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opening extract from

Vamoose

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Vamoose!

The midwife was giving me the evil eye.

'Mothers your age often have trouble bonding,' she said, and then added grudgingly, 'but it will come.'

My age? Jeez. It's not like I was twelve or something.

We'd spent the last ten minutes glaring at each other, but I couldn't help admiring the way she cradled my baby, holding him close up against her great big bazooms and looking into his big velvety eyes. Also, her smile (at him) appeared to be genuine. Which was a plus.

'Who's a dear little sweet thing?' she cooed. 'Who's a beautiful big moosie boy?' My baby held her gaze adoringly, eyes unblinking. 'Look at those eyelashes!' She turned to me. 'Well, he may not be what you expected, but he *is* a beauty.'

'I wish you'd tell that to my mum.' Squinting, I searched for the beauty in the curve of his nose, his little baby nostrils. 'She refuses to look at him. I guess she has a point. He is kind of hairy.'

'Don't you mind about that, now. Just look at his lovely wee hooves.'

The midwife held out one tiny foot, shiny and ebony black. It *was* cute. I closed my eyes, still pretty numb and queasy from the Caesarean. And a little dizzy from getting used to things. I mean, how exactly had this happened? The twenty-week scan was perfectly normal.

'It's a late development in some pregnancies,' the consultant said in his I'm-SO-much-more-important-than-you voice, slithering out of any and all blame

at the same time. 'We often fail to pick it up on the blood test.' He paused. 'They're not common, but we've had a small cluster of non-homo-sapien births this year. Mainly moose. No one knows why.'

I squeezed my eyes into slits and suddenly realized that he wasn't a doctor at all, he was a zombie! Heh heh. Of course he hadn't looked so superior when Mum threatened to sue the hospital over my non-homo-sapien birth. He'd looked even queasier than I felt.

'Something to help you sleep?' A slightly elevated eyebrow suggested that he'd accept if it were *his* child. 'We'll send the social worker round first thing in the morning. In the meantime, try to get some rest. It won't look so bleak in daylight.'

Was he referring to the situation or my baby? I didn't think either was going to look a whole lot better in the clear light of day.

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