles' large side and looked to Kachka again. "Lead the way."



by [Kachka](#) 2 years ago

"...okay. Come on, then."

The one-eyed duck directed the ragtag bunch through narrow streets, sticking to back alleys to avoid the chaos that was wrecking the city. Usually Pringles alone would have been enough to scare off potential troublemakers, but with everybody being drugged out of their minds, better be safe than sorry.

The unhappy trek finally arrived at a little bar which had seen better days but managed to stay out of shabby-territory. Right now it was dark behind the tinted windows and the place gave every impression of being completely boarded up.

Undaunted by that Kachka banged against the door, yelling something in Russian. A gruff sounding voice answered and after a brief discussion there was the sound of some furniture being shoved aside and the door opened to reveal a huge grizzled old bear who looked at the assembled group, a little warily.

"Kachyushka, what are you bringing me?" he sighed, revealing a full set of gleaming steel-teeth.



by [Malicia](#) 2 years ago

Darryl was more than correct. With the ever helpful addition of alcohol to help the sulk-fest along, Mal was going to be down and out for awhile. But perhaps that was a good thing, as it gave her Familiar plenty of time to join the adventure that was rescuing Lilly from a terrible fate.

At the door to the building, Pringles sniffed the air. "Baroo?" One head replied to the bear. Because nothing said 'greetings!', let's bust out the bubbly!' like a three-headed canine carrying an almost-dead body on his back.



by [Darryl](#) 2 years ago

A body and a demon-dog, said one half of Darryl's face. I'm sorry, are we interrupting, said the other. And all of it was trying very hard to keep still so that Kachka could take the lead here and possibly get them some progress. His only plan at the moment was to nod a little if the bear looked at him and keep his hand up to steady Lilly's arm. Fat lot of good it would do if she slipped off, but it gave him something to do.



by [Kachka](#) 2 years ago

"Please, can we stay?" Kachka asked the bear, in English, so Darryl could follow what was being said. "Just for little while, until all the crazy has stopped..."

"Is three-headed dog part of crazy?" he asked, not entirely unreasonable.

"No... I mean, he is not part of *that* crazy..."

"And almost-dead girl?"

"Another crazy again... Volodya, please, we really need to keep her somewhere safe till she can get real help. And I promise the dog will behave."

Shaking his head the bear muttered something incomprehensible to himself, but he stepped aside to wave the group inside.

"Pringles, you be good, okay?" Kachka asked the cerberus pleadingly. "No smashing furniture, and then I'm sure we can get you tasty steak." Beat. "Or three..."



•

by [Malicia](#) 2 years ago

OH boy! She said the S-T-E-A-K word! Pringles perked considerably at that, and seemed more than eager to get Lilly inside without stepping on any toes. Whether or not he could accomplish such a feat remained to be seen. How a monster-truck sized dog even fit through the door was a mystery to begin with, but with a bit of squishing and wriggling, the cerberus managed to pop his way inside.



•

by [Darryl](#) 2 years ago

It was a tense while, hoping a limb wouldn't get caught on the doorframe and drag the whole operation into havoc, but by some miracle Pringles made it, and Darryl nearly sagged with relief.

"Thank you," he sighed to the bear, gently easing Lilly down. "Is there a... bed, or something? Table, maybe?"

An ice-box, perchance? said the back of his mind. I know she's in stasis, but she just seems to be getting colder.

"Oh god..."



by [Kachka](#) 2 years ago

Before Darryl could properly get Lilly off her three-headed mount the bear had already scooped her up with frightening ease, like she weighed no more than a ragdoll.

"Bed is no good," he declared after taking one look at the girl. "Blankets just keep cold in. Best thing to do is put her in warm water."

Without waiting for a reply he turned around to carry her out, presumably to the bathroom.

"He knows what he's doing," Kachka told Darryl in a low voice. "Best go with and make sure the stasis-thingie keeps working. I will stay here and... take care of things."

While Kachka 'took care of things' Volodya carried Lilly up a narrow flight of stairs - well, narrow for him - and into a small bathroom where he tenderly put down, dress and all, into a bathtub. With a surprisingly gentle hand he held her head when he turned up the warm water, so she wouldn't slip.

Downstairs a brief search of the kitchen had yielded a small plate of steaks which Kachka put down in front of Pringles.

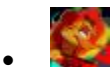
"This is all I could find," she told the cerberus apologetically. "But there are some more sausages if you like those..."

With a weary sigh she pulled up a chair and sat, rubbing her good eye. With nothing left to do but wait and worry it was becoming harder to keep the fear at bay.

"I messed up," she confessed to the dog. "Being like that with Mal. I should have known better. I mean, I meant every word of it - still do - but I shouldn't have been so confrontational about it. Should have left her a face-saving way to agree..."

This was one of the reasons she liked pets. They were so easy to talk to, without having to worry about judgemental words or whether they would gossip.

"What if Lilly dies? What if Mal could help her and she dies and it's my fault..?"



by [Malicia](#) 2 years ago

Kachka's lament was accompanied by the background orchestra of chewing, snarling, and tearing of meat. Not that the cerberus wasn't sympathetic, but he was incapable of

speaking the English language. Perhaps that was a good thing though, because sometimes all a person needs is a (big, furry) shoulder to lean on and listen to their problems.

If Pringles could talk however, he would've agreed that Malicia is an extremely stubborn, proud woman who is ruled by her emotions -- real typical of those hot-headed 'fire' types. Getting her to do a favor often involves a level of manipulation that fools her into thinking she's the one pulling the strings -- it was something that Negaduck had been good at and was probably why he survived for as long as he did.

Finishing up the steaks, the beast shook its heads and began to turn in a circle -- one time, two time, three times, before slumping to the ground to rest.



by [Darryl](#) 2 years ago

Biting back a groan, Darryl followed the bear up to the bathroom and folded himself into a small space near the tub, taking her hand and checking the machine on her wrist carefully.

"She's still freezing. I don't know how long she was in the bay for," he muttered to nobody in particular, just rather needing the comfort of being able to talk aloud. "... I don't know how far gone she is... For god's sake she never did anything to anyone."

Maybe being oblivious and trusting and being in the wrong place at the wrong time when her trust and obliviousness broke down counted as doing something to very dangerous people, though...



by [Kachka](#) 2 years ago

"Yeah. Good idea," Kachka murmured and pulled up her legs and hugged them to her body to rest her bill on her knees. "Nothing to do but wait anyway..."

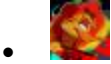
While duck and cerberus had their little heart-to-heart Volodya kept holding on to Lilly's head while the tub filled with water and the warmth seeped into the girl's boy.

"Cold is good," he stated without looking at Darryl. "Better to be drowning in cold water than warm water. Better chance of coming back right."

When the tub was full he rose and directed the drake to keep Lilly's head above the water.

"I go and find something dry for her, so you can get her out of wet dress when she is warm."





• by [Malicia](#) 2 years ago

Slowly, the beast's eyelids seemed to grow heavier as he drifted into a deep slumber. His ears however, remained perked and ready for anything -- although the odds that Pringles could do much of anything in the worst case scenario were quite low.

((Not sure what else to do with him. I suggest you guys continue the thread without waiting for me to go in order.))



• by [Darryl](#) 2 years ago

((Yes ma'am. :O But if anything occurs to you, feel free.))

"Yes sir," he said quietly, shifting forward so he could hold her head in place. "And you're right. If... if I can get her back, she'll be more right this way. I hope. Right, I'll stop talking. Stay here. While you go."



• by [Kachka](#) 2 years ago

It wasn't the bear who returned a few minutes later with an armful of clothes however, it was Kachka.

"Hey," she said softly. "Volodya figured I should help with getting her into dry clothing. You know. Girl to girl and all that."

She put the heap of cloth on a dry spot on the floor and wiped a strand of wet headfeathers out of the girl's face.

"Just help me get her out of tub, then go downstairs. Have some tea. Nobody makes tea like Volodya..."

Indeed, after shooing 'Kachyushka' upstairs the bear carried a samovar out of the kitchen, along with an armful of hard black sausages in case anybody - including but not limited to Pringles - was feeling peckish.



• by [Darryl](#) 2 years ago

Not sure what other use he could be if he stayed, Darryl nodded and helped heave her out of the tub. Detaching his hand with some difficulty, he stood there for a few moments, wavering.

"... thanks," he said awkwardly, squeezing her shoulder on his way out. Tea. Yes, tea would be excellent.

"Need some help with that?" he asked, looking in on the bear.



by [Kachka](#) 2 years ago

A headshake and a low grumble indicated that, no, the bear did not need help with that, but thanks for offering, now tuck in.

It was a very expressive grumble.

About twenty minutes later Kachka came down, an exhausted look on her one-eyed face.

"I got her dry and in warm clothing, and put her into bed," she informed the assembled party and went to pour herself some tea.

"Now, hospitals are still clogged. Will be so for days to come, I think. So..." With a deep sigh she took a sip of tea. "Darryl, you think Malicia will help if you go there, tell her I'm crazy bitch and ask her really really nice?"



by [Darryl](#) 2 years ago

"I could try begging," he mused, staring down at his untouched cup of tea, as he had been for the past twenty minutes. "Not my first experience trying to make nice with her. If she's sober, I suppose there's no harm." Ahahah. No harm. "... heck, it might be a better chance if she's drunk..."

Finally lifting his cup, he took a long sip that drained more than half of it, to the point that it looked like he'd stopped breathing to down it all first, and set it back down. "Worth a try. There's not really much else we can do. Heh, unless you fancy nicking something from her store-room or something. Come with me, though? Hang around outside, in case her only response is to ram something through my stomach and too me through the window."



by [Kachka](#) 2 years ago

"Sure," Kachka sighed and rose. "Sorry about... you know."

'You know' being code for 'Bitching Malicia away so now you have to do some grovelling'.

"Lilly can stay here... She can, right?"

The bear grumbled assent.

"Thank you. Pringles, will you come too? Back home?"



by [Malicia](#) 2 years ago

The beast was snoring loudly, but one of his ears twitched to indicate that somewhere in his doggy dreams he had heard his name mentioned. This was confirmed by a thumping of the tail.



by [Darryl](#) 2 years ago

"Is that a yes? Come on you dozy dog. Get up and let's go home." Darryl gave the large, hairy ear a hearty scratch and headed for the door.

"Kachka, it's fine. If there was a day she didn't explode, I'd worry she was sickening for something. ... heck, she'd probably explode anymore... How long do you think it'll take us to get there?"



by [Kachka](#) 2 years ago

"Not too long, I think. That is one advantage of all the chaos. Traffic is light," Kachka commented sourly and, after a brief conversation with Volodya, too soft and too Russian for Darryl to understand, she ushered her companions outside.

Well. Darryl was ushered. Pringles was mostly encouraged to *please* mind the furniture on his way out.

"We should be there in, half-hour, tops. Pringles, maybe you can help with persuading Malicia? Make adorable puppy-eyes or something?"



by [Malicia](#) 2 years ago

Well surely six eyes magnified the cuteness more, yes? Unless we were talking about spiders...

But Pringles didn't seem terribly concerned as he bounced carelessly alongside the duo. Malicia would have blown off some steam at this point and was most likely somewhere between her fourth or fifth bottle of chardonnay, although the canine couldn't quite voice this reasoning to his new friends. So instead he stopped to pick up a 'stick', which was in fact a large wooden beam that had been laid out on the side of a construction site. Well for HIM it was stick...



by [Darryl](#) 2 years ago

"Are we going to use that to bring her down?" Darryl asked, looking at the beam half-hopefully. "Aww, look at him, trying to be extra adorable already. Thanks for having our back, Pringles. I promise when this is over, I'll get you as many steaks as you like. And Lilly will probably spoil you with love, but that's a given..."

Smiling a bit, he gave Kachka a little nudge as they walked, trying to be a little optimistic.

"Coffee-party when things are back to normal, what say?"