

GELITECH

EPISODE 8

BARGAIN BASEMENT

BY SHETIRA ANWAE

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I

There was something deeply unsettling about her expression of blissfully naive curiosity that sent an icy cold shudder down Chyka's spine. Something about her loose, almost angelic pose that made the little snow leopardess cringe. What could she possibly have felt as the digital gorgon unleashed its unholy power upon her helplessly floating body? What must she be feeling now, reduced to a mere object composed exclusively of disturbingly stunning green emerald, and having been so perfectly encased in her prison of crystal clear quartz? Or diamond? Or whatever sort of clear mineral it was that the machine had formed around her magnificently petrified body?

To the little snow leopardess, the vision of pure, albeit not-quite-innocent beauty hovering there in

at the center of the foul machine was gut-wrenchingly terrible to behold. This wasn't the attendant anymore. It wasn't just a random woman encountered by chance during the course of a day's activities. It was her wife. Her completely uneducated, barely civilized, periodically profoundly stupid, and now, apparently, hopelessly naive wife.

What the damned hell was she thinking? Chyka hissed to herself, and to that ever-present soul which resided within the glistening black biogel that coated her body from neck to toe. That unseen, voiceless being that had bound the two feyli lovers within its own perfectly polished, amorphous form, making the all together a single, unified living organism in almost every way imaginable. Almost. *Why did you let her do that? Why didn't you stop her? Why?!?*

The little snow leopardess knew well that there was really no use in expecting anything resembling a satisfying reply from that 'other wife'

within the biogel. It had long since become more than amply apparent that she had her own set of often quite deviant priorities for their relationship. Her own dark curiosities. Curiosities that were almost invariably of the sort that would lead to trouble. Physically transformative trouble, in particular. And she was clearly all too willing to try and use the captive bodies of her feyli 'spouses' in order to fulfill them.

Their biogel wife experienced everything that her captive spouses experienced. Every minuscule sensation. Every hint of emotion. Every fleeting thought. Everything. If she wanted to experience something specific, she was sure to make it known. Sometimes she would make it more than just known, periodically in very obvious and potentially embarrassing ways. But, in the end, she'd always let Chyka make the final decision, both for herself and, more recently, for Jumie as well. And she'd always kept things in check until that decision could be made. But now... what could possibly have changed?

Chyka couldn't help but wonder if her biogel wife had come to regard Jumie as something of a disposable component of their mutual relationship. An extraneous warm body acquired solely to help facilitate the satisfaction of those dark curiosities. A gift to placate the faceless soul's so often expressed desire for the little snow leopardess to use her own body to acquire some desired physically transformative experience, for better or for worse.

The biogel soul didn't even attempt to reply to Chyka's frustrations. She didn't try to soothe her feelings and make it all seem so perfectly normal and acceptable to give up their new spouse for such a trivial purpose, and not without a second thought or care in the whole world. She certainly could have, of course. She could have forcibly wiped all negativity about the experience from Chyka's mind as well. But she didn't. Instead...

No! Just... no! Chyka thought as tingles of involuntary desire flitted about at the edge of her mind. Desire to enter the machine. Desire join her wife as a work of gemstone art. Just so she could know what the leopardess had felt. *Are you fucking crazy? Do you really want to spend the rest of forever like that? A fucking statue? No! We're not doing it! And we're going to get her back! Period! Stop trying to make me want it!*

Her biogel wife didn't press the issue, but the rather halfhearted effort did make Chyka more convinced than ever that Jumie hadn't entered the machine entirely of her own accord. The pleasure offered by the seating during the shop attendant's demonstration might have opened her mind to the almost assuredly oversold possibilities, but there was no way that alone would have convinced the shy and generally skittish leopardess to throw fate and caution completely to the winds. That idea had to have come from someplace else, and the only other 'person' in the room who could have given her that idea was their biogel companion.

"Jumie!" Chyka yelped as the robot again appeared, this time to snatch up Jumie's crystal prison and whisk away into that dark back room where the attendant had been taken. She gasped as she door thumped closed behind it, leaving her bereft of not merely her wife's warm, living presence, but of her now cold and inanimate emerald body as well. "Dammit! Give her back!"

A soothing, vaguely effeminate voice filled the chamber. "In accordance with the posted policies of this jewelery studio, the newly crafted artwork will be added to the establishment's inventory unless the temporary jewelery experience fee is paid within one hour. In the case of the aforementioned artwork, accounting for the form and mounting selected, the temporary jewelery experience fee is... five-hundred and thirty-five Imperial credits."

"Five-hundred and thirty-five... oh... bugger-all!" Chyka huffed. "Well... I guess that isn't *too* bad, all things considered."

"Should the temporary jewelery experience fee be paid within the hour limit," the computer continued, "the aforementioned artwork will remain in its current state for a full four hours, beginning at the moment of jewelery, prior to restoration. You have... fifty-five minutes left before the payment period expires. Your ImperID has been detected and biomatch confirmed. If you wish to pay the temporary jewelery experience fee for the aforementioned artwork using your preferred payment account, please say 'yes' now. Otherwise, you may..."

"Yes," Chyka replied.

"You have stated that you wish to pay for the aforementioned artwork's temporary jewelery experience fee," the computer replied. "To confirm, please say 'yes' again. Otherwise..."

"YES!" Chyka nearly shouted. The computer was almost as frustrating as a typical corporate phone answering system, and the little snow leopardess just didn't have the patience for it.

"Thank you!" the computer replied cheerily. "The leopardess, ImperID first name Jumie, shall be restored in... three hours and... twenty-eight minutes. Please take the intervening time to seriously consider your own jewelery experience within the studio's gorgon."

"Yeah, I'm sure I'll do that," Chyka huffed with considerable displeasure. Having to wait so long for Jumie to be given back was hard enough. Having to pay for it just plain got her fur all up in such a ruffle that not even the biogel could fully hide her irritation.

One one hand, it seemed an awful lot like a scam. Your loved one got into the gorgon? Pay up or you're never getting her back!

On the other hand, it seemed just as much like the proprietor and his happily naked assistant just didn't quite know how to play the game. They were aiming to add to their inventory, for sure. That was just part of the business. But the best way to do that was to let potential artworks toy with it first. Buy a temporary experience or two. Tell all their friends how much fun it was. That was the way to get an unending line of hot asses willingly offering themselves up for the chance to become magnificent, gemstone art.

"Ah! There you are!" the voice of the alien proprietor called out as the door leading back out to the showroom slid open. "Oh. Hmm. I see. Your rather nervous looking friend has decided to include herself in my wonderful new project. What a wonderful surprise! I cannot even begin to express my absolute delight! Perhaps you would like to join her? I can assure you that you most certainly would not be disappointed with the experience!"

"Don't count your chickens before they hatch," Chyka sighed, crossing her arms and eyeing the alien with considerable suspicion. "She's only on the four hour trial run. Assuming your computer wasn't lying when it charged me for it."

"Oh. I see," the alien replied rather dejectedly. "That... is rather disappointing. But perhaps she will change her mind once she has had the opportunity to see what it is her wonderful body might become a part of! Perhaps *you* will change your mind as well! Come! Let me show you!"

Chyka wasn't quite sure whether or not to follow the little alien through that door from which the robot had come. Just standing next to the gorgon seemed enough of a risky venture for the time being. Who really knew what the alien might be hiding in that back room? Was it really some amazing artwork, or was it another gorgon, unconstrained in its movements by a giant

framework, waiting for the moment some unwitting victim came into sight?

"Come, come!" the alien called over his shoulder. "Don't be shy! It really is the most supremely magnificent thing!"

Chyka reluctantly followed the alien as the door again snapped open to reveal a dark chamber beyond. This time, no robot came out. Rather, she could just make out a strange, shimmering, sparkly shape in the darkness. It seemed to rise up several stories. Before she could make out much more, the door snapped shut, leaving her, the alien, and the strange shape in complete darkness.

"Behold!" the alien called out as lights rose throughout the massive cylindrical chamber. "Behold my finest creation!"

II

Chyka's jaw dropped. She'd certainly been expecting something strange. Something alien. Something so brazenly titillating that it would hardly be worthy of the word 'art', let alone justify placement in any manner of public setting. And that was by the notoriously liberal feyli standards. But this... this was something altogether different!

The gigantic, gemstone tree was so magnificently exquisite in form and detail that the little snow leopardess could hardly believe her eyes. The astonishing work was made entirely of transparent gemstone of varying color, stretching upward at least five stories in a form so perfectly reproducing that of a real deciduous tree that it was hard for her to believe that it was actually a thing of purely mineral substance. Everything

about its smoky, grayish-brown trunk and branches; its broad emerald leaves, replete with dark veins and stems; and its many bright, ruby flowers with their golden yellow interiors was perfect. Almost too perfect. Just a tad surreal, in fact. Whether or not that was a result of the exotic material from which the tree was made, or the fruit which hung from its thick limbs was something the little snow leopardess couldn't quite pick out.

So that's where she went! Chyka thought to herself with half a sigh of relief as she immediately recognized one of the four dangling, crystal encased women as Jumie. Seeing the emerald leopardess merely transformed and encased had been amazing enough. Now, properly mounted in such an incredible setting, she seemed positively exquisite. Almost... natural, even. *Goddess, she looks so perfect like that. So... so fucking hot! But... no. Just no. I can't even... dammit... I wish I knew what she was feeling all done up like that. I wish I knew... but... no. Just... just no.*

The little snow leopardess' eyes turned to her emerald wife's equally exquisite companions. Right next to her hung a beautifully lithe, sapphire elf-ear who's permanently preserved expression of sheer wonder seemed to suggest that she'd been totally enthralled by her experience within the gorgon. A bit further around the tree was a muscular, ram-horned, amethyst mitanni who's peaceful, airy expression made her seem as if she'd fallen asleep just before the machine had petrified her. And then there was the attendant, Sakie. She was higher up in the tree, looking just as yearning for orgasmic pleasure as she had the moment the machine had transformed her.

Chyka couldn't help but notice how many more such fruit the tree could accommodate. There were at least a dozen empty stems visible from where she was standing. There were likely at least half a dozen more hidden from view on the other side of the tree. There was little doubt in her mind that the alien fully expected her to be occupying one of

these in very short order. What he was going to do to get her there was an open question.

"A magnificent expression, is it not?" the alien said, waving his arms upward as he gazed with an expression of mixed satisfaction and disappointment at the tree's latest addition. "A perfect rendition of the natural form, a mounting which so perfectly displays each of its eternal fruit. Each fruit expressing its own individual response, completely free of outside influence in that last, supreme moment when its body is saturated by the gorgon's incredible power. Preserved for an eternity, blithely detached from the outside world, never again experiencing an existence outside of that final instant when they were transformed. A captive, forever imprisoned within the artwork it has become. A concept. An idea. A temptation for the next. And so on."

Chyka had never really been one to appreciate the sorts of overblown, over-analytic art babble that so many artsy types used to place a firm

wedge in between themselves and their audience. She could never quite understand why so many people were attracted to buying things that, it seemed, they just were never supposed to actually understand, if the artists interpretation of their own work was to be believed. If it made any sense at all. All too often, it just didn't.

This time, however, the artist's intention seemed to match the work of art that had been produced. Or was in the process of being produced, as the case happened to be. And she really couldn't argue with the concept. It was quite visually striking and, as chance happened, was rather similar in idea to one of her favorite sorts of biogel décor: a glistening black gummy, permanently encased in crystal biogel. Sometimes more than one, and in poses just as titillating as some of those she'd seen in this particular alien establishment's own showroom.

Such items were no less visually appealing than the alien's gemstone creations, though they did

tend to be starkly monochromatic. One major disadvantage was their lack of suitability as a construction material. Proposals to build some sort of structure from crystal biogel blocks containing gummies always ran into the issue of their lack of structural strength and stability. They would inevitably squish and bend to some degree, no matter what shape they were cast in, and only so many could be stacked upon one another before the whole structure began to deform. These gemstone creations, however...

Chyka began to get all sorts of ideas in her head. Ideas that were both astonishingly beautiful and impossibly grandiose. What she could do if it were *her* in charge of this place...

"Tell me! What *do* you think?" the alien inquired. "Do you think this worthy to display in a public place? A public garden, perhaps? A gemstone garden full of trees, and fountains, and statuary that will both amaze and bring in much lucrative business?"

"I think that would be quite splendid," the little snow leopardess replied with a faint smile. It was exactly the sort of thing she'd been thinking of, and it would certainly be just the kind of thing to draw plenty of tourists to do something they were almost certainly going to regret for a very long time.

"Splendid enough to entice you to into becoming this wonderful work's newest fruit?" the alien inquired.

"Uh... no," Chyka replied, shaking her head. "Not a chance."

"Bother!" the alien huffed. "Not even... not even for a little while? A few hours? Until your friend is restored? Come now! You simply *must* try it! I will absolutely guarantee it will be the most amazing thing that your body has ever experienced!"

The little snow leopardess began to shake her head again, but something gave her pause. Someone gave her pause. *No! We're not...*

A sudden sense of deep curiosity filled Chyka's mind. Deep, blissfully naive curiosity. Airy, floating wonder. Nervous anticipation. Bright light. Cracking glass. And then...

The little snow leopardess had to stifle a sharp gasp. *You... bitch!* she swore in silence as the final, foggy impression of distant, dull, and impossibly tight encasement got stuck in her mind. A harsh, yet strangely comfortable thing, so icy cold that it felt warm and inviting. *You... you fucking bitch!*

The little snow leopardess knew full well that the misty, almost unreal impressions weren't something born of her own so often wild imagination. Now were they the product of her biogel wife's own imagination. Each impression was a soft, ethereal memory of what her biogel

wife had felt, directly absorbed from Jumie's mind as it had all taken place.

This wasn't the first time that Chyka had been force-fed someone else's thoughts and memories, of course. That had taken place when her grandmother had given her such a vivid image of what was going to take place in Dari if no one from the outside intervened. This was, however, the first time that her biogel wife had taken it upon herself to do such a thing. It was also the first time that she'd connected the little snow leopardess and her feyli wife together beyond the sharing of pheromones, hormones, and the occasional emotion.

Chyka couldn't help herself. Her imagination ran wild, fueled by the foggy, uncertain sensations that had come from her wife's own mind. Sensations that she could never truly understand unless she entered the gorgon herself. Allowed it to levitate her body and saturate it with its foul,

alien energies. Transform it into stone, and encase it for mounting alongside her gemstone lover.

The little snow leopardess was helpless to resist, no matter how much her biogel wife made it seem that she could still choose. The choice was just an illusion. There was only one actual option. One path that she could take. One way out of the jeweler's studio.

"How much will it cost?" Chyka finally asked, her mind filled with imagined sensations as she looked back up at her crystal encased emerald wife. It didn't really matter how much it would cost, of course. She simply *had* to do it at this point. There was only one real consideration on her mind, and that was keeping Jumie from just going back into the gorgon and doing it again, for keeps. "How much will it cost... as long as you let me out before her? I... I... promised her I wouldn't... and... and I don't want her to know that I did. So I've got to come out before her."

"Let me see," the alien pondered. "She has three hours or so... so if you enter the gorgon right now... two should suffice? Yes! Yes, it should. As to the price... well..."

"If it actually feels good, I promise to tell everyone I know!" Chyka said. Even in her current state, she still couldn't help but try and snag a discount.

"I suppose I could let you have a complementary taste of the experience," the alien replied. "In hopes that you will seriously consider permanently adding your body to my masterpiece at a later date."

"Deal!" Chyka replied, turning toward the door without another moment's hesitation. The quicker she got into the gorgon, the better. It wasn't so much about her having second thoughts. Her biogel wife simply wasn't going to let her change her mind. It was her biogel wife having second thoughts that worried her. At any moment she

might decide that becoming a permanent part of the tree was a much better idea than having just a taste. "I can go right in?"

"Yes," the alien replied with a shallow nod as the door opened in front of the little snow leopardess. "The machine is as prepared for your body as it was for your companion's."

Chyka looked over her shoulder and smiled. "Great! I can't wait to feel what it's actually like!"

III

Well... isn't this the grandest of ideas? Chyka thought in silence as she began to float up off the floor in the middle of the gorgon's massive armillary structure. *Why the hell did I agree to this again?*

Stepping into the machine had brought with it a sudden and frightening clarity. No longer burdened by her biogel wife's manipulations, the little snow leopardess' impending transition from warm, soft, living flesh into cold, hard, inanimate gemstone seemed an almost unthinkable terrifying thing. Anxiety gripped her heart, even as she found herself all too aware of the irony of her feelings about the situation.

Chyka had joined Gelitech knowing full well that her coating of biogel was very much a permanent thing. And she knew that one day, that permanent coating of biogel would subsume her, and make her into something almost as inanimate as the jeweler's statues. An object, to be acquired and used as such. She'd accepted that as a matter of course. It was one of the things that made biogel so enticingly kinky, after all.

But now that she was about to actually experience what becoming an object really meant, the idea seemed far less kinky that it was horrifying. In a few short moments, she would stop having anything to say about her existence as a living, conscious soul trapped in an object that no one would ever regard as actually being a person. What if the jeweler was lying? What if he undo the transformation? What if he didn't undo both of their transformations?

Chyka couldn't help but feel a horrible sense of dread as the gorgon's eye whirled around along

with the armillary before leveling with her quivering chest. She bit her lower lip, closed her eyes, and held her breath. Her arms stretched back and she clenched her fists in futile defiance of the unstoppable.

An impossibly bright light burst through the little snow leopardess' still firmly closed eyelids. Her whole body felt as if it had been struck by countless thousands of volts of electricity. But instead of painful convulsion, her body seemed to motionlessly 'twitch solid' amid a wave of strange, disorienting warmth. This wave was almost immediately followed by a feeling of icy cold, so smooth and fluid that she felt almost as if her stone body might well become aroused.

Mere fleeting moment after the cold had taken hold, Chyka felt a sudden, crushing tightness that pressed inward upon every millimeter of her gemstone body. Cold and tight. It was all she could feel. And it was all she would ever feel if the alien failed to keep his world. But strangely, now

that she'd become a statue, it just didn't seem to matter.

Chyka's new body simply couldn't feel anything besides a dull sense of touch. It didn't respond to thoughts or emotions because there was nothing there to respond. No matter what she thought about her own situation, or her wife, or the jeweler, or anything really, she was filled with a sense of calm, peaceful nothing. A dull, blank sort of euphoria that seemed to consume everything and leave her mind floating amid a sea of distant, fleeting memories. A mind whose only bounds were the cold tightness that offered its only sense of physical form. Its only way to know that it still had some physical existence in the real world.

The little snow leopardess' mind melted away into a state that was commonly referred to as 'eurotic dissolution'. Still living. Still conscious. Still firmly bound to the mortal realm. No thoughts. No memories. Everything that had made her who she was seemingly erased. Feeling,

without knowing. Each moment as if it were the only moment, and bereft as she was of any change to what little physical sensation she was experiencing, that one moment seemed to go on forever.

If one were to ask any exophysicist or hard core philosopher, they would say that Chyka had ceased to exist. What minuscule flicker of eternally looping energy existed in her transformed body was no actual mind. It was just a remnant of her soul's connection to its native realm in some higher order dimension, an inconvenient anchor that held what little was left of her in a place that was neither here nor there. An anchor that could, under the right conditions, have its uses.

So long as such an anchor remained unstable, it could be used to extract energy from the soul's native realm. It was how the Vixanti-Gelitech biogel based power generation plants worked, dissolving individuals into pure, field-contained

energy loops to draw forth and redirect energy for transformation into electricity, among numerous other useful purposes. That instability also held in its fluctuations the 'pattern' of the body that had been transformed in order to create the anchor. So long as the instability was maintained, that pattern could be restored.

In the biogel power systems, that instability was maintained at the desired level by force, using systems that would automatically restore the subject body in the event of a failure, before the unbreakable state of full stability could occur. As was quite well known, the gorgon's transformation had no such protections. The anchor loop's undulations would fade over time. Effective instability would last for more than two days, but never more than five. After that, the loop would slowly become stable and, barring disruption and collapse caused by an external force, locking the soul into an eternal state of eurotic dissolution.

Of course, Chyka couldn't care about any of that anymore. She didn't exist. Only her singular thread of continued consciousness existed, and that only knew cold tightness. An unending eternity of impossibly cold, crushing tightness.

SNAP!

Chyka could see the spinning armillary. She could feel the cool air washing over her warm, glistening black, biogel coated body. She could even smell the presence of the little alien proprietor's lovely, naked assistant. The sensations, however, fell into an empty pit where her mind had once been. And then they bounced back as the dissociated stream of consciousness began to thread itself back into its physical home.

The little snow leopardess was held aloft for an impossibly long ten minutes as her brain returned to a state of passable functionality, and her sense of balance returned. It was as if she was waking up from a long night's sleep filled with sweet,

sexy, biogel dreams and kept hitting the snooze button. Eventually, however, the cold of the gorgon's central platform on her toes woke her up enough to allow her to stumble out of the machine without falling. She collapsed onto one of the chamber's seats and stared up at the ceiling in slack-jawed befuddlement, trying, and failing, to comprehend what had just happened to her body.

"Wow! You look like you have fun!" Sakie giggled, sitting down right next to the little snow leopardess' head, rubbing her warm, soft, and very naked thigh into her hair. "It was awesome wasn't it? So... dreamy and nothing and... like... so pure and perfect. Right?"

"Y... eah?" Chyka responded without really knowing if she agreed or not. There didn't seem to be any real knowing. It was all so cold and tight and, in hindsight with a functioning mind, rather metaphysically comfortable, in a completely dissociated way. None of which made sense. Or did it? She had no way to tell.

Maybe if I tried it again, I could figure it out, the little snow leopardess thought as she pondered it all. *What... no. What the hell am I thinking. I'm not doing that again. Well... I mean. Not today. Definitely not today. Not ever... well... maybe not ever. Possibly. I... augh! Stop thinking about it!*

"Oh! Here. Before I forget," Sakie said, reaching down to scritch Chyka's chin as she put a coupon in her hand. "That's the coupon for High Tail that you came for. Don't lose it!"

"Thank you," Chyka replied softly. She'd pretty much forgotten about the original objective of she and Jumie's outing at this point. It was a convenient reminder, and just the thing to take her mind off what she'd just experienced.

"So. What do you want to do while we wait for your friend?" Sakie asked with a silly, rather mischievous grin. "I'm technically off work now. So... what do you think about some social

cuddling? Maybe tell me all about that shiny black goo you're covered in? It looks really sexy and I'm not going to lie, I've been thinking about buying a starter kit. I'd love to know what it actually feels like."

Chyka's eyes lit up. "Really?" she asked, sitting up and letting the naked cougaress pull her in close. She'd never been much of a social cuddler by feyli standards, but the mention of biogel brought out the Gelitech model in her. Anything for a sale, and all that. "Because I'd be really happy to tell you all about that. And if you let me, I'll even talk you into getting into it yourself. Today. For free."

"Is that so," Sakie chuckled as she began to rub the little snow leopardess' shoulder. "Well then. Go ahead. Give it your best shot!"

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TO BE CONTINUED...