

THE COMPLETE
GELITECH

VOLUME 5
SIDE STORIES

BY SHETIRA ANWAE

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ONE

POWER

"Welcome to the Vixanti Interstellar Systems Life Essence Power Generation Demonstration System," the smooth, deeply effeminate voice of the computer cooed. Its tone was as warm and comforting as it was invoking of the promise of sensual experience to come. A more astute observer might have noticed a subtle undertone of domineering forcefulness, however. The machine wasn't about to ask for consent. It had been purposely designed to assume it.

"Eh, why'd'nt ye shut up for bit, eh lass?" Gorin quipped as he delved waist deep into the mechanism that kept the individual power

Pods level as the whole mechanism rotated for loading.

The Gelarium's power plant, billed as a demonstration system to help entice tourists, consisted of two independent life essence harvesting systems. Set up in a hall beneath the tourist oriented Biogel Hotel, the two plants were configured as horizontal cylinders with domed ends. The cylinders themselves were broken up into a set of twelve carousel-like mechanisms, each consisting of two rotating rings with six individual power pods suspended in between. Each of these pods could accommodate a single volunteer, whose experience could be viewed from start to finish via the large window that filled the door which made up the pod's upper surface.

Together, the power plants could maintain an average output of twenty-eight megawatts. It was a modest amount of power for such a large commitment of personnel, materials, and physical space, but electrical power was only a

portion of the overall power that they were capable of delivering. Energy imparted into the biogel network of the Gelarium and neighboring Anwae Arena was far greater, though its uses were far more limited, at least in a terrestrial environment.

It was aboard starships where these sorts of generators came into their own. The exotic energy could directly power trans-dimensional field coils. These coils would be stacked up around energized biogel tubes. These tubes would typically be mounted parallel to the intended direction of faster-than-light flight. Pulses of energy down the tubes would produce trans-space motion, and differential application of power would be used to maneuver. And it was just one of the numerous ways that this exotic energy could be used to drastically cut a starship's conventional energy needs.

All that was lost on the Gelarium's facilities exotic systems supervisor. He was certainly no

starship engineer. In fact, he was no engineer at all. More of a plumber, to be precise. And a bit of an electrician. And if you needed something hand carved out of a chunk of driftwood, he was the definitely man to see. But when it came to mechanical contrivances, and about ninety percent of everything else that came under his purview, he was most definitely the least handy man in the whole of the facilities staff.

What Gorin did have was a knack for managing resources, and in translating the esoteric requests of various other departments into actual terms that more practical souls could use to achieve the desired results. That was what had gotten him promoted. "Bloody vacations," he huffed as he looked toward the comm on the floor, in the vain hope that one of his more talented mechanical techs would reply to his pleadings for help. "Always has to happen in the middle of the night, when everyone's off on their bloody vacations!"

"Welcome to the Vixanti Interstellar Systems Life Essence Power Generation Demonstration System," the computer again cooed, as it did every time the onset of motion in the room triggered its routine. Every time Gorin moved his exposed legs, the computer would start its spiel, only to stop when his lack of motion caused it to register a false trigger.

"Would ye shut the bloody hell up!" Gorin snapped as he struggled to loosen a bolt. The ratcheting mechanism on this particular pod had locked up. It seemed as if the spring that held the pawl against the main gear had broken and the pieces had jammed the pawl in place. Getting it apart, however, was proving more than merely difficult. His diminutive stature might have made it easy to get into where he needed to be, but his short arms were short of leverage.

To make matters worse, there was no room for power tools. Even with the fairing sections opened up on both the pod and its mounting,

there was only just enough room for an adjustable wrench. "Whoever designed this bloody thing... ought to have... their fingers... stuck... in... GAH!"

With a sharp, metallic clank, Gorin's wrench slipped out of his tired fingers and went careening off into parts unknown. "Fuck'in hell!"

"Welcome to the Vixanti Interstellar Systems Life Essence Power Generation Demonstration System," the computer began again.

"SHUT UP!" Gorin roared.

"Sorry!" came the entirely unexpected reply.

"Mika! Is that you, lass?" Gorin asked, pulling himself out of the machine and back onto the elevated catwalk which served as the loading deck for the power pods.

"Yes," Dr. Mika replied from the chamber floor below.

"Did'je see where me wrench got off to?" Gorin asked.

"I think it landed in a flower pot over here," Dr. Mika replied. "I'll get it for you."

"Thanks a bunch, lassie!" Gorin replied, wiping the sweat off his brow. "Would'a taken me forever to find it."

"This power generation facility is capable of generating up to twenty-eight megawatts of electrical power using nothing but the energy flowing through the connection that binds each volunteer's mind to their immortal, extra-dimensional soul," the computer continued in its firm, bedtime voice.

"How are the new modifications working?" Dr. Mika asked as she poked about among the leaves. "I trust they aren't giving any trouble?"

"No complaints," Gorin replied. "Not like there ever were, though. But gettin the loss rate down te three percent certainly didn do any harm. Can't lie though... the whole comin out in a duplicate o summon else's body was always a laugh. Specially that one lunk who wound up a little blue nobai lass. Couldn comprehend the concept of tits for the life o 'im. Well... her."

Dr. Mika chuckled as she pulled the oily wrench from the planter. "That was quite amusing, wasn't it? Especially when the original started trying to explain the quirks and details of his new body to him. I wonder whatever happened to... her?"

"Not a clue, as usual," Gorin replied. "Shame. Would've made a great model, what with all those insights bout both sexes'n'all, right?"

The computer's routine went on. "In order to obtain this life essence energy, the power

system requires that living, sapient individuals be contained within individual pods. Within these pods, the volunteers are encased in energized biogel, and saturated with trans-space energy until they transition into an outwardly formless, extra-dimensional state."

"Indeed," Dr. Mika responded as she rounded the end of the power plant and started up the stairs toward the exhausted, would-be mechanic. "What's the problem tonight?"

"Broken spring, and for the life'o'me, I canna get off the bolt that's hold'n it place," Gorin replied as his eyes fixed on the approaching scientist. The lack of a disappointing frown on her face quite so out of character that it made his heart skip a beat. So was her perfectly form-fitting coating of pure, glistening, and fully exposed blackness. She had always been so extremely physically shy that seeing her without a full covering of clothing was as much a shock as her lack of grumpiness. "Woah, lassie! If ye didn have

them glasses o yours on, I wouldn'e recognized ye one bit."

Dr. Mika responded with a very reserved half-smile. "Are you sure it's the spring, and not something caught in the mechanism? Didn't Evik do some work on this before he left for vacation?"

"Aye, he did," Gorin replied, scratching his beard. "Hav'n seen anytin out o place, though. An it hasn moved since he worked on it."

The computer continued. "While held in this extra-dimensional state, volunteers find themselves consumed by a formless euphoria, their life essence connections soothed into submission with gentile waves of sweet, ethereal pleasure."

"Maybe he didn't check to see if all the alignment bolts were evened out when he finished," Dr. Mika suggested. "There's very little tolerance. It needs to be perfectly straight, or the energy flow will be dampened

to an unacceptable level. I also imagine that might keep it from moving freely."

"Aye, that... that might be the case," Gorin responded with a nod as he picked up a small sheaf of papers that had been laying on the floor beside where he was working. "Let's see... um..."

"Considering that it hasn't moved since he finished, wouldn't it most likely be the bolts on the front?" Dr. Mika inquired. "Maybe try those first?"

"Right," Gorin replied with a nod and a rather sheepish smile. No doubt it was somewhat embarrassing to the man responsible for supervising maintenance of these sorts of exotic systems to be getting directions from something of a nerdy, overly cerebral lab-wonk. "Didn' know ye were much of an engineer lass. Got a good head for it, if nothin else."

"Just because I work with little things in the lab doesn't mean I don't have to understand how the big things work," Dr. Mika replied. "Or very basic things. In fact, sometimes the basic things are far more interesting. Simple pistons, and gears, and levers, than all seem quite mundane on their own, can be put together to do the most interesting things."

The computer's routine went on, despite the lack of anyone paying attention it. "Thusly aroused, the volunteers' life essence energy connection acquires a greatly elevated state of conductivity. This allows far greater energies to pass through the connection, energies than can be siphoned off without causing any harm whatsoever to those providing it."

"Ye must have some interestin hobbies," Gorin said as he again stuck his nose between the end of the pod and its mounting, this time with a small gadget which would take highly accurate measurements of just about anything it was pointed at.

"Well... I do have quite a nice little collection of model steam engines," Dr. Mika responded as she read the screen over Gorin's shoulder. "Eighteen point five centimeters."

"Aye," Gorin grunted, looking back to the blueprints. "An it's supposed te be fourteen even. No wonder its all locked up! Nice... eh... nice catch. Steam engines, ye say?"

The computer droned on. "To make the analogy with electricity, the connection becomes capable of withstanding more current passing through it. As well, the widening of the connection increases what might be thought of as the voltage. While both of these factors are important, completion of a proper circuit is required in order to actually cause useful energy to flow."

Dr. Mika nodded. "I have eight in my workshop. Six very small ones, and two that are a bit larger. Sized for real, practical application. I use those for... um... well...

things."

Gorin looked over his shoulder and eyed the visibly embarrassed tigress as he applied his wrench to the alignment bolt. "It's okay, lass. There's lot's o folk with the steampunk bug. Ever been te one o them resorts? With the real skyships an all?"

"Yeah... I have," Dr. Mika responded with a little smile. "A while ago. So many mechanical things. All that shiny brass. An gears. And the steam engines. And... yeah. It was... fun. And... inspiring. After meeting Doctor Alluwa, I..."

Gorin let his wrench slip from the bolt as the tigress abruptly stopped. "Woah, now. Dun tell me ye had anything te do with that machine lab o hers down under... did'je?"

Dr. Mika turned away sheepishly.

The computer continued its speech. "Each power pod is akin to a battery. Each battery is connected in series with all those physically in-

line with it. Each series set is then connected in parallel at the ends of each power system. All that is required then, is to complete the loop."

"Ah... well... I suppose yer a far braver lass than I," Gorin responded as he remeasured the alignment bolt. "I hope yer not usin them steam engines for that sort o stuff. That'd be... well... I wouldna wan any o that down near me bits, if ye know what I mean."

"Well... you just have make sure the gear ratios are right, and use an automatic lubricator," Dr. Mika replied softly, eyeing Gorin sideways with an uncertain smile.

Gorin chuckled. "Very funny. I'm sure yer jokin... but... eh... ye know, if yer not... I wouldna mind a watch. Ye know... if ye don mind some company when yer... ye know."

Dr. Mika giggled in a shy, indecisive manner.

The computer went on with its analogy. "Power is directed from the source end of the plant, through a central conduit, to the drain end. Special induction coils surround this conduit, allowing energy to be safely siphoned off into a secondary energized biogel circuit. This secondary circuit enters one side of a biogel-electrical transformer, which directly transforms the energy into electricity."

"Fourteen centimeters," Gorin observed, pointing the measurer at each of the neighboring adjustment bolts in turn. "Fourteen. Fourteen. Was it really jus that one that was munging up the works?"

"Well, I suppose there's only one way to find out," Dr. Mika replied, her tone just ever-so-slightly on the mischievous side.

"Aye," Gorin replied, closing the fairings and locking them into place. He took hold of one of the loading handles and gave it good yank. The pods were designed to only rotate toward the

catwalk, keeping them level while the carousel on which they rode turned the opposite direction. With a deeply satisfying click, the ratcheting mechanism moved one place.

BWEEP! BWEEP!

"Pod misalignment detected," the computer said, cutting off its tourist speech. "Unit one. Section four. Please stand clear while the pod is realigned."

BWEEP! BWEEP!

The pod rolled downward.

"Sounds smooth," Gorin noted with considerable satisfaction as the pod quickly made a nearly complete revolution.

"Very smooth," Dr. Mika agreed softly as the pod door slid open with a soft, strangely sensual hiss. "Though I imagine a more... well... you know. Thorough test is in order."

"This pod is now ready," the computer announced, its smooth, firm voice coming from the pod itself rather than the room's speakers. "You may now proceed with your personal demonstration of this pod's function. Please remove any clothing you may be wearing prior to entering the pod. In consideration of current power needs and volunteer availability, your stay within the pod will be... eleven days."

"Right. So... I take it ye didn't come here to just help me find me wrench, eh lass?" Gorin inquired with a raised eyebrow as he took all of his tools and papers and stuffed them into his utility bag.

Dr. Mika smiled and shrugged her shoulders. "Well... no. Not really. I... I just... need to relax a bit. After all that up in the valley. And not being able to make that staff do anything. Yeah. I need to relax."

"Relax?" Gorin questioned. "If yer wantin' to relax, why'd'je come down here?"

Dr. Mika gestured toward the open pod.

"Ah," Gorin responded with a slightly dejected look on his face. "Well, if it float's yer boat. Ye know... um. Maybe... when ye get out... we can..."

"Have a look at my... steam toys?" Dr. Mika asked with a quick little grin.

"Well, yeah. That," Gorin replied. "You know... an... maybe..."

Dr. Mika again responded with a very sheepish look on her face.

"I mean, it's... eh," Gorin responded.

"Well... I..." Dr. Mika replied with audible hesitance. "I... suppose we could... I could... let you..."

"No pressure, lass," Gorin said with a suddenly concerned expression on his face. "It was jus an idea..."

"I know," Dr. Mika replied with a shallow shrug of her shoulders. "But... well... I... you know... I wouldn't mind if you..."

Gorin's expression lightened. "Well, ye know. Think about it. An when ye get out..."

"I was thinking... well... what about now?" Dr. Mika responded with a bat of her long black eyelashes. "Here... and now. Would you..."

Gorin's jaw fell slack. "Well... I never! I suppose I'd be mighty remiss te refuse ye. But... eh... there's no place here te have a proper go... an..."

Dr. Mika looked toward the pod.

"Oh," Gorin responded, following her gaze. "Uh... ye know that's fully automatic..."

Dr. Mika nodded. "And no override."

"An ye really wanna..."

"Find out what it's like to... to copulate with someone else's soul," Dr. Mika responded softly. "Yeah... I would. It's just... such a strange idea. I've always been curious... and you... here... now... and... well. I was already going to go in there. So... so why not? You wanna try it with me?"

For a moment, Gorin was silent. His expression went from shock, to worry, to perplexity, to anxiety, and on to something that couldn't seem to decide between unfettered lust and considerable displeasure. "Ah... well..."

"I mean, you don't have to," Dr. Mika replied.

"No! No," Gorin said, shaking his head as he looked the shy tigress up and down. Her nipples were starting to show under the surface of her glossy black biogel coating. So too was the crease between her legs. There was nothing he could have done to keep his

own body, and his own biogel coating from replying in kind. "Okay. Ah suppose this place wouldn't fall apart without me for a bit. An... soul sex? I suppose I gotta wonder what that might be like."

"I have no idea," Dr. Mika replied as she stepped up to the edge of the pod, and sat down on the cushions that formed a firm bench from which to enter and exit the pod. She took off her glasses and placed them on the solid barrier which separated the loading points between each section of the power plant. "Come on. Let's... let's... you know. Roll in there together so it doesn't lock one of us out. And then..."

"An then what, lass?" Gorin said, as she slid herself back until he could fit his knees on the cushion between her spread legs.

Dr. Mika shrugged. "I guess then... well... you can see if you manage to give me a filling of your DNA before we both get turned into

goo."

Goring smiled as the pair wiggled themselves back, off the cushions and onto the firmly padded bed within the pod. "Not gonna lie, lass. I don't generally last very long in bed. So..."

Dr. Mika shyly bit her lower lip.

"Alight then," Gorin responded as they shifted fully onto the bed. "Let's... let's do this."

For the moment, the pod remained open. Gorin knelt above his soon-to-be lover as she spread her legs open and shifted to give him as much access as she could in the narrow confines of the pod. He slowly settled down atop her and slid the tip of his now erect, and surprisingly ample manhood down along the folds between her legs.

"You're pretty big for such a little one," Dr. Mika observed with a soft smile as the pod

door finally hissed closed over Gorin's head.

Gorin slid himself into her body. Their biogel coatings merged together as one, first between their legs, and then everywhere they touched. In an instant, they were consumed by a rapidly spiraling feedback loop of hormones and pheromones communicated and amplified by the biogel. Incapable of finding words, they could only fill the pod with primal noises as mindless, animal yearning for complete consummation consumed them both.

If either of the lover's had noticed the glowing pink slime that was stretching out from openings in both ends of the pod, they gave no hint of it. Nor did they react when the energized biogel touched, and merged with the biogel which covered their wildly copulating bodies. Only when this glistening blackness itself began to energize did they sense their impending transfiguration. With a few final, pounding thrusts, Gorin succeeded in giving the tigress the gift of his genetic legacy. In an

instant, her body responded, as those of all feyli are wont to do in reaction to such a gift. The muscular contractions were barely visible through the blackness, quite fittingly, just as the wash of pink energy spread through it.

No sooner where the lovers surrounded in glowing pink biogel, they were lifted together off the bed into the exact center of the power pod. Sparkles of searing white energy began to burst forth from their surface, twinkling in the air around them. The energized biogel formed a taut, form-fitting sheath around them, before beginning to pulsate over them. Wave after wave flowed over their combined shape, each time causing their form to become less defined. Bodies became lumps, and the lumps soon became became fluid.

Amid the fluid, an inner darkness appeared. It seemed to consume the light around it. The whole fluid mass began to spin. Slowly, the energized biogel formed into six thick strands stretching from one end of the pod to the

other, while the thread of inverted space remained within.

The threads of energized biogel continued to throw off sparks of energy. Some of these went outward, shimmering against the walls of the pod before slowly fading away. Most, however, were drawn inward, toward the negative space, not to produce energy, but to produce stability. Through this mechanism, the two living, breathing beings were transfigured into a purely physical structure which spanned numerous additional higher order spatial dimensions, stretching far beyond the bounds of the generally observable universe. A structure that could then be collapsed back into its original state. That was the theory, at any rate. It didn't always work out the way it was supposed to.

Sometimes, the biogel would trigger, and the volunteers would reappear as inanimate, though still very much living biogel dolls. Gummies, and not always of the same gender

as the volunteer who'd become them. Far less commonly, one could one exit the system in a perfect copy of someone else's body. It was always that of another current volunteer within the same power plant. Least common of all, a soul might be lost, presumably to the realm at the other end of their life essence connection, though sometimes they might be pulled through the induction loop, and into whatever biogel network the power plant was connected to.

The chances of all of these untoward fates was now quite small, relatively speaking, but they were still just chances. There was no way for either of the lovers to know if they would ever return to the mortal realm as they'd left it. All they knew was that should anything happen to prevent them from being returned to their normal selves, their fate would be shared. Together. As one. For eternity and beyond.

The carousel rolled. A new, empty pod took its place. "This pod is ready," the computer announced to an empty room. "Awaiting the next volunteer..."

TWO

OBSIDIAN

The tigress bit her lower lip and silently pondered the floating black slab. It seemed more like an altar to some dark god than a mechanism for the permanent relaxation of all genetic inclinations toward the myriad stresses of sapient civilized life. An obsidian edifice, glistening in the flickering candlelight, beckoning voluntary sacrifice upon its perfectly polished surface.

"Are you sure about this?" the finely figured feyli inquired with a soft, timid tone that exposed her own inner uncertainties. It hadn't been her idea, after all, and it was a pretty big leap to take for a woman who didn't really

understand the point of it. All the same, she'd agreed to join her companion for the one-way trip. It had seemed appropriate at the time. Now, however...

"Not really," the pretty, violet skinned elf-eared ashiri replied with a nervous shift of her hips. Her companion may have been perfectly comfortable running around naked in public, but she was clearly far less than enthused. "So... which one of us goes first?"

The tigress shrugged. "It's your people's tradition, isn't it?" she asked with considerable hesitance.

It was their tradition indeed, and one so conceptually outrageous that there mere consideration of it probably ought to have been regarded as proof of insanity. There seemed to be no possible justification for it, save the philosophical platitudes about the wonders of abandoning one's very own self for a purely primal sort of bestial existence. An existence

that hardly justified itself, utterly dependent on those who weren't crazy enough to seek it out for themselves. A horrifying transfiguration of incomprehensibly alien origin. And it was a transfiguration of which thousands quite willingly partook of each and every day.

"I... I guess I'll go first then," the ashiri responded with visible anxiety. Clearly, she was having second thoughts.

The tigress was having quite a few second thoughts of her own, though she knew quite well that they were completely futile at this point. The floating obsidian table wasn't the only alien relic still active in this dark, damp ruin. The stone slab that served as a door had closed behind them, sealing them in until they had both accepted the full measure of their completely voluntary fate.

The ancient structure had been built by the tall, domineering, and extremely aloof alien

race known only by the insulting epithet which the equally ancient and very much extinct key'vin'ta had typically spat in response to even the most passing mention of them, their most implacable rivals in their efforts to conquer the stars: von'kir. The von'kir had long since given up on establishing a foothold in the Core, but their powerful, seemingly magical relics remained and ever-present reminder of their attempted conquest.

Their original purpose long since forgotten, the works of alien artifice had been reinterpreted several times over the ages. Punishment. Entertainment. Divinely prescribed ordeal for the attainment of true enlightenment. A genetic deep massage to soothe away all the cares of sapient life. It could apparently be any of those things and more, depending on the form of the relic, and the context in which it was used.

Exactly what this obsidian table was supposed to be at the moment was a complete

mystery to the tigress. Her ashiri companion had been one of half a dozen men and women who, for whatever reason, had been ordained to enter this dark place and face the power within. Each had picked a non-ashiri companion, seemingly at random off the street. Someone to share in their experience, as they played their part in what was, so far as she could tell, was a weekly celebration. Exactly what it was a celebration of, Goddess only knew, but she'd felt too obligated by their hospitality during her stay to refuse.

The ashiri ran her hand along the edge of the floating table's glossy black surface. The candles in the room seemed to glow brighter, and a subtle odor of jasmine filled the air.

The tigress fingered the cold, gray metal collar that had been locked around her neck when she'd agreed to join in the 'festivities'. It was far more comfortable to wear than it had any right to be. Indeed, it felt quite natural. Appropriate. Pleasant, even. Whether or not it

was von'kir magic at work, or her own mind trying to justify the outrageous act she'd unwittingly committed to performing, she didn't know. Nor did she really want to know. It would just make things even more anxiety inducing than they already were.

"Well... there's no point in putting it off, is there?" the ashiri softly observed as she turned to rest her rump on the table's edge. Her long, pretty ears seemed to quiver as she boosted herself up onto the floating table with both arms. She paused, and looked at her companion with a nervous, uncertain smile. "That you for coming here with me. I... I hope you enjoy this as much as I will."

The tigress sincerely doubted the nervous ashiri was going to enjoy anything about what was about to happen to her. "I really don't understand what there is to enjoy about it. It's..."

"Extremely unpleasant," the ashiri

responded with a deep sigh as she lifted her legs up onto the table's perfectly polished surface. "So unpleasant that it's pleasant, in some sort of horribly perverse way. That's just how it is."

"Why?" the tigress asked as her companion sat herself lengthwise on the floating table. "Why is this even a thing?"

"Because it's... kind of fun," the ashiri replied as she nervously shifted about in preparation to lay back onto the cold, hard surface. "You know. Forbidden knowledge. Finding out what it actually feels like, even if it means... you know. To change. And... and to exist in that way. Because... I mean... aren't you at least a little bit curious about what it's going to be like?"

"Not particularly," the tigress answered with an unsettled frown. She certainly was curious to know what it might feel like. In fact, she was curious to know what quite a few

xenoexperiences might feel like. But she wasn't nearly curious enough to actually go out and try it for herself. Well, not that she had any choice in the matter at this point.

The ashiri shook her head. "Well... you don't have much choice now, do you? So you might as well be curious about it, right?"

The tigress shrugged. "I suppose."

"Well... no more words," the ashiri said softly as she closed her eyes and began to lay back. "It's not like they're going to matter to us anymore, right? Or anything else, really. So... no more words. Just watch me... as I feel... as I..."

"I don't even know your name," the tigress interjected.

"Names don't matter anymore," the ashiri responded, her voice sounding distant and almost cold. "Not now. Not ever. Now hush. Not another word."

The tigress reluctantly nodded as the ashiri let her back settle onto the table's surface. It seemed almost uncouth to not know the name of the one with whom she was sharing this deeply unpleasant experience. Perhaps it was for the best. No name meant no familiarity. No attachment. No concern at any sort of personal level. No need to care what she felt as the alien power took her. What she cried out in desperation as she became fully aware of the truth of the experience on a very intimate level. What she became as a result of the horror inflicted upon her body. Or where she ended up once it was all done.

The thought of simply not caring what happened to the ashiri made the tigress feel wrong. Deeply wrong. One very small step short of evil, even. But everything that happened to the ashiri was going to be inflicted upon her own body before all was said and done. Did the ashiri care about that? Did she care about what the tigress was going to scream as the full measure of the horror

came upon her? Did she care where the tigress was going to end up when the relic had finished its vile work?

Of course the ashiri didn't care. No one cared. If anyone actually cared, this 'celebration' wouldn't be a thing, would it? The tigress was just a disposable object to them. And so was her companion. All that mattered was that they entered the ruins and lay on the table and...

A strange, metallic sizzle filled the air as wisps of luminous white energy formed around the ashiri's wrists and ankles. Shackles made entirely of some exotic, alien energy, they were quickly attached to the table by ethereal chains. Two more chains rose up from either side to take hold of the half-ring on the front of her collar.

The ashiri's arms were pulled out from her sides as the ethereal chains pulled taut. So too were her legs spread slightly open. She could

still move her neck to some degree, and flex her back and hips quite freely, but was otherwise quite firmly restrained.

The tigress bit her lip as she watched her companion squirm upon the table, completely helpless in the grasp of her ethereal bindings. For a brief moment, a twinge of sympathy tugged at her increasingly cold heart. Every passing moment was a moment closer to her own mounting of the table, however. An experience that, unlike the ashiri, she was going to have partake of alone. One would have thought she'd have shown a little more appreciation of that fact.

A new kind of harsh, almost greasy sizzle filled the chamber as a flat plane of nearly transparent yellowish energy formed at the foot of the table, rising up until it was just a bit taller than the ashiri's upturned chin. It's edges undulated in a highly unpredictable fashion, while every so often a little flare would part away and float off in a random

direction. Most of the flares were tiny, and faded away quite quickly, but a few were much larger, and continued on until they struck the walls or ceiling.

The ashiri tensed as the little sheet of alien energy began to move up the table toward her feet. She flexed her toes and wiggled her hips in an abrupt, twitchy kind of way that made her extreme state of nervous anticipation quite clear. Closer and closer the energy came to her toes until, it seemed, she could actually feel it about to touch her. She inhaled sharply as her back tensed into a very uncomfortable looking arch.

The tigress cringed at the horrid noise that came when the energy finally made contact with the ashiri's flesh. It was a positively terrifying mix of spiky electric arcing and sparking, a soft hiss of hot steam, and something that sounded to her very much like meat sizzling on a griddle. The scent of it was all at odds with the sound, however. She could

practically taste the magnificent combination of intense jasmine and a soft, subtle brine.

The tigress gasped as the energy moved past its initial contact and began to make its way up the deeply huffing ashiri's feet. What it left behind was a shriveled gray mockery of what had once been. The woman's toes had become emaciated and leathery looking, far more like those of a mummified corpse than a living creature.

Goddess above! the tigress barely managed to stop herself from blurting aloud. That's... that's...

"Oh... oh... oh," the ashiri began to pant as her feet shriveled up into bony, distorted things. "Oh fuck. Oh fuck. Oh fuck."

The tigress kept her mouth shut. No matter how much she wanted to ask the ashiri how it felt, she'd been told to keep quiet, and quiet she was going to keep. All the same, there was an odd tone to the ashiri's voice that piqued

the tigress' curiosity to the point where she felt almost compelled to speak. There was no expression of horror. No expression of pain. Or even serious discomfort. The ashiri didn't seem quite pleased with what was happening to her feet, but she didn't seem quite displeased with it either. Perhaps there was something to her remark that it was all so unpleasant that it was actually pleasant. Whatever that was supposed to mean.

The energy field sizzled its way up the ashiri's quivering legs. The shriveled results were even more unpleasant to behold than her emaciated feet. There was some muscle left to give her calves shape, but hardly enough to allow her to stand. Or at least that was how it seemed. What had once been birthmarks on her smooth, violet skin became nasty looking little nodules. A few of these moles sprouted thick, dark hairs. Others were dark and twisted in shape.

The tigress could barely stomach the sight

as the energy moved up the ashiri's thighs, leaving nothing but gray, emaciated nastiness in its wake. At the same time, she just couldn't force herself to look away. It was extremely unpleasant to behold, yet so perversely fascinating that she just had to watch every moment of it.

The energy made its way upward, toward its inevitable meeting with the ashiri's soft, puffy womanhood. She wiggled and tensed as it approached. "Oh... oh... ohhhhhh..."

The tigress held her breath as she watched through the energy field itself. As it approached closer. And closer. And...

"AAAAAH!" the ashiri called out as the energy pushed its way up between her legs, her tone expressing a combination surprise, confusion, and not just a little fascination. Her womanly folds went gray and wrinkled up to momentarily expose what lay hidden within. All that too turned gray, but it did not become

an emaciated mockery of its former glory like everything else. Instead, her womanhood closed up and smoothed over until there was no sign that it had ever existed.

The tigress bit her lower lip as she found herself staring at that now barren place where the ashiri's genitals had once been. It was gone. Just like that. Gone. And it wouldn't be very long before the same was going to happen to her.

The very thought of having her most intimate and sensitive of places wiped away and replaced by harsh gray nothing sent a sharp shudder down the tigress' spine. She couldn't even begin to imagine what it might feel like. She really didn't even want to try. But starting at that barren place, squirming back and forth upon the obsidian table... she just couldn't stop herself from thinking about what it might be like. What it would be like, when it came time to do it herself.

As the energy field moved upward into the fullness of the sonorously huffing ashiri's abdomen, more and more little flares of energy were cast off into the chamber. Most were still very tiny and equally short lived. Some, however, were getting to be quite large. They floated off in all directions, and a few began to pass quite close to the tigress as she stared down at the ashiri's belly.

"Ohhh! Ohhh! Yeah," the ashiri huffed as her soft skin shriveled up and pulled taut over her hip bones. Her lower belly shrank inward to the point that it looked like no internal organs were left amid the horribly shrunken and misshapen muscles of her abdomen and lower back. More nasty looking moles appeared, always in places that seemed to accentuate the horrid nature of her new form in the most effective of fashions. "Oh yeah. Oh... oh. Yeah."

The tigress couldn't help but notice the change in the ashiri's voice. She didn't quite seem to actually be enjoying whatever

sensations her progressive emaciation was imposing upon her. She did, however, seem to be quite 'into it', insofar as it was a thing one might get into, if only for the unusual feel of it. That, of course, made the tigress just a bit more curious about what it actually felt like. Was it as bad as it looked to the uninitiated eye, or was it actually interesting enough to be palatable to the senses in some strange way?

Something in motion caught the very edge of the tigress' vision. A puff dust or something, floating toward head from the right. Purely out of instinct, she swatted the unwelcome distraction away with her right hand.

There was no mistaking the sizzle and snap. Nor was there any mistaking the wash of cool, leathery tightness down the length of her fingers. She yelped and recoiled away from the errant little sheet of pale yellow energy, but not before managing to put the rest of her hand through it.

The ashiri managed to stifle her huffing and moaning long enough for a brief giggle at the tigress.

The tigress didn't know what to think as she stared in blank wonder at her gray, emaciated hand, replete with a particularly knobby mole near the base of her little finger. It all felt quite stiff and mildly unpleasant, in a strangely fascinating way. Like a leather glove one size too small, but that leather glove was actually her skin. It wrapped tightly around the bones, leaving little room for much in the way of muscle. It was noticeably weakened, but not nearly as much as she would have expected for such a drastic reduction.

The more she stared and wiggled her shriveled fingers, the less unpleasant and more fascinating the tigress' hand felt. The more she manipulated her transformed hand, the more she actually wanted to know what having other parts of her body similarly treated would feel like. Would it all feel similarly fascinating, in

that same slightly unpleasant, unfamiliar, and thoroughly alien way?

The tigress turned back to her companion on the table and watched as the energy made its way to her tender chest. She wasn't quite sure what she wanted to do more. Should she watch the rest of her companion's transformation? Or should she chase the cast off flares of energy, and see what it would feel like to let them wash over her own tender places?

The tigress decided to watch. Unless, of course, fate sent another flare in her direction. A nice big flare, at just the right height to...

The energy sizzled its way up the ashiri's ribcage, pulling the skin taut and her breasts down and flat along with it. The warm, inviting lumps sizzled away to nothing. Nothing, that is, save the long, dark, knobby nipples that would be the only surviving indicator of what she had been before her transformation.

The ashiri hardly seemed to notice the loss of her breasts. The energy was making its way upward, towards her chin, and the final act in her reduction from a thing of immeasurable beauty into something very much the opposite. She began to huff and pant in a very different tone. A higher tone, and one that came in shorter, sharper bursts.

The tigress ignored the flares as she moved forward along with the alien energy. Little sizzles flared on her body, as bits of fur vanished to reveal little spots of leathery gray flesh. It felt so strange. So unreal. And so... stimulating.

The ashiri inhaled sharply as the energy sizzled up her neck, drawing it all in to half its previous size. Up it went over her chin, leaving behind nothing but tight skin over her jaw bone. Her lush lips shriveled away as her mouth became nothing but a thin, wrinkly slit. Her nostrils opened wide in virtually skeletal appearance, as her cheeks shrank and her

cheek bones protruded. She closed her eyes as her long, pointy ears vanished into tiny wrinkles. Her eyes sunk in. Her forehead grayed and became covered with dark spots and a few unpleasant looking moles. She shuddered as the energy passed beyond her head. And then she let out a low, deeply unpleasant hiss.

The creature was little but a living, breathing corpse. A beast so horrid to look at that only the darkest of minds should have found it acceptable, let alone desirable. Dark minds like those of the long gone von'kir. And like the mind of the tigress who stared in confused fascination at the monster her companion had become.

She knew she should have been disgusted. Repulsed in every way imaginable. But she wasn't. Her hand just felt too... interesting for that. She wanted to feel more. She needed to feel more. To feel what her companion had felt. To partake of that forbidden knowledge and

steep herself in it until...

The energy which had transformed the ashiri stopped at the head of the obsidian table and paused for a few short moments. Then it collapsed and washed over the whole obsidian table's finely polished surface. The creature's glowing bindings of pure alien energy pulled downward. The squirming, hissing beast descended through the field. Through the portal. Into the alien unknown.

The tigress gasped as the glow faded. The chamber fell dark, illuminated only by the dim, flickering candles. "What... where... where did she go?"

For a few moments, the tigress stood in silence. Then she shrugged her shoulders. "Fuck it," she muttered, shaking her head as she flexed her leathery, emaciated fingers. They were actually starting to feel perfectly natural now. A bit nice, even, in a strange sort of way. "Does it even matter?"

The tigress knew well that it didn't matter. The only way out of the chamber was on the top of the obsidian table. To feel what the ashiri had felt. To become what she had become. Where she ended up after that was entirely irrelevant.

The tigress took a deep breath and rested her rump on the edge of the floating table. "Well," she sighed as she hoisted herself up with both hands, "here goes nothing..."

THREE

GONE BUGGY

This seems like a really bad idea, Se'na thought to herself as she pondered the clothing, if it could even be called that, which she had just unpacked and laid out on the glass coffee table. Eh... fuck it. It's not like I've got anything better to do today.

The lavender skinned elf-ear had paid good money for the outfit. Four hundred and twenty-five credits, to be precise. It was an insane price to pay for just a matching sport top, pants with integral boots, elbow gloves, and a lower-face mask. It was doubly insane a price to pay for this particular selection. But she'd paid it. And she still wasn't exactly sure

why.

Maybe it was the sheer strangeness and bizarre novelty that had attracted her to it. It was all so unlike anything she'd ever seen before. A fully organic costume as unsettling to behold as it surely would be to slip into. A bug suit, who's sole apparent purpose was to give its wearer the most prominent physical features possessed by those nasty little walnut-brained rowa worker-drone creatures.

Se'na had always found worker-drones incredibly disgusting to behold. Simply inhaling their musty, briny odor invariably gave her a warm tingle of completely involuntary sexual arousal, making them even more repulsive to her senses. And the fact that each and every one of them had once been a woman just like herself utterly horrified her. But it also fascinated her in a darkly perverse sort of way. As reviled as she might have been by the mere presence of such monstrosities, she could never quite stop herself from

wondering what it must have all been like for those who'd become them.

Or perhaps it was the patently outrageous idea that she might actually, and willingly, offer up her body to the outfit's horrid nature by putting it all on. Surely it was never intended to actually be worn. Surely it was just a fetishy décor accessory to be kept on display. Surely it was only a disingenuous expression of one's willingness to contemplate wearing it all, without ever being obligated to go through with it. An expensive trophy to be shown off by those claiming to be hive-curious, rather than a mechanism eventually leading one into the hive itself.

I'm soooo going to regret this, Se'na mused in silence as she gazed at the collection of enlarged and largely hollow worker-done body parts. But... why not? It's not like I'm going to care afterwards.

While Se'na might not quite have been sure

why she'd bought them when they'd first gone on sale six months before, she was very sure why she'd taken them all out on this particularly dreary evening. She'd had them all out before, of course, to examine each piece and its unsettling physical features. To contemplate the consequences, and steep her brain in their strange, pleasantly unpleasant odor. But today. Today was different. Today she was bored. One might say existentially bored. The vile looking bug bits seemed like the perfect thing to occupy considerably more than just her mind.

Existential boredom was a trait quite common among longer lived peoples such as the elf-eared ashiri, the ram-horned mitanni, and of course, the 'nine-lived' feline feyli. It was a fundamental part of multi-century sapient life, and one which quite a number of other species had evolved to take advantage of. Vegetable, bestial, and even some which were fully sapient, these organisms had come to offer the subjects of existential boredom

various easy, yet non-fatal, ways to escape their current life condition while advancing their own biological, social, and sometimes even political objectives.

Chief among such species in the Feyli Empire were the insectoid rowa. Their species' entire life cycle was dependent on the acquisition of sapient life forms to be physically transformed into more useful rowaform creatures. Utterly disgusting, lesser sub-species whose purposes ranged from labor, to battle, to reproduction, depending on each individual form. Subspecies such as the diminutive, formerly-female worker-drones whose bodies Se'na's outfit was intended to replicate.

There was nothing nice about worker-drones. Nothing pleasant. Nothing at all to redeem their pure physical nastiness. They were vile creatures who bubbled and spit pheromone laden mucous from vaginal-oral orifices, and generally made themselves a

messy nuisance whenever, and wherever they appeared. And yet, wherever hives were allowed to be established, countless women happily offered up their bodies to become these creatures, who's outward purpose seemed simply to exist and be annoying to people living in proximity to the hive. It all seemed so pointless. So senseless. So... insane.

Se'na reached down and picked up the pants. They looked very much as if someone had taken the lower abdomen and legs of an expired worker drone and hollowed them out for use as clothing. A very unusually large worker-drone, from the size of it. She'd have no trouble sliding her feet down the chitinous black lower legs and into the tri-toed feet if she were so inclined to do so. Nor would she have any issue getting her pleasantly shaped thighs and posterior into the leathery, grub-like, off-white upper legs and abdomen.

The ashiri ran her thumbs along the leathery black rim of the insectoid pants and

gazed into their glistening, fleshy, deep gray interior. The scent that wafted forth filled her nose, and offered her that familiar tingle of involuntary arousal that inevitably came along with it. *Why do they always have to try and make you want to fuck their nastiest shit?* She thought as she gazed down at the two protruding lumps in the crotch of the pants. Why they'd bothered to include such features was a mystery to her. They didn't seem to have any functional purpose. There was no mistaking where they were intended to go, however. *I guess those don't look too bad. The insides are slippery enough. Shouldn't be too uncomfortable.*

Se'na took in another lung-full of the musty odor. Ashiri weren't nearly as susceptible to pheromone-induced involuntary sexual arousal as other species such as the feyli and mitanni were. Each breath brought with it just a hair's worth of heightened arousal, and the more she took it in, the more she began to appreciate its effects. After a minute of gazing down at those

two intimidating protrusions and breathing in the pheromones, she began to feel disturbingly attracted to it all.

This must be what bees feel like when they smell flowers, Se'na thought as she bit her lower lip. *This is so... so... nasty. Fuck. What am I waiting for?*

Se'na dropped the bug pants to the floor and lifted her feet into the opening. The firmness of the leathery abdomen and upper legs made the movement awkward, as she found herself obligated to slide both legs in at once. The plush couch cushions certainly weren't helping as she slid her calves down into their respective fleshy tunnels. She wouldn't be able to get it much further than her knees without a lot of wiggling and squirming. She began to wonder just how anyone was expected to put the things on by themselves.

This doesn't feel too awful, she thought as she contemplated the feel of her lower legs

within the soft, snug flesh within the pants. The shiny flesh felt slick to the touch. It was also starting to feel moist. She looked down to discover that the whole of the interior was covered in a thick, sticky mucous. Every little movement of her legs caused some to splatter up onto her thighs, and all over the couch and carpet.

"Oh... EEEEEW!" Se'na groaned as a wave of particularly strong brine filled her nose. Her arousal spiked in response to the copious pheromones being released along with the mucous. So too did her disgust with the whole thing. "Oh... this is awful! Why the hells am I doing this again? Ugh! Nasty! The carpet... ah... shit. Ah... why do I even care?"

At this point, there was little that Se'na could do but heave her legs up on the couch along with the increasingly slimy pants and wiggle them up into place. *This is so awkward*, she thought as she squirmed and pulled on the increasingly hard to grip rim of the pants. As

her legs went in deeper, the tunnel of flesh felt tighter. Unlike the leathery upper legs, the chitinous lower legs had no give to them at all. *How the hell are my feet going to get through the ankles of this thing? It's getting too tight. Way too...*

Se'na gasped as pulled the pants up toward the top of her thighs. She could feel the protrusions poking into her tender places, just as her feet came to the point where it seemed the could go no further. If the little pamphlet that had come with her outfit was correct, just a hair more and she would pass the point of no return. The point where the pants became something other than just pants. She stopped her wiggling and began to have second thoughts.

Maybe I shouldn't, she thought to herself as she pondered the feeling of those two poking members that were about to enter her body. *Not right now. Not today. Maybe tomorrow? Ah... I don't know. I thought I was ready, but*

now I'm not sure. What should I do? Should I wait? This is going to be such an awful mess to clean up though. Maybe I should just do it and get it over with. It doesn't feel too bad so far. Maybe it'll feel even better as it goes. Or maybe not. I just... I just...

Se'na flexed her hips from side to side as she debated whether or not to proceed. She didn't mind the feel of the well lubricated protrusions sliding back and forth over her most intimate of places. The one as it toked upon each womanly fold in its turn, all the while looming right beneath that tight little tunnel that seemed so confused as to whether or not its prospective penetrant was a desirable visitor. The other as it pressed from side to side against her soft ass-cheeks, its rather blunt-feeling tip ticking her virgin anus as it went.

Yes? No? I don't know. I really, really don't know, she silently pondered. This is all so... so insane. But...

Without any warning whatsoever, it felt as if Se'na's toes were getting somehow slimier than the mucous that coated them. Then the rest of her feet began to feel the same way. Then the sensation began to crawl up her legs, and along with it, so too did the pants themselves.

"Fuck!" Se'na hissed as she realized that her contemplative flexing had somehow managed to move her just deeper enough into the pants to trigger the final act. The pair of probing protrusions entered her body without the least bit of resistance whatsoever. Despite her still slowly rising state of arousal, and the pleasant sensations of the foreplay, their filling of her tender orifices didn't feel particularly good. Indeed, it felt far more like she was being subjected to some sort of alien medical procedure than being treated to a bit of light lovemaking prior to...

Se'na inhaled sharply as the full measure of what was about to happen to her body finally

made its much belated appearance in her mind. She cringed as she felt the rim of the pants slide up onto her hips, and the crotch come fully, and firmly up between her legs. Her toes no longer felt liquid. They didn't feel at all. Or, rather, they felt like three things that she knew were there mostly by where they started and stopped moving, two to the front of each foot and one to the rear.

Upward the strange sensations flowed, one the feeling of liquefaction, followed by a strange, hard nothing. Se'na wasn't wearing the pants, so much as she was becoming them. Or, more accurately, they were becoming her, using her own flesh as fuel for the rather uncomfortable, yet completely painless transformation of her lower body into the lower body of a rather more generously proportioned rowa worker-drone.

The transformation was no mere veneer insinuating itself into the skin of its subject. Everything which the 'pants' surrounded was

becoming fully, and very permanently, the genuine flesh of a worker-drone. Just as with the worker drones, this new flesh was fully, genetically compatible with its subject, ensuring that their body would treat the transformed portions as if they had always been part of the subject's body, both during and after the transformation itself.

Nothing subjected to the transformation's effects would be left as it was. Not even such tender places as the rise of the fluid sensation was now rapidly approaching. Se'na could only shudder and gasp as it found her womanhood. For a brief, intensely arousing moment, she found herself hanging between two worlds. Instinctively, she slapped both hands down between her legs and tried to capture one last, supremely euphoric moment before all was lost. All her fingers found was a cool, leathery, and perfectly featureless surface.

In that moment of momentary confusion and frantic rubbing, all of Se'na's physical and

mental arousal collapsed into the abyss of liquid nothing. It felt as if her flesh, her womanhood, her everything, had simply imploded inward and left virtually nothing in its wake. She fell limp, unable to quite comprehend what had just happened to her body.

Oh... oh... no... It... I... I... she thought as the second wave of sensation made its way from the chitinous nothing around her knees into the dull, leathery something of the grub-like segments on her upper legs. I really... I really did it. I really did it. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck!

All that Se'na could do was lay there on her mucous slathered couch and feel as the leathery sensation spread upward, over her thighs and into that barren place between her legs. Again her hands slipped to the smooth surface, and she probed for something, anything that might remind her of what had once been there. There was no response. Not even the slightest tingle.

Se'na's crotch felt felt no different than her firm upper legs. Or her hard hips. Or her tight, rather reduced rump. It was all the same. The same sort of skin. Or carapace. Or whatever it was they called a grub's flesh.

I can't believe I actually did it, Se'na thought as she lay staring at the white ceiling of her apartment. I can't believe I'm actually becoming a bug... thing. It feel so gross! So nasty! But... fuck. Fuck. Why do I feel like I have to go further? To put the rest of it on?

Of course, the ashiri knew well why she felt as if she had to put the rest of her outfit on. The pamphlet had been very clear on that point. Once she'd joined with the first part, it would fill her with hormones who's only purpose was to compel her to join with the rest of the matching set. So long as any unworn piece remained in smelling range, she wouldn't be able to stop until she'd joined with them all.

Se'na sat up and gingerly pressed her new

bug-feet into the slimy carpet. They were certainly awkward to place any weight on. Then again, they'd been evolved to support someone at best half her weight. It was going to take quite a lot of practice to be able to walk properly.

The ashiri contemplated the remaining pieces. There was the mask, in all it's ugly pussy-face glory, but that seemed like something best left for last. There were the two elbow gloves, but those might make putting the top on rather awkward with only two bony, unfeeling bug-fingers and a thumb on each hand. That left the 'sport top', and the promise of doing away with those two soft lumps of life sustaining flesh that were now little more than an unpleasant reminder of what had used to reside between her legs.

The sport top seemed like it would be particularly hard to get into. It was all leathery, grub-like segments, just like her upper legs and abdomen. There were openings

for her head, arms and torso, but both the former and latter seemed much too constricted for her to fit her head through. To her surprise, and unlike any other time she'd examined it, the zig-zag lines where the back segments met the front segments began to part, exposing a stretchy sort of flesh that would allow her to squeeze herself inside.

Well... here we go again, she thought as the top's shiny gray interior began to ooze smelly mucous. This time, however, there was nothing left for the pheromones to arouse. Instead, it just made her feel strangely 'off' as she lifted the thing over her head. Mucous drizzled all over her head and chest, turning her long, deep violet ponytail into a slimy mop that clung to her back. *Yuck! Why the hells does it have to be so messy?*

Se'na slid both of her arms into the top and through the arm holes. Getting it stretched over her head was almost as awkward as wiggling her thighs into the pants. She couldn't

stop the mucous from getting into her nose and mouth her head pushed up and through the neck. It tasted almost as salty as seawater, and just a bit like candied apples. She was sure the latter bit was entirely her imagination, but she rolled with it just to make the inevitable need to swallow the foul goo a bit more palatable. And have to swallow, she did. Not once, or twice, but five times before she finally popped out of the top of the neck.

"Gah!" Se'na spat as she reached up in an effort to clear the sticky mucous from her eyes. As she did so, the top abruptly pulled closed around her back and chest, squishing her modest breasts almost flat in a very uncomfortable fashion. "What... come on! Be gentle, dammit!"

The ashiri's mammary discomfort didn't last long. This time, the liquid sensation encompassed the full of her torso and neck, all at once. Her breasts melted away in an instant, and with them all sense of discomfort. Her

heart seemed to stop, and she couldn't feel the air passing down into her lungs as she continued to breathe. At least she thought she was continuing to breathe. She couldn't tell until the liquid nothing was replaced by the dull leathery sensations of her body's newest set of grub-segments.

For a few moments, Se'na rubbed her flat, leathery chest and pondered the strange feeling of being flexible in a place and fashion she'd never been flexible before. As she bent forward, her whole torso curved forward in a perfect arc. She could feel the segments press against one another, shift, and stretch along with every bend and twist. Through all this contortion, she didn't once feel any effect on her lungs, or her faint, distant seeming heart. Surely it must have been compressing her organs? Twisting them into unnatural shapes? Squeezing the life out them with every broad motion?

The fact that she could straight up twist her

torso completely sideways without turning at her waist was so intensely surreal that the ashiri began to feel a bit faint. But was it the surreality of it, or was she actually squeezing her innards in ways they'd never been meant to? She didn't know. The pamphlet hadn't mentioned that at all.

This is all so fucking weird, Se'na thought to herself as she turned back to the coffee table and reached for the gloves. Let's just get this over with. Maybe it'll make more sense to me once it's all done.

The gloves were much like the lower legs of the pants in that they were chitinous and black in coloration. She picked up the left hand glove and slipped her hand into its slimy orifice. By now she was so completely slathered in mucous that a little more didn't bother her. She thrust her arm deep into the tight tunnel, pushing her fingers straight into the fingers of the glove, with the top coming to a stop about a third of the way up her upper arm.

Again, Se'na felt the liquid sensation, this time starting at her fingers. She only paid it attention long enough for it to be displaced by the more solid feel of her new bug-hand. It was a far easier extremity to make immediate use of than her still quite sketchy bug-feet. She immediately picked up the other glove and thrust her right arm all the way into it.

Oh... this all feels so... so... so fucking weird! Se'na thought as the gloves transformed her arms into slender black bug-arms from just above the shoulder down. At the same time, her legs seemed to tighten up, and become thinner. So too did her torso, becoming just a bit less disturbingly flexible as it shrank. *Ah... oh! Is that how this works? The more bits I put on, the closer I get to being a worker-drone?*

Se'na sat in silent contemplation of her new bug-parts. She wasn't nearly so disgusted by all things rowa anymore. She still thought it was all quite vile and nasty. But now she was just as vile and nasty. Just thinking about that

fact brought her considerable amusement. Of course, she wasn't quite as vile and nasty as she could be, even though she was a sexless half-bug sitting in a mess of sticky, smelly bug-mucous. Sticky, smelly bug mucous that tasted so very, very interesting.

Again, the ashiri tasted the mucous that covered her virtually from head to toe. It still tasted like brine, but now the candied apple flavor was much more distinct. It wasn't at all unpleasant, and she just couldn't help but keep scraping little gobs onto her bug-fingers and licking it off like candy.

An hour passed. And then another hour. Bit by bit, Se'na licked up most of the mess that hadn't soaked into the couch or carpet. The more she consumed, the more that she felt at ease with her new body parts. Without even thinking, she'd stood up and walked on her awkward bug-feet as if she'd always had them. She wanted to look at herself in the mirror before she finished what she'd begun. To look

at that slender nose, and those lush, deep violet lips that were about to go the way of her sex. One last time.

I look horrible, she thought as she looked at her face. It just didn't seem right. It didn't seem natural. It wasn't like the rest of her beautiful body. Her new, beautiful, half-bug body. Ugh. I... I've got to do something about that. Got to... got to put my real face on.

Real... face, Se'na thought as she headed back to the couch, and the mask that lay by itself on the coffee table. Is that what this has come to? I can't even tell what's natural and what's not anymore? What's me and what's it? Oh... who the hell cares? I don't care. And I don't need to care. Once it's done... once it's done, I'll never need to care. So... so here we go. Bye bye Se'na. Hello walnut-brain.

Se'na picked up the chitinous black mask and looked at its big, round mandibles for a moment. She ran her bug-fingers over the

sides which would cover her lower cheeks and help meld it with her top around the neck. Then she turned it to contemplate the slender, blunt protrusion that she was about to slide into her mouth.

It wasn't so long that she thought it might be uncomfortable going in, but its implication gave her a moment's pause. It currently formed the interior of the mask's vaginal looking mouth orifice. That interior wouldn't stay nearly as small once she'd put on the mask. It, along with its highly efficient mucous glands, would soon occupy much of her considerably restructured head.

The pamphlet had claimed that she wouldn't stop being who she was. That she wouldn't lose all her memories and individual traits like real worker-drones did. But she didn't really believe it. How could she? Even the pamphlet showed how tiny her brain was going to become. Walnut sized, just like the real worker-drones.

Se'na didn't give it a second thought. After all, it didn't really matter, did it? She was going to become what she was going to become, and that was that. She took the mask and placed it solidly on her face. The protrusion slid over her tongue and filled her mouth the momentary taste of pure candied apples, unaccompanied by the sharp saltiness of the other outfit pieces' mucous. It was a final treat for the new half-rowa, albeit a very brief one.

The mask instantly adhered to Se'na's face, and the liquid sensation came on hard and fast. In an instant, everything from the bridge of her nose, down over her cheek bones, and around under her chin had vanished. For a brief moment, she could feel the protrusion in her mouth growing thicker and stretching back toward her tonsils. Then her mouth was gone, along with her sinuses. The whole world began to seem foggy. Distant. Almost unreal.

Se'na could begin to feel her new face. Her

mandibles flexed and revealed the glistening pink folds of flesh that made her soft, mucous bubbling oral orifice look almost exactly like the inner labia and vaginal tunnel of her vanished womanhood. Beside these were well hidden breathing orifices, completely separate from her gooey, gummy mouth.

"Mp... nf... pft!" she mouthed, causing gobs of mucous to spray all over the coffee table in front of her. She could feel the entirety of her oral tunnel's interior. From the gummy folds of pink flesh, to the little opening where her actual throat branched off, and all the way to the back of her skull.

It was all quite dizzyingly disconcerting, and Se'na grabbed at her mouth with her right hand. Her fingers pressed against the upper peak of the pink folds, and she found herself instantly, and quite intensely physically aroused. Not between the legs, but right there in her mouth. In her head. Almost straight into her now quite minuscule brain.

At least, that was how it felt. Her walnut sized brain was safe in the front of her restructured skull now, well protected from probing fingers, and the sorts of tasty treats that tended to find such inviting openings a nice place to visit. But there was no getting over the fact that she could feel her new sexual orifice reading itself for a potential meal, right back to where it pressed against the back of her skull. And the more she toked at her new mouth, the more aroused it all became.

Se'na couldn't help herself. She just had to try to make her new orifice sing itself to orgasmic glory. It didn't take long. Fifteen seconds was all it took before a crescendo of euphoric pleasure caused her little brain to go momentarily blind to everything but the pulses of release. Each of these oral convulsions was accompanied by a messy spray of mucous that splattered all over the coffee table, the floor, and even the opposite wall.

It was just too much to handle. The new

half-rowa fell back on the couch and again stared up at the white ceiling. She began to think about what she would do now that she'd become something so different than what she had been. Her mind failed her.

She was still Se'na. She could remember everything that came before. But, for the life of her, she couldn't quite figure out why so much of it was the way it was. It was all so complicated. Far too complicated for a bug girl like her.

Se'na thought about the pamphlet. It had given a contact for someone who'd help her begin her new bug girl life. She'd have to do that. In the morning. After she'd played some more. After she'd slept. After she'd had a proper bug girl meal... if she could find one. A tasty one, with a nice, big...

For a brief moment, the old Se'na came back. Oral sex had never appealed to her, let alone the idea of actually consuming the

results. But that was how worker-drones fed, wasn't it? Usually that was in the hive, from other rowaform creatures who existed only to offer such sustenance. But for her, for now, it would have to come from other sources. But where was she going to find someone?

She remembered a neighbor, three floors down, who she'd seen getting a half-torn open package with a xeno-erotic video cartridge in it. A very bug themed video cartridge. She stood up and headed for the door. The poor guy had seemed so horribly embarrassed that she'd seen him with that vid-cart. But now... now she could make it up to him, and make all his buggy fantasies a reality! It was going to be such fun!

FOUR

IN A BOTTLE

It *seemed* innocent enough. It was just a weird looking bottle. Wasn't it?

Denya held the large crystal flask aloft and admired its strange, almost otherworldly beauty. Its countless crisp, clear facets glimmered in the morning sunlight, casting bright, colorful little rays all over her little one room apartment. These little scales formed a perfectly regular pattern that spiraled up around the whole of the flask's surface, broken only by a bubbly, fluid stream of vivid pink. This eye-catching splash of color formed a pool around the flask's base, rising up in fluid threads around it's voluptuously curved sides

and long, slender neck, before forming a smooth roll around its mouth.

The mouth of the flask was closed by a tall, oval plug of vivid pink crystal. This fit so well that it made a perfect seal. No matter how much the cougaress turned the flask about, it didn't wobble, rattle, or come loose. It would have been the perfect container to hold a bottle's worth of wine to share among guests, if she'd been the sort to drink wine. Or had any room for guests.

Denya looked back at the package in which the flask had come. It was a fancy faux-wood box, matte black and held together with a lovely pink, postal service approved, gift-parcel ribbon. There was no return address. Nor was there much to indicate that it had even been sent to the right place.

The cougaress carefully rechecked the shipping label. It was her address, all right. But, instead of a name, it simply read "Current

Resident". If it had been a piece of junk mail, or an inexpensive sample from some local business trying to attract new customers, that would have made perfect sense. This was anything but that. It was something special. Something expensive. A gift, and almost certainly not a random one.

But... if the flask hadn't been sent out at random, then why had she been picked to receive one? And where had it come from? Who had sent it? It was a puzzle, for sure, and it was one that had been occupying her mind all morning.

There was only one, impossibly vague hint. It was found on a piece of yellowed, old-timey style paper that had been carefully clued to the underside of the lid. "A very special gift, very specially ordered, for a very special fey'li. ~ Your most thoroughly enthralled paramour," Denya read the faux-calligraphy script aloud, shaking her head at the thought that anyone could be so thoroughly enthralled with a

grouchy night shift nurse, let alone enough to send such a seemingly expensive gift.

Granted, the modestly attractive, middle-aged cougaress was always encountering patients who'd expressed more than just a passing interest in her fuzzy fey'li tail. It was hard to imagine anyone being attracted to her blunt, scowly demeanor. Then again, it was Macharri. The vets were used to taking orders from cats with attitude. Maybe she was inadvertently providing them some sort of comfortable familiarity. Or maybe they were just too buzzed on medications to notice how much of an ass she could be, despite the enticing roundness of her rump.

The hint, if it could really be called that, was accompanied by an equally puzzling riddle of sorts. "The Genie's Bottle," the cougaress murmured as she continued on to the next part of the label. "This carefully hand crafted bottle has been specially enhanced to hold and preserve even the most magical of liquid

spirits. The rest is up to you. Will it contain the liquid spirit of some other beauty? Or... will it contain your own?"

That... that just sounds silly, Denya thought to herself as she wondered just what sort of potent liquor had inspired such a fantastical description of the flask's most likely intended use. Assuming that it's most likely intended use was to hold alcoholic beverages, of course. That's what liquid spirits meant, wasn't it?

Now... what to do with it, she thought as she placed the flask down on the little smoky glass dining table, next to the box it had come in. Where to place the lovely flask was as much of a puzzle as it's origin. Her plain apartment, with its sterile white surfaces and dark wooden furniture was hardly the kind of place for the display of fancy baubles. *I could put it on the shelf over there. In place of the picture frame. But... it's so much fancier than anything else I have. It'll look so out of place.*

Denya began to run her finger over the top of the flask's smooth, round plug as she contemplated what to do with it. It felt quite solidly gripped in the flask's mouth, at least at first. After a few moments, however, it began to wobble. Without really thinking about it, she began to rock the plug back and forth. After a few moments of that, she started to move it around in a circle. Slowly, bit by bit, it began to work its way out. A faint, jasmine scent wafted into her nose.

"Oh! That smells nice," Denya said, holding the plug canted to one side and taking in the pleasant scent. It wasn't the sort of thing one would expect from a container intended to hold drinkable liquid. Perhaps this flask was intended for some other purpose. Perfume? Or maybe scented oil?

Oh! Maybe it already has something in it, the curious cougaress thought as she plucked the loosened plug from the flask's mouth. It hadn't before occurred to her that the flask might

already be filled with some sort of clear liquid. But what sort of liquid could it be? *Let's see...*

A wave of intense jasmine surrounded Denya as she looked down into the open flask. Within the flask's faceted walls, the sunlight glittered and danced about in a mesmerizing tangle of rays, sparkles, and... an intangible *something*. Something ethereal. Something luminous. Something potent. Something...

Oh! What... the befuddled cougaress thought as it seemed to her eyes that the *something* was flowing out of the bottle, even though it was held perfectly upright. It seemed to defy comprehension, a vision like oil upon water, but in the air itself. A slowly billowing cloud, bending light and breaking it into colors that cast a rainbow filter over the table, the box, the flask, and the hand with which she held it. *What... the...*

Denya had no time to react. In but a few short moments, the cloud flowed over her

chest before spreading outward to surround her whole body in colorful jasmine *something*. Her form fitting blue top and black shorts were no impediment to its spread. It flowed into, around, and under the fabric. Before she knew it, she was completely surrounded in the stuff from head to toe.

"Uh..." the cougaress gasped, more confused than alarmed. Portable, field projection containers designed to automatically apply full body coatings of things like disinfectants, hazardous chemical neutralizers, and the like were nothing new. They had them at the hospital. But for perfume? That was something new to her. Not that she minded. It was quite a wonderful scent, after all.

Denya moved to put the plug back into the flask, but stopped short as a strange, cool tingle washed over the whole of her body. She started to feel numb. The plug dropped onto the table as her whole body began to feel weak. Limp. Almost... liquid.

The room began to whirl about in a dizzying spiral that seemed to defy the laws of physics. She was spinning. Spinning quickly. Around and around and around and up and around and then down. She felt smaller, and smaller, and smaller. A firm squeeze. A settling in some confined space. Staring up at the ceiling. Eyes filled with sparkles. A pink shape descending. The world closed away with a sharp 'thunk'. And then...

What... what... the... fuck!?! Denya thought as her view of the world devolved into a cacophony of rainbow sparkles flashing amid fluid threads of pink luminescence. *What... what just happened?*

Impossible sensations did their best to make the astonished cougaress question reality. She could hear only twinkly chimes, which seemed to rise and fall with the all encompassing sparkles. She could smell only jasmine. She could taste only a subtly, fruity flavor, like cherries, but smoother and less distinct. Her

body itself felt like a dull, distant nothing. Or was it a something? There was a coolness. A roundness. A strange uniformity of substance.

Oh... oh goddess! I'm... I'm in the bottle! Denya thought as she struggled to maintain some degree of mental focus. I'm the liquid spirit! What the... how? How it even possible? It can't be! I can't be... I... I... can I?

The bottled genie struggled to comprehend her new physical state, even as she began to fade into a dreamy world of dancing light pixies, singing their strange songs as she bathed in a warm, jasmine scented bath, surrounded by trays and trays of delectable fruit. Nothing seemed to matter any more. Nothing but the soft, involuntarily euphoric feeling that saturated the whole of her whirling mind and formless body.

It was wonderful. Beyond wonderful, really. Every moment existed as it was, unfettered by memories of past moments, or anticipation of

future moments. The vision, the smells, the scents, were as fresh and intense in the current moment as they were in the first. There was no need to think. No need to ponder. No need to do anything but steep in the glorious, unending *now*.

It was impossible for the genie to know how much time had passed, for time didn't pass at all for her. Her dream just was. Until the moment that it wasn't.

All at once, the genie's world began to whirl about in a madness of blinding rainbow light. Her formless form began to take a more definite shape. A much larger shape, and one that felt vaguely familiar, in a distant, dreamy sort of way.

The genie stood in glistening, transparent, faceless humanoid gloriousness as her summoner reached out to run an affectionate hand over her oily smooth shoulder. Another hand gestured toward a nearby surface. A soft

looking surface upon which she could comfortably lay and receive whatever blessings her new master might be pleased to give her.

The genie wasn't compelled to do as her new master pleased. She just didn't have any reason not to. Her mind was empty, completely cleansed of everything relating to her former life. Bereft of any form of willpower, anything her new master desired was as desirable to her as it was to him.

The genie's master again gestured toward the bed he desired her to occupy. She obeyed.

...

"I don't think she remembered signing up for the project, do you?" Dr. K'trie remarked as the scanner began to make its way down the examination table.

"I don't think she even read the form explaining what she was signing up for, to be honest," Dr. Miyar commented as her research partner watched the image being formed on the monitor. "But she doesn't seem to mind it, does she?"

"I don't think she can at this point," Dr. K'trie responded with a shrug as he watched the data come in. "Eh. It's all good. The more we can learn about these 'genies', and the quicker, the better. Intel is all worried that they're intended for use as some kind of bedroom infiltrators, but for the life of me, I can't imagine how."

"Intel and their imaginations," Dr. Miyar sighed. "Do you remember the time they tried to claim that Drochaki hives were brainwashing facilities to create an army of compliant soldiers to conquer the Empire? More like an army of honey addicts."

Dr. K'trie chuckled. "That was a good one."

"Ah well," Dr. Miyar said with a smirk. "Let's hope we can learn something from this thing, at least. It's quite a unique transformation. Those Aveyka carnies always come up with the strangest and most fascinating things. It's such a shame the fancy crystal-tech bottles are so expensive though. I don't think we can justify a second one in the budget. Maybe we shouldn't have let them send it directly to her as a surprise gift."

"A lab setting might have affected her resulting mental state," Dr. K'trie responded, "Besides, if we get good data from this, we'll have a good chance of getting all the credits we need to buy more."

"I certainly hope so," Dr. Miyar replied. "I really would enjoy watching the transformation in person."

"That makes two of us," Dr. K'trie said with a smile. "Now... assuming she's not found to be dangerous in this form, what are we doing

with her once we're done with the examination?"

"She didn't specify," Dr. Miyar said, looking over her consent forms again. "So that means the default option. No specific preferences for the sex of the receiver. Research team's discretion."

"Well then," Dr. K'trie responded with a chuckle. "Toss a coin for her?"

Dr. Miyar shook her head and laughed. "Seriously? Alright then. A coin toss it is. Loser gets the next one, though. Got it? Fair's fair."

Dr. K'trie nodded as he watched the scanner begin its second pass over the prostrate genie with a grin. "Agreed. Now, lets start getting the hormono-pheromono emission test prepped. I want to get that settled before lunch. The cafeteria is serving hampai tacos until thirteen hundred today and I really don't want to miss them!"

FIVE

THE LOVERS' BEND

There were many machines spread throughout the Gelarium's private upper level chambers. Many means through which a living, breathing guest might become a nearly inanimate, yet still living object of one hundred percent pure biogel. None, however, struck Paro's particular fancy more than the simple, yet astonishingly enjoyable 'Lover's Bend'.

The tigress who currently knelt before Paro was enjoying her brand new coating of glistening black biogel. He could see her smiling in the reflection on the equally glossy surface of the biogel mattress. She huffed softly with every thrust of his thighs. Growled,

friendly-like, with every firm squeeze of her gloriously firm hips. Slapped him in the face with her tail, every time he thumped her soft rump just a bit too hard.

Paro was almost completely enthralled. This wonderful tigress was by far the best impromptu lover with whom he'd ever had the pleasure of sharing such a glorious workplace moment. A woefully fleeting moment, as it always was. But a truly magnificent moment nonetheless.

Technically, Paro wasn't supposed to be offering this particular sort of service to Gelarium guests. Models generally weren't allowed to give anything in exchange for a guest's engagement with the Gelarium's many myriad offerings. Nor were they supposed to receive any payment for guiding a guest to some particular biogel transformation experience. But the big, muscular olive green edrikan was just too good a catch for a certain sort of lady to pass up. They were so enthralled

by his physique that they just insisted on having a go at his manhood before being physically transformed into something one hundred percent biogel. One last moment of unbridled sexual bliss before entering into a new kind of life. And for that, there was no better place than on the Lover's Bend.

The device was little more than a comfortable lump of glossy black biogel on which a supplicant might kneel and bend over upon in order to present themselves to a prospective lover. Alternatively, such a supplicant might sit upon its surface, and let the lover do the mounting. But taking that later option wasn't something that fit Paro's particular fancy. He was a Gelitech model. It was his job to help make gummies out of guests, not sit there and let the guest make a gummy out of him. Not yet, at any rate.

The sensuously panting tigress had no idea what was about to happen. She hadn't bothered to ask. She just wanted to make love

to him. The rest, she'd said, she didn't care about. He could do whatever he pleased, so long as he made her body sing.

It was clear that her body was singing a particularly sweet song. Every movement he made elicited a beautiful sound that kept him wanting to hear more. And more. And more, until he could hold himself no longer.

Orgasmic bliss. Sweet, sweet orgasmic bliss. But for all the pleasure it offered, it wasn't the sensation that he enjoyed the most. It was the sudden transformation that subsumed his astonished lover that he found most pleasing. The moment he had released that first, succulent squirt of semen into her body, her obsidian biogel coating wrapped itself around her head. The second pulse of hot jizz came as the biogel flowed inward, transforming her helpless body into a solid biogel version of its former fleshy self.

The tigress' biogel body began to change

shape. He gripped her hips firmly, and savored the feel of the transfiguration. He thrust with wild abandon as her womanhood became smoother and so much more pleasingly tighter. Thick, sticky semen dribbled and splattered as he did all he could to enjoy every last moment of his time within her. He panted. He groaned. He pressed all the way in, one last time.

The door to the private chamber slid open. Paro was too exhausted even to turn and face the unexpected interloper. "I'm... I'm a bit busy, if you don't mind," he grunted.

"Oh, are you now?" Tashie purred as she slipped up behind him and began to massage his broad shoulders. "Because it looks like your already done. So... tell me something. Is it true that you big edrikan boys can fill a lover ever five minutes for hours on end? Because that's what I've heard. I'm not sure I believe it. But I was thinking that... well... maybe you'd like to... enlighten me."

Paro took a deep breath. "Yeah, just give me a few minutes to let my body recover," he replied, with a dark smirk on his face. "Then you can get on here and I'll stuff you good and proper."

Tashie giggled. "Sounds like fun!"

"Oh, it's gonna be," Paro chuckled. "You know, I've always wanted to get those hips of yours in my hands. Can't wait to feel you getting glistened. It's gonna be something special."

"Oh, no, no, no!" Tashie laughed as she nuzzled her soon-to-be lover's ear. "Matron T'myne says its your turn to sit on the Lover's Bend. Such a sneaky rule breaker, screwing girls up here while on duty. Couldn't be bothered to invite them back when you got off work, could you?"

Paro shuddered and looked over his shoulder at the grinning fey'li. "Are you... are you serious? Really?"

"Very serious," Tashie giggled. "Oh, so very serious. But hey, at least you get a nice final fuck out of it, right?"

Paro sighed. "Yeah, fine," he huffed as he slid his gummy-lover from the Lover's Bend and sat on top of it in her place. "Get up here and lets do it. But I'm warnin' you. I ain't gonna go easy!"

"Oh! Really," Tashie giggled as she slid on knee onto the Lover's Bend beside the burly green-skin. "Because you know... that's just the way I like it!"

SIX

THE GUMMY FACTORY

Schlop. Glub. Blurp. Whirrrrrr. Thud!

T'nae took yet another deep breath. After waiting in line for almost a half hour, it was almost her turn to enter the machine. And once she did... well, who really knew what she would feel as it transformed her?

If ever there was something so questionable for so many naked women to be so enthusiastically excited about, this unrelenting mechanism of mass bodily transfiguration was certainly fairly high up on on the list. It wasn't that the pale lavender skinned mitanni didn't think the machine was entirely devoid of any

ability to arouse the imagination. Quite the opposite, in fact. At the same time, it was just so dispassionately mechanistic about the whole process. The moment that one laid their naked body upon its padded conveyor belt, one became a virtual object, to be processed, packaged, and shipped off via a completely automatic progression of pre-programmed events.

Schlop. Glub. Blurp. Whirrrrrrr. Thud!

T'nae sighed and ran a hand through her long, deep purple hair. This really wasn't anything like what she'd imaged herself getting into when she'd come to visit the Gelitech Gelarium. In fact, she hadn't imagined getting herself into anything at all, really. She'd just come to see the sights and watch others get themselves into all sorts of sweet, sexy trouble. But not her. Not unless she found something particularly special. Something really unique. Something that was just so *her* that she's just have to try it on for size.

The crowd, however, had apparently had a very different idea for the statuesque ram-horn. They'd caught her up in their excitement over some wonderful, incredibly kinky thing that everyone seemed to be doing. Their flow had quickly turned into a queue of people waiting to enter the machine and try it out for themselves. By the time she'd noticed that she was actually in line to join them, it was far too late to change her mind without looking to everyone else like she'd gotten herself a cowardly case of cold hooves. And that, for such a typically physically bold mitanni as herself, was just downright unthinkable.

Schlop. Glub. Blurp. Whirrrrrr. Thud!

T'nae looked into the last of the broad windows that allowed anyone who might be curious to watch what was happening inside the machine. One after another, the women passed by on the conveyor, laying in the position of their own choosing. One after another, they were coated in the living liquid

blackness. The glistening, transformative slime they called biogel. And then...

The mitanni's long, tufted tail twitched at the very thought of her own body being treated in such a fashion. At the very idea that she was now destined by chance to be transformed from something so magnificence unique into something so completely, almost outrageously, plain and generic. Something so perfectly identical to every other woman who'd entered the machine before her, and would every woman who entered after.

Schlop. Glub. Blurp. Whirrrrrr. Thud!

T'nae watched a lovely tigress fey'li pass down the conveyor, followed by a pretty blue ashiri, both illuminated in an eerie purple light. The line moved forward. Now, rather than a window, there was a structural column. And then, after that, was the open entrance of the machine.

The mitanni watched as a leopardess fey'li

popped herself down on the stationary padded section. More than half of the women in the line were fey'li. Things like this seemed to attract them like flies to honey. Such a grossly disparate birthrate, with so few men and so many women with so little to occupy their irrepressible and highly imaginative erotic inclinations, was the generally accepted reason. There seemed to be no end to the number of them that would throw themselves to such fates, with not a second thought in the world. And there seemed to be no end to the number of others who they'd somehow manage to get caught up in their fun.

Schlop. Glub. Blurp. Whirrrrrrr. Thud!

The leopardess' padded section dropped onto the conveyor proper and slid into the machine to join the others. Now it was a tigress' turn. And then an ashen gray myakki. And after the myakki...

T'nae bit her lower lip and watched the

tigress sit down onto a new section of glossy black padding. She smiled and waved as she lay down upon her back, feet towards the machine's ominous, iris-door opening. The padding dropped onto the conveyor. The iris snapped open. In she went.

Schlop. Glub. Blurp. Whirrrrrrr. Thud!

The muffled sounds of the machine doing its nefarious work hadn't really meant much to T'nae until she found herself watching the slender ashen myakki settling down onto her newly dispensed section of conveyor padding right in front of her. Now, however, it sent a cold shudder down her spine. Her long tail twitched as the giddily smiling woman laid back and took a deep breath. Again, the iris opened. In the woman went.

A new section of glistening black padding came out of a slot in the wall, behind and just above the conveyor. There was no sound. No change in the dull, purple light to indicate it

was ready. It was just there, waiting. Inviting her to give herself up. Daring her to willingly sacrifice her body to the power of the infernal machine.

Schlop. Glub. Blurp. Whirrrrrrr. Thud!

T'nae stepped up to the waiting padding and turned to sit down on its glossy black surface. As she did so, she looked up into the eyes of the irrepressibly bouncy cougaress who was next in line. The mitanni smiled. She didn't understand how anyone could find something so harshly impersonal as this machine so attractive, but she wasn't about to let anyone know that she didn't fully share in their enthusiasm for it. Even the slightest appearance of second thoughts was just not an option. Not for a mitanni, at least, no matter how many she might be having.

The courgaress excitedly grinning in reply. It was obvious that the fuzzy feline could hardly wait to get her own body onto a pad and

into the machine. The only thing in the way was the big, brave mitanni.

Far be it for T'nae to hold up the works. She lifted her legs onto the cool, slick surface and laid back. The iris opened beyond her feet. She looked down into the tunnel, at the raven haired head of the myakki who'd entered before her. Her pad dropped onto the conveyor. It began to move. Into the machine she went.

Schlop. Glub. Blurp. Whirrrrrrr. Thud!

The sounds of the machine were much louder now that T'nae was actually inside of it. The pad quickly moved inward until her hooves were only half a meter from the myakki's head. She tried to sit up a bit, to get a better look at what was happening further down the charcoal gray, purple-lit tube, but a soft, gentle sort of force field was holding down onto her padding. She looked around to her sides and discovered to her considerable surprise that there were actually no windows.

Either that or the windows that she'd looked in as she's been standing in line were one-way windows. Or had they just been video screens displaying images of what was happening inside the machine?

Slowly, the conveyor moved its living cargo deeper into the machine. The captive mitanni could hear the iris open again, back above her head. The excited cougaress, no doubt, was entering the voracious machine to join her, and all the rest.

Schlop. Glub. Blurp. Whirrrrrrr. Thud!

The conveyor kept moving at a slow, steady pace. The iris kept opening and closing. The sound of the machine processing its willing captives got louder and louder.

T'nae rode the conveyor around a corner. It was there where she'd watched through the 'window' as several of those who'd gone before were were processed. She looked down past her feet as a glob of glistening blackness fell

down onto the tigress who'd entered before the myakki. She couldn't really see what was happening as a brief crescendo of sloppy liquid noise filled the tube. Then there was a whirl as the tigress' padding abruptly lifted up vertical to dump her transformed body down into the packaging machine. A thud came up from below as the tigress' padding fell back to the horizontal.

The conveyor moved forward, completely uninterrupted by the 'disposal' of the tigress. A moment later, another glob of glistening blackness dropped down onto the myakki. In an instant, she was covered head to toe in the blob. She wiggled and squirmed as it shrank into a skin-tight coating. She shuddered as the coating continued to shrink and shift as it rapidly transformed her living flesh into more of its own substance. She fell still as her transfiguration into a completely generic female, living biogel 'gummy' doll was completed. Her padding advanced abruptly and tipped up. Down into the packing system she

went.

T'nae inhaled sharply as she looked up into a black abyss in the tunnel ceiling. In an instant, that abyss was upon her, spreading its cool, oily substance around and beneath her prostrate body so quickly that she hardly had time to register that she couldn't breathe. She began to squirm against the force field that held her captive, as realization that the goo was filling her nose and mouth came upon her. For one brief moment, she felt like she was going to asphyxiate.

The cool, oily sensation began to spread through her flesh. Her need to breathe vanished as it spread deep into her core. She could feel herself shrinking. Her horns and hair melting away. Her tail. Her hooves. It was all melting away into the faceless, two toed, three fingered, effeminate gummy shape that she'd always found so particularly unattractive. In a virtual instant it was done, and her body shuddered in one last, futile

objection to what it had become.

T'nae was all too aware that she was now just an object. A doll. A doll so perfectly identical to all the others that no one would ever be able to tell her apart from them. A doll with no records kept to match who she'd been from the thing that she now was. A doll who's sole existence, it seemed, was for the pleasure of others.

The new gummy could feel herself falling as she began to slip into a cloudy, dream-like state. She could feel herself drop onto some firm surface within the packing system. It felt dull. Distant. Unreal.

Wispy dreams consumed the new gummy. She felt nothing as she was packed. Nothing as she was stored in some warehouse, waiting to be randomly picked to fulfill some order from some unknown soul seeking a living doll to serve as a bedtime partner. Nothing as she was shipped off to face her new life as a toy. A

plaything. A lover. And who knew what else.

Then she felt a strange warmth. Strange hands sliding over her glistening black hips. It woke her. And it very much aroused her in the only place in her new body that didn't feel dull and plain. Something was rubbing there. Something firm. Something nice. Something... very, very pleasing to the touch. It felt good. Very, very good, and in a way that the gummy never could have imagined.

Sex. Sex and only sex. Not just in the sense of life, but in the sense of having a body which seemed to focus all of its being on that one glorious place. That one set of magnificent sensations. All focused on that one supreme goal. It didn't take long. Little, brain bending thumps shuddered through her biogel pelvis. And then...

The unseen, unknown lover continued, but to the gummy it felt as if it had only just begun. It was as if this was now her very first

experience having sex as a gummy, even though she knew it wasn't. It was an amazing thing, to be able to forget what it was like to make love. The gummy may have still been a bit disgusted at having become such a plain, generic pleasure doll, but the fact that she could experience sex as a wonderful new thing, each and every time, was more than enough compensation for it.

Soon, the gummy's lover was done with his toy, and she was left to return to that dreamy place. There she would remain until the next time. And that time would, no doubt, be quite soon in the coming.

SEVEN

ALL WRAPPED UP

Vai hesitated. It was only natural, of course. She had no idea what perils might be concealed within the maze-like ancient tomb and its collection of eye-catching treasures. Touch the wrong thing, or select the wrong tool to solve one of the puzzles, and who knew what very personal, very physical, and, indeed, very intimate sort of fate might befall her? But if she could make it through unscathed, well...

Come on, girl, the pale azure ashiri silently soothed her fluttery nerves. You can do this. Just a little bit further. You're so close you can almost taste it!

Vai's long, sensitive elf-ears twitched as a distant, scraping sound echoed its way through the dark, sandstone tunnels and galleries. It was just one of many such spine tingling sounds that she'd heard on her way toward the end of the tomb's current level. Most of the noises had just been distorted echoes of her own movements and actions. Other sounds, however, gave her pause. Brief, distant grindings. Scratches. Clicks. And even a dull, deeply unpleasant sounding thump.

There was no way to know if the sounds represented some peril that she'd yet to discover, or if they'd been deliberately introduced as part of the game, to up the ante and excite the audience by making her more nervous and more likely to make some fateful mistake. Whichever might be the case, they were certainly having the effect of making her feel far less certain about each choice she made as she moved deeper and deeper into the tunnels. Who knew how many treasures she'd passed up, just for fear that they might trigger

some unseen trap?

Vai bit her lip and began to wonder just how much potential treasure she'd left behind as a result of her excessive cautiousness. Her leather backpack was barely a quarter full, even though she was presumably nearing the end of the tomb's third level. Almost half of what she'd accumulated weren't so much treasures as they were tools, many of which she dared not leave behind for fear that they might be needed later on, in the tomb's deeper levels. If, that is, she chose to delve into them.

Whether or not she was going to choose to advance to the next level, or get out with what little treasure she'd accumulated so far, was a decision that was ever-present at the back of Vai's mind. There were five increasingly perilous levels in all, and the current level was already testing the limits of her ability to observe and deduce the nature of the traps, as well as her ability to get away from the increasingly agile monsters who liked to lurk

in the least easily escaped side tunnels and dead ends. And she hadn't even found the tomb's final chamber yet. Who knew what was waiting there, ready to snatch her up the very moment she made even the slightest of mistakes?

Vai took a few more steps into the darkness. She could see that the tunnel opened up into a large chamber at the edge of her torch's illuminations. What might lie within was a mystery, of course, but there were enough sparkly, golden hints amid the darkness to make her heart flutter. Was this the final chamber? The last stop before she had to decide whether or not to continue? The place full of golden treasures that she was, yet again, going to be too timid to take?

Vai slowly advanced, carefully examining the floor, walls, and ceiling for even the slightest sign of some trap. The slightest glint of biogel hiding in the creases between the stones. The slightest smell of natural rubber

that would give it's close presence away.

There wasn't a hint of biogel's distinct odor coming from the stones in the tunnel, but upon the cool breeze that wafted out of the chamber beyond, the scent was strong. Very strong. That wasn't all that much of a surprise, of course. There was certainly going to be some amount of biogel present in any of the tomb's peril filled chambers. If this was the final chamber, there was going to be biogel by the barrel full. Biogel that was just waiting for someone to find it. Someone like the nervous ashiri who was just now reached out to poke her torch into the chamber in an effort to see exactly what it contained.

Vai gasped. This was, by far, the largest of any chamber she'd encountered during her journey through the tomb. It was round, about twenty meters in diameter, with a corbelled vault roof that seemed to stretch upward toward infinity. The walls were inset with vertically oriented quartz sarcophagi of the

fashion once common among highly revered fey'li religious and other particularly honored souls in times long past. Most of these were open, with their lids set about on the floor or leaning on their sarcophagi in haphazard fashion. A few were sealed, however, and she could see dark shapes help captive within.

Goddess, she thought as she couldn't help but imagine the sarcophagi bursting open and being attacked by whatever sort of biogel 'undead' might be lurking within. *I really need to be careful here. Really, really careful.*

Vai's attention turned to the altar at the very center of the chamber. The ornately carved, black granite edifice loomed over the rest of the chamber on a large rectangular plinth accessible by several steps carved into each side. Upon the altar were a pair of golden torch holders, each holding an unlit variation of the faux-torch she was herself holding. A few small, painted ceramic jars stood to one side, while a collection of larger jugs and urns

surrounded the altar's base. These latter jars were well-adorned with gold leaf to accent their painted decorations, giving the impression of a pile of treasure that didn't really exist.

Vai carefully studied the floor as she stepped forward toward the altar. If there was one thing in the game that was guaranteed not to trigger a trap, it was lighting a torch. At least, not directly. There was no rule against using a torch as bait, and the ashiri had to be extra-careful to avoid whatever traps might have been put in place to take advantage of her desire to illuminate the chamber more clearly.

One particular stone directly between the tunnel and the altar looked just a bit too suspicious. The space between it and its neighbors was just a hair larger than the rest of the seams. She carefully stepped around it, and up the steps to the altar. She carefully reached out over the jars at its base, and touched her torch to those upon the altar, first

the left, and then the right.

The altar's torches flared up with an unnaturally bright flame, illuminating the chamber far more clearly than Vai had been expecting. For a few moments she blinked as her eyes adjusted to the light. She looked around nervously, for any sign of activity from the sarcophagi whose captive dark shapes now seemed even more threatening. Then she looked back at the surface of the altar. Its surface was perfectly smooth and polished, devoid of all decoration that might have suggested some specific ritual purpose.

It wasn't the surface of the altar itself that really caught Vai's attention. It was what was reflected in it. She looked up, past the altar to the far wall beyond. There were two exit portals, one to either side of a central plinth that rose a dozen steps above the level of the altar. Above each were ancient fey'li runes for escape and catacomb, marking them both as the final exits from the level. One would take

her out of the game with the treasures that she'd accumulated, or more precisely, their designated value in credits. The other would take her to the next level. But it wasn't the exits that the ashiri was fixated upon. It was what was looming between them.

Upon the central plinth was a quartz throne. It was empty, but laid out upon it was a beautiful set of golden regalia. Its centerpiece was a dress of gold, glossy black beads, and nearly transparent fabric that had clearly been designed to expose far more than it covered. This was accompanied, by a golden circlet filled with obsidian jewels, a gold adorned, and an obsidian capped staff that all looked as regal as it did intimidating.

Vai carefully studied the regalia from a distance, pondering her next move. It was the only obvious treasure to be seen in the chamber, but that just made her feel as if it might be bait to trigger some trap. Or perhaps it was a trap in and of itself, something which

might snare her if she dared to put it all on. Then again, perhaps it wasn't. Perhaps it was actually a tool that might serve her in some capacity deeper within the tomb.

Or, perhaps, it was actually the final reward for completing the level. The reward for the third level was always some ancient looking outfit with a shiny black biogel inspired twist, invariably matching the jewelry offered as rewards for levels one and two, and the home décor items offered for levels four and five. These outfits were intended to be kept and worn as a mark of the master tomb-delver, a title created back when the game had only three levels.

The fourth level had been added as a bonus for those who were willing to test fate by delving into even more intense perils than those posed by the first three. The final was added after too many tomb-delvers managed to get through the fourth. So far, of the sixteen who'd tried, none had made it all the way

through.

Vai was almost, sort of, half-willing to give the fourth level a try. She had at least a sixty percent chance of making it through by the numbers, and if she was actually going to walk away from the game with any real money, she was almost surely going to have to give it a go. But if she was going to do that, she was almost surely going to have to claim this chamber's ultimate prize. The necklace she'd gotten in the second had been a key to one of the main puzzles in the third, and who knew if the outfit she got in the third would be the key to something in the fourth? But...

Vai just couldn't shake the feeling that there was something off about the regalia on the throne. It was too obvious. Too easy. Too...

Dammit, she thought as she looked around the chamber for some clue. *For all I know, the real prize is on one of those bodies in the sarcophagi... or in one of these urns. But how*

can I know? There's got to be some clue here. Some sign. Something...

Vai looked down to the ornate carvings on the black granite altar. They seemed to tell a story of sorts. Of a priestess casting some magic spell, and directing wrappings to mummify a body held aloft in mid-air. Of the resulting mummy floating into a sarcophagus and being sealed within. There might have been more to the story on other sides of the altar, but from where she was cautiously standing, they couldn't be seen.

The ashiri's attention turned to the ceramic jars. The three atop the altar had nothing to indicate what might be within. Those around the base were all painted with female figures of different, ancient-empire races carrying jars upon their shoulders, walking toward the entrance to a tomb, presumably bearing offerings for the dead laid within.

Just like the empresses of old, Vai thought as

she recalled the pictures from a book that she'd once read about the ancient, pre-technological Fey'li Empire, in the days after the key'vin'ta extinction, when all that connected the peoples who'd once been ruled by that alien empire were a number of von'kir transit portals that were somehow maintained until interstellar spacefaring technology took over. In those days, many of the former key'vin'ta subjects had gravitated toward the powerful fey'li nation that had somehow manage to resist falling before the key'vin'ta and their purple slime magic. With the passing of each Empress, countless goods would be sent, carried by maidens to be given as offerings to the deceased, or as gifts to the newly ascended monarch. Among those providing such offerings were Vai's own people, the ashiri, one of the first to offer their world, and their people, to fey'li rule.

Vai took a careful step back and began to ponder the situation. The jars were clearly marked as jars containing offerings, and

potential treasure. But, like the regalia on the throne, it seemed just a bit too obvious, not to mention just a bit too copious. While the game was designed to force players to pick and choose what they took with them, there was no way that she was going to have to sort through more than a dozen large jars to pick what she wanted. Even if one held some treasure, it was almost certain that most were actually traps of one sort or another.

The plain jars on the altar, however, were small and unassuming. They were just the sort of things that might be passed over simply for looking too ordinary, and perhaps a bit too dangerous given their location. If there was going to be any real, portable treasure, surely those jars would be the most likely to contain them.

The least likely location for anything valuable was the sarcophagi. That seemed to make them the most likely location. One, at least, might hold the real final prize. Perhaps it

would hold more than just that. But how to figure out which one was safe to open...

What if I'm just overthinking things, Vai thought as her eyes again turned to the throne. What if the real trap is making me think the safe things are the traps?

Vai turned and carefully stepped back down from the altar. She began to examine the floor for a safe path around it, so that she could look at the sarcophagi more closely. The discarded lids, strewn about the floor, made that virtually impossible. There were only two clear paths, leading around the altar to either side, toward the throne and the exits.

Am I not seeing something here? Vai thought as she puzzled over the way she seemed to be shoehorned into choosing between two paths, and only two paths, if she wanted to avoid the perils of walking over the sarcophagus lids, and whatever hazards they might be concealing. What am I missing? I have to be

missing something. I have to!

Vai gingerly made her way around the left side of the altar. The lack of any further obvious traps on the floor made her more and more nervous with each hesitant step that she took. Perhaps she'd just been lucky to take the correct path. Or perhaps, and very unlike previous chambers on this level of the tomb, there simply weren't any.

Again, Vai surmounted the altar plinth, this time up its left side. In the open space between the altar and the steps leading up to the throne was a large obsidian mosaic that covered much of the floor. If ever there was an obvious trap, that was certainly it. Almost too obvious. Again, the ashiri began to wonder if the obvious peril was just being used to direct her to the hidden.

The rear side of the altar lacked the ornate carving of the front. Nothing about it, or the floor along its rear, suggesting some concealed

trap. Vai approached and eyed it with considerable suspicion. She waved her torch over its surface. Then, accidentally, she bumped it into one of the small jars.

“AAAH!” Vai shrieked as she jar immediately tipped over and spilled a portion of its contents onto the altar surface. Shiny gemstones scattered about, mixed with a few golden rings, and other less valuable looking baubles. “Aaah... oh. Oh. Phew!”

Vai stood for a moment to let her racing heart subside. Then she reached out and picked up one of the gems. It was cold. Hard. Real. *How lucky did I just get?* the ashiri wondered as she shrugged off her backpack and placed it on the altar. She began to pick up the baubles, one by one, and place them in with what little she'd accumulated thus far. It was only a portion of the contents of the jug, but she wasn't quite sure if she should risk trying to get the rest. *What do I do? Do I just dump it out? Or should I just play it safe and leave it?*

Despite her reservations, Vai chose the former option. She carefully lifted the jar up and dumped the remaining baubles out onto the altar before placing them into her pack along with the rest. She still wasn't quite sure if she was willing to give the fourth level a try, so at this point every little bauble was a few more credits she'd get for a prize if she opted for the exit. She could always get rid of the crap later if she decided to delve deeper.

Vai pondered the other two jars. At least one of them almost certainly had to be a trap. There was no way they were just going to let her get treasure so easily. She turned away from the altar and looked back up at the throne. The longer she looked, the more the resting regalia looked like an exact match for the jewelry she'd gotten at the ends of the prior two levels. Surely, this was the final prize for the third. Or was it? There was only one way to find out, and that was to examine it more closely.

Fuck it. I've come this far. I can't leave without the outfit, the ashiri thought as she carefully walked around the obsidian mosaic and stopped at the foot of the dozen steps leading up to the altar. *No one's ever left without the outfit. I can't be the first. That would just be embarrassing.*

Just as with the path around the altar, the path around the mosaic was unsettlingly free of any indication of traps. So too were the steps up to the throne. She carefully climbed up to the eight step, where she could be close enough to examine the regalia, but not so high up that she might not be able to escape if she triggered the monsters who presumably lurked inside some of the sarcophagi.

They're an exact match, Vai thought as she compared the items to the necklace that she'd gotten at the end of the second level, and which, along with the bracelets from the first, she was currently wearing. *An exact match. This must be the final prize. It has to be!*

Vai ascended two more steps, to the point where she could actually reach out and touch all of the different pieces of regalia. She gingerly reached out to take the circlet, which sat upon the dress. As she picked it up... nothing happened. Not wanting to take off her backpack to stow it away, she placed it upon her head. She picked up the bejeweled sandals that were under the circlet. Nothing happened. Then she picked up the jingly dress. Again, nothing happened.

For a moment, Vai thought to just toss the dress over her arm, grab the staff and exit the tomb intact. But that just wouldn't have been sporting, would it? It wasn't a rule, but there was a general expectation that master tomb-delvers would put on their new dress right there in the tomb. The completely unnecessary lingering and potential for accidental disaster was certainly a good way to increase one's popularity with the kind of live-peril fans who watched Tomb Delver. That and the extremely titillating nature of the dresses. They never

seemed to leave much to the imagination.

Gotta make the fans happy, right? Vai thought as she examined the throne very, very carefully. Again, there was no sign of any sort of trap. At least not one that might be triggered by putting her backpack on it while she changed.

Alright. I guess here's a good enough place, Vai thought as she stepped up onto the level of the altar and placed her backpack onto it. She very carefully took off her tomb-delving outfit. Short sleeve shirt. Shoes. Short pants. Skimpy undies. One by one, each piece found its way onto the throne beside her backpack. *Gotta be careful not to fall though. The last thing I want to do is hurt myself and look like a total idiot.*

Vai very carefully slithered her way into the middle of the strings and strands of gold, obsidian beads, and see-through fabric that made up the dress. It was designed to mimic ancient fey'li fashion, and it did so with totally

shameless homage to the style that left almost nothing to the imagination. Its top was more of an under-bra, holding her little round breasts aloft for all the world to see. Its bottom wasn't so much a bottom as it was a belt that held up the transparent fabric, which only covered the sides and back, leaving her front completely exposed.

Goddess, I'm practically naked, Vai thought as she pondered her new outfit. Cat-style. Tits out and showing puss. I wonder if I actually look good in this? Shame I don't have a mirror. Ah well. I guess I'll have to wait until I'm out of here to see.

Vai picked up her backpack and did her best to get it on without getting it all tangled up in the bits, bobs, and boobs that seemed to be doing their level best to make it all but impossible. The best she could manage was to get it over her left shoulder, with her torch in that hand, and the staff in the other. She turned to descend the stairs, and immediately

began to wonder if she'd made a mistake getting changed at the top.

Getting up in normal shoes and with one hand free had been easy. Getting down with sandals and both hands full was another matter entirely. It was only twelve steps, and she had the staff with which to steady herself, but it proved quite a perilous task, especially with the obsidian mosaic at the bottom, just waiting for her to fall upon its presumably trap-laden surface. *Oh... this was a mistake. Gotta be... gotta be careful. Really, really careful.*

Somehow, Vai actually managed to get down the stairs with only a couple of close calls. If her backpack had been more heavily laden with treasures, however, things almost certainly would have ended quite differently. She sighed with relief and pondered her next move.

Get out now, or go deeper? Vai asked herself

as she looked over one shoulder toward the exit, and the other toward the tunnel down to the next level.

A chill filled the chamber, sending a shudder down Vai's nearly naked spine. She looked from one sarcophagus to another, fully expecting one of them to open and unleash the biogel beast within.

"What are you waiting for?" a cute, very girly voice inquired from the altar. "Summon the wrappings. Mummify me, so that I can serve the tomb in my biogel afterlife."

Vai whipped about to discover a lovely brunette leopardess fey'li laying atop the altar. Standing beneath its head was one of the gold leaf decorated jars, the one painted with fey'li maidens bringing offerings to the tomb. At its foot was a second such jar, the one with the painted ashiri maidens.

"You only have a short time to decide," the leopardess said, smiling mischievously as she

gazed up into the darkness above. “Summon the wrappings. Or leave. Or...”

Vai wasn't sure what to do. It was one thing to face peril. It was entirely another to act as the peril faced by someone else. “How do I summon the wrappings?” she asked in an effort to buy a bit of time to process exactly what was happening.

“Just point your staff and desire it,” the leopardess instructed. “Just do it. Do it now. Or...”

“Or what?” Vai asked, still unsure of how to respond. On one hand, she didn't want to do anything to the pretty leopardess. On the other hand, she kind of wanted to see what it would look like mummifying her. She'd only seen it on video. But... being able to watch it in person, and so closely, would be something else entirely. Something fun. Something exciting. But...

“Do it,” the leopardess again instructed.

“I don’t understand,” Vai responded as she found herself hesitating, forgetting for a moment exactly the sort of place she was in.

“Then you’ve made your choice,” the leopardess giggled, suddenly floating up off the altar to smiling down at the stunned ashiri. “But don’t worry. I’m sure you’ll find the consequences to be very physically... enlightening!”

Vai turned to bolt for the exit, but to her horrified astonishment, there was no exit. The walls simply continued around to the sides of the throne, with more sarcophagi standing where the exits had been. It was like the tunnels had never existed. “Wait... I...”

The leopardess laughed as the lid of the ashiri adorned jar popped off and clattered onto the stone floor.

At the same time, a strange force took hold of Vai. She yelped as she was tugged up into the air over the obsidian mosaic. Her

backpack, torch, and staff fell to the ground as ribbons of glistening white biogel flowed out of the open jar. This began to swirl around her as the leopardess began to chant some spell in a long forgotten tongue.

“Hey! I... I...” Vai stammered as the oily-slick biogel ribbons slither toward her body and began to wrap around her. They slipped smoothly under her skimpy dress completely covering her from neck to toe. “Let me... let me go!”

The leopardess continued to laugh as a second layer of biogel ribbon bound her captive’s legs together and her arms across her chest.

“Please... I... oh... OH!” Vai sputtered in shock as the remaining ribbon began to wrap around her head, covering it until all that was left exposed was her deep purple eyes. For a few deeply unsettling moments, the squirming mummy felt as if she was asphyxiating. A

strange, dull feeling spread through her chest. Her need to breathe faded away. She felt unable to move. Unable to resist. All she could do was stare out at her gleeful captor and feel the strange sensations that were being imposed upon her helpless body.

As terrifying as her abrupt mummification had been, and as deeply frustrated as she was with her own fatal moment of untimely indecision, she couldn't help but feel strangely comfortable within her shimmering white biogel wrappings. It was nice and snug and felt so pleasant that she found herself quite at ease with it all, despite the fact that she knew quite well that her real biogel fate was yet to come.

“You've made your decision and now you shall decorate this tomb for the viewing pleasure of the next delver who braves its foreboding depths,” the leopardess declared with a flourish as her captive floated toward one of the open sarcophagi. “Are you ready for the final step? The final moment when all goes

dark? When all becomes a dream? When all that you are becomes... the gel?"

Vai couldn't respond as she settled into her quartz sarcophagus. She didn't want to respond. She just wanted to keep feeling nice and snug and warm and comfortable. What she actually felt was a cool, dull uniformity spreading over her skin. An oily slickness that brought with it a relaxation so complete that she felt almost as if she was melting. Her biogel wrappings tightened around her as the plainness spread up her neck. Over her face, replacing her features with a featureless blackness. Over her eyes, casting the world into absolute darkness. And then...

Vai shuddered as her transformation into a thing of pure, uniform biogel was completed. Reality faded into dreams as a thump-like motion made her quartz prison move just a tiny bit. Dreams of dull, distant sensations. Of lust for carnal fulfillment that would be forever denied by her permanent biogel

wrappings. Of being put on display for her audience, so they could see, and even touch what she had become. And then of being put back in the tomb, to fade away into an eternal liquid dream, lost to the world as much as she was to it.

EIGHT

IT'S A ZOO

Sho'ra chuckled as she watched the squirmy tigress dangle among the dozens of horizontally hanging cocoons that the worms had collected along one side of the completely unprotected exhibit. She just couldn't help but find considerable amusement in the rather buxom fey'li's incredibly disgusting predicament. The worms were covering their captive's wiggling body with their sticky, smelly spittle. This goo rapidly expanded when it was exposed to air, forming a soft, breathable encasement in which their helpless victim would undergo a deeply unpleasant sort of metamorphosis.

The dusty-lavender, ram-horned mitanni toyed with the pendant that hung from a silver chain around her neck. The delicate cage held an eight sided die made of black glass. Each side was deeply engraved with its own symbolic glyph, each of which had some different meaning to those enlightened in certain, less well known matters of mitanni culture. Even for those so enlightened, the proper time and place to roll such a die was a matter of considerable debate, however, though once rolled its outcome was never, ever to be questioned.

One didn't simply purchase such a thing. Only the prelates of certain temples had the power to impose them upon random visitors, who were expected to live by their rule, mitanni or not. They could also be found, almost always left behind when the fate dictated by their roll forced the parting of ways. The mitanni regarded such a discovery as being no different than being handed a die by a temple prelate, and many of the die in

circulation have been handed down through many generations of owners over the centuries.

Sho'ra's die had come to her in the latter fashion. She had discovered it while exploring the ruins of an old mine during a hiking trip into the desolate Takari Mountains of Del'tari Beta. The discovery had left her rather less than enthused, in more ways than one. For starters, she was obligated to pick it up, and live the rest of her life in the shadow of the possibility that she might find her fate dictated by it. Perhaps worse, its presence in the mine made it clear that something was present that might compel her to cast her lot to fate before she'd even had a chance to think about how it was going to affect her life.

Now, for the very first time, Sho'ra found herself wondering if she had an obligation to take the die out of its silver cage and roll it along the exhibit's waist high concrete barrier. She hadn't done anything to put the tigress in

her current predicament, let alone done so in order use the woman for her own personal entertainment without having the courage to join her. Nor was the tigress expressing any objection to her predicament which might obligate the mitanni to attempt to help her, or at least join her and offer comfort in sharing in her experience.

Instead, the tigress seemed quite pleased with herself, despite the horribly disgusting ministrations of her malodorous captors. She was smiling, and giggling, and behaving for all the world like being covered in stinky worm spittle was the most fun she'd ever had in all her life. Perhaps it was, assuming she'd been living her life in a barn somewhere beyond the reach of modern civilization. Or, perhaps, there was something to the whole, vile mess that wasn't obvious to the uninitiated eye. Was it possible that being cocooned by these sticky, slimy worms actually felt far more pleasant than it smelled? Was it possible that it might actually be desirable to experience? Perhaps

even... fun?

Sho'ra's turned to look at one of the older, dryer looking cocoons. The head end had split open, and a drizzle of thick, yellowish mucous was starting to drizzle onto the ground. The mucous was quickly followed by the head of a newly created worm. A deeply corrupted, bestial organism that had once been a sapient humanoid captive, just like the giddy tigress. And... just like the mitanni who was gazing upon the scene with deeply disgusted fascination.

Therein lay Sho'ra's conundrum. One of her faith's fundamental tenets was that one's existence as a sapient being was merely a temporary opportunity to comprehend the depth and breadth of creation. A moment of lucid awareness of the creator's power before being reduced to some baser, more primal existence. A more fundamental sort of organism, mindlessly existing to serve some useful purpose in nature, a purpose lost on

those who's sapience was allowed to continue in defiance of divine will.

The idea had existed in mitanni faith since time immortal, but it had only become something that every mitanni was expected to experience when their people had been enslaved by the ancient key'vin'ta. It was then that everyone was expected to eventually find their fundamental existence through transformation and absorption into the mystical purple slime, to be cast into an afterlife in the Nine Heavenly Hells, where they might experience a far baser experience in service of those who'd found their way into the Hells through less artificially induced ways.

After the key'vin'ta extinction, and the loss of access to purple slime, the mitanni developed their own dogmas and methods in order to ensure that all would experience 'reduction' within the mortal world. Any physical transformation would do, so long as it

reduced both body and mind into a more primitive state. Each was empowered to choose their own method, or allow the temple prelates to choose it for them. And each was expected to do so before they reached the age of two hundred local, or two hundred and twenty-three Imperial Standard years. At that age, the temple prelates would impose something they knew the defiant soul wouldn't find pleasing, as it was regarded as defiance of the creator's will to refuse to seek out reduction for one's self.

The only exception to the rule was carved out for those like Sho'ra. Her fate was dictated directly by her maker's will, spoken through the roll of her eight sided die. She could go on living as long as she could, so long as she faithfully rolled her die whenever the conditions dictated. It was a boon, wrapped in a curse. And that curse was so vague that one could probably argue that it applied to almost all situations. But what about this one?

It was clear that Sho'ra was in the presence of a potential reduction of her existence into something primal. It was clear that she could choose whether or not to be reduced in that fashion. But it was also clear that to be reduced here would fly in the face of divine dictate. She was supposed to become something wild. Something that would live as a part of nature, unfettered by the conditions of sapient mortal existence. Living in a zoo, and existing only to help other curious interlopers experience reduction was hardly a natural kind of living. Unless...

Sho'ra frowned as she pondered the most pertinent of questions that would decide whether or not she was obligated to roll her fateful die: Was removing herself from the reproductive pool of an increasingly overpopulated world enough of a justification to consider it an act which would enhance the natural world by sacrificing sapient existence? If the answer was no, then she could just stand and watch the worms encase the tigress

without the slightest bit of guilt. If the answer, however, was yes, then she was obligated to roll the die and accept whatever result might come up.

To say no to the question was the traditional approach, and increasingly out of fashion in a modern world that saw the acceptance of non-mitanni participants in the old faith. To most, however, the answer was now yes. And doubly so for someone who was actually enjoying watching someone else who was well on their way to reduction, even if she wasn't mitanni.

Sho'ra shook her head as she pondered what divine displeasure might find its way to her if she didn't take the die out and roll it. Karma always seemed to strike those mitanni who failed in some way to comprehend their maker's desire. Several of her friends had passed by suitable, pleasant forms of reduction in their lives, only to find fate taking them suddenly, and very unpleasantly, into a reduction process of particularly vile nature

not long down the road. Granted, they weren't doing a thing to avoid such fates. That would have been against mitanni nature. But still.

As Sho'ra thought more, she began to realize that the die was just as much an escape route as it was a finger pointing directly to reduction. If she rolled, and it decided in her favor, then she was free to stand there and enjoy watching the worms slather their spit all over the tigress as long as she liked. Then again, if she rolled at all, then she'd have to keep rolling every time she looked at each of the zoo's other exhibits. Unless...

The mitanni came up with a bargain. She'd roll the die once for the whole zoo. If the traditional reduction glyph came up, then she would enter the worm pit without hesitation. If the road forward glyph came up, then she would assume that she was to roll at the next exhibit. Then she would do the same for each, until another glyph came up, or her maker directed her into one of the exhibits.

Sho'ra opened her pendant and took the die out. She rolled it onto the concrete barrier. It clattered and tumbled, but before it had a chance to settle and declare her creator's intent, it hit a tiny bump and fell over the edge, into the exhibit. It fell to the base of the barrier and landed unseen with a loud, slimy splatter.

“Dammit!” Sho'ra hissed as she leaned over to see where it had landed, and which face was most upright. She could see it in the puddle of yellowish mucous that covered the ground of the exhibit, a puddle that was much deeper than she'd imagined. She could see the black die amid the goop, but she couldn't see what it had decided.

There was only one option, of course. Sho'ra was just going to have to enter the exhibit and slosh through the goo to see what her maker intended. “To the Hells,” she muttered as she got up onto the barrier and slid her legs over the edge. There was a gate a ways down the

barrier for guests to access the worms, but she didn't want to take her eye off the die, losing track of it, and having to really get herself all covered in the goop. "Well... here goes nothing..."

Sho'ra splashed down into the stinky, yellowish mess. The thick mucous was ankle deep along the barrier, and looked like it might be quite a bit deeper as it approached the wall of cocoons. It was now immediately clear to the mitanni that the worms which had looked like they'd been slithering through a shallow layer of goo were actually swimming through the pool of it, and quite dexterously at that.

The mitanni grimaced at the thought of being so much as brushed by one of the swimming worms as she bent down to try and see which of the die faces was upright. She couldn't. The slime was just a bit too opaque. For a moment she hesitated, before deciding the best thing to do was to carefully pick the die up and keep it correctly oriented until she could see which of

the glyphs she was to obey.

Sho'ra reached down and lifted the die up as carefully as she could. The slime that now coated her fingers would have made it hard to hold onto anything, let alone something so small. Still, she somehow managed to get it into her palm without changing its orientation, and began to slowly lift it out of the slippery muck.

“AAH!” the mitanni yelped as something slid along the backs of her ankles before starting to wrap itself around them. The die went flying off toward the cocoons as she fell over backwards into the thick mucous. Globbs of goo splattered everywhere as she landed in a particularly deep spot. In an instant, she was covered from head to toe in the heavy mucous. It seemed to push its way into every crease and crevice, entirely of its own accord.

“Oh! OH! Yuck!” Sho'ra moaned as she found herself focused entirely on the fact that the

foul goo was now all up in her everything, and there was nothing she could do that wouldn't just push it in deeper. Who knew what nastiness it contained and what might, at the very moment, be making its way inside of her to do hell's-knew-what. "Oh! Nasty! Just... auuugh!"

The mucous coated mitanni had no time to contemplate how she was going to get up amid the slippery slime, let alone try to find her precious die. The worms crowded around her, pressing against her body as she tried to sit up. First one, then another, slithered atop her, forcing back down into the smelly goo. They weren't just intent on keeping her wallowing in her mucous bath, either. They forced her legs to stay together, and her arms to stay at her sides.

"Stop! I need to find my... oh! OH!" Sho'ra exclaimed as the layer of mucous immediately surrounding her body began to feel just a little bit thicker. By the time she realized what was

happening, it was too late to do anything about it. “No! No! NO!”

Sho’ra’s body was trapped within a thick layer of firm, yet stretchy gel. The encasement was almost total, leaving only her face free to express her shock and displeasure at her sudden, and entirely unexpected manner of captivity. It hugged every millimeter of her naked flesh, and pressed quite firmly into her soft places, making every move and wiggle an act of subtle self-induced arousal.

“You... nasty little...” the mitanni hissed as the worms began to turn her and push her feet first through the slime, toward the wall of cocoons. She could feel every shove between her legs, and it made it difficult for her to focus on any plan of escape. “Oh... ah... you... oh... dammit! Stop making me feel... so... ah... oh!”

Sho’ra looked up toward the captive tigress who’s cocooning had proceeded almost up to

her shoulders. She wondered if the woman had been snared in the same fashion, and been compelled to feel the same involuntary stimulus.

The captive tigress grinned and giggled, even as the worms slathered their spit all over her shoulders and around her neck. It wouldn't be long before they started on her head, but the prospect didn't seem to bother her enough to draw her attention away from the worms' latest plaything. Her deep hazel eyes locked with the those of the struggling mitanni. "Keep wiggling!" she softly huffed as the first bits of worm spittle splattered on her chin. "They really seem to like it!"

If there was anything that Sho'ra didn't want to hear, the fact that the worms might actually like her futile struggles was certainly fairly high up on the list. She wasn't about to give up, no matter how pointless her attempts to escape her gelatinous bondage seemed to be. Not until she'd found her die, and seen what

fate it had decided for her. A roll that was interfered with had to be re-rolled, of course. The die had been re-rolled, albeit rather unintentionally. But it had been re-rolled. All she had to do was to find it.

Obtaining the decision of the die seemed an utterly pointless desire, seeing as the local 'nature' had already made the decision for the squirming mitanni. Or were they just carrying out the die's decision? Was it the original decision, or was it the second? How could she even know, if the worms wouldn't release her?

As the worms pulled her feet up onto the mass of solidified worm spittle beneath the other cocoons, Sho'ra began to wonder if there was really any point in worrying about her lost die, no matter how obligated she might have been to fulfill its desires. Regardless of how it had landed, it *had* decided her fate, in an indirect way. It was her obligation to retrieve it that had led her into the worms' lair. And that had led her into their smelly, sticky grasp.

If that was the case, then she might as well give in and let them have their vile way with her.

Sho'ra chose to give in. Not that she had much choice, of course. No sooner than she'd been dragged in among the other cocoons than she was being raised up by thick threads of glistening spittle. These shrunk quite rapidly, lifting her up into the thick of the collection of cocoons about four feet above the spit slathered ground. She couldn't see the captive tigress from where she'd been bought, but she could only imagine how the woman might be reacting to having disgusting worm spit slathered all over her face. Surely, she couldn't actually find it enjoyable, no matter how much every movement made that spot between her legs tingle.

The worms continued their work on the mitanni without pause. They began at her feet, and covered her with a whitish mucous that expanded into a thick coating on contact with

air. It squeezed her legs with gentile firmness, and made her feel quite comfortable, despite the horrible stench. Upward they progressed, covering her with far greater rapidity than they had the tigress. Were they worried that she might find some way to escape? Or were they just giving her all of their attention now that there was no one watching who might also desire to join in the ‘fun’?

Sho’ra barely had time to consider her wormy-squirmy future as the cocoon was built up over her chest and shoulders. “Fuck,” she muttered to herself as the creatures spread the encasement up around her neck. She gagged as spittle sprayed over her face and around the back of her head. She closed her eyes and winced as the world went dark. Barely another moment passed before the cocoon was complete.

Shit. What’s going to happen to me now? Sho’ra thought as she found herself obligated to breathe through the foul smelling material

of her worm-spit cocoon. *What's... what's... oh... ah... ah...*

Sho'ra's head swam. The world spun around her as she fell into a very strange sort of sleep. She couldn't move. She couldn't see. She couldn't hear. But she could feel, and in a way that seemed to bend the rules of space and time.

For a short while, nothing seemed to happen. Sho'ra floated aloft in a snug little dream where all was silky sweet and right with the world. Then she began to feel strange. Her body was melting. So too was her mind. Her thoughts and memories floated away into nothingness as her flesh melted away into a liquid mass that felt like cool, gelatinous nothing.

Another short interlude passed before the ex-mitanni's liquid mass began to form into something more solid. Slowly, her new worm body developed within the comfortable

captivity of its cocoon. With it, her empty mind developed anew, in a fashion to match her new shape.

No sooner than her new body had fully formed, the worm's cocoon split open, and her perception of the passage of time suddenly snapped back to reality. She slid out into the slime that covered the zoo habitat floor, with only one thing on her bestial mind: finding new subjects to cocoon, and thereby reproduce.

NINE

SHROOMS

Goddess, I can't believe I actually let them talk me into signing up for this, Daia thought to herself as she mucked her way through the dark faorest mire, vainly hoping for an easy afternoon's harvest. A whole month. A whole, goddess forsaken month! Dammit. I'm such an idiot sometimes!

The slender, olive skinned tiyanni was heading east, away from the little treehouse encampment where she and the other harvesters in her group were required to live for the duration of their contracts. Unlike the nervous newcomer, most of the girls were colonists who'd spent most of their adult lives

ankle deep in mud, searching out the highly valuable aphix odangi mushrooms that bought them both the prospect of considerable wealth as well as the promise of deeply unpleasant peril. Each succulently sweet, mature odangi stalk would net the picker a hundred credits, and each successfully trip out into the swamp could net a dozen or more. Against that lay the very real possibility of falling victim to the virulently transformative powers of the phallic mushrooms' defensive 'spoo'.

There was no way to avoid the shroom spoo. If you wanted to pick a stalk, you didn't have any real choice but to take a good squirt of it. But where on one's naked body it was allowed to splatter, and how much the resulting fungal growth could be allowed to grow before it began to insinuate its substance into its new host's body were things that could only be learned by experience. Those who learned fast survived to become full time harvesters, or escape to some far less perilous occupation. Those who didn't learn quickly fell victim to

the fungus, and never returned.

Daia carefully followed the sheen of murky water that marked the well worn path that she'd been assigned. Several centimeters of slimy, reddish brown mud lay beneath. This cold, briny smelling muck oozed up between her toes with each step. There was something about its particular viscosity that make it feel particularly unpleasant. This certainly wasn't helped by the fact that it was also somehow managing to slowly make its way up her lower legs, forming a thick, wet coating that glistened in the few little rays of sunlight that managed to filter down through the high, thick forest canopy.

The tiyanni had watched the colonial girls slather their naked bodies in the distinctly uncomfortable ooze before they'd gone off into the swamp. They'd said it would help protect them from the shroom spoo. Daia hadn't really believed them. Nor had the other tourists. It just looked like something they were trying to

get the newcomers to do just for a deeply perverse laugh. A slick, muddy hazing ritual of sorts, intended to convince the inexperienced to approach their quarry without the required level of caution, no doubt leading to reduced competition with those who failed to see through the game before it was too late.

I wonder how far I have to go before I find these mushrooms, Daia thought as she looked around at the massive tree trunks and the twisted roots that began to close in around the watery path, transforming it from a single clear path into a veritable maze of paths, pools, and the occasional patch of raised dirt where a long since fallen tree had once stood, or where another was about to sprout. But so far, there was no sign of the creamy white patches of fungal mass, or of the pale blue phallic shafts that grew atop them. *I haven't seen a single one. And this place is so damned confusing! I'm going to get lost if I go much further!*

Fortunately the increasingly nervous tiyanni didn't have much further to go. Off to the left, she spied a collection of pale blue stalks that seemed to form one large, neat patch. She began to advance through the maze of twisted tree roots toward it, though she still wasn't quite clear on just what she was actually supposed to do when she got to it.

Daia hadn't been provided with any real instruction on harvesting odangi. All she knew was that she had to snap a mature stalk off at the base and put it in her basket. That and she shouldn't let the things spray any of their sticky spoo between her legs. Or on her face. Or, heaven forbid, actually swallow any of it. And using it for the sort of intimate purpose that its shape so boldly invited? That was absolutely beyond the pale of consideration!

That was it. That was all she'd been told, and it wasn't much. And it certainly wasn't nearly enough to guide her in harvesting the things from such a large patch without getting

completely soaked in shroom spoo.

As the anxious tiyanni advanced toward her quarry, she saw another little mushroom patch to her right. And then another to her left. And then another. And another. Before she knew it, she was practically surrounded by them.

“Oh... wow!” Daia murmured as she looked around at the dozens and dozens of inviting mushrooms who all seemed to be inviting her to come closer and let them cover her body in their foul fungal ejaculate. “They’re... they’re everywhere!”

The patch that she’d first noticed had been upon on a broad mound, rising about a meter above the swamp’s watery surface. Now that she was closer, she could see that it wasn’t so much one single patch, but a densely packed collection of small patches with little paths running between them, almost daring her to see what would happen if she wandered into the middle of all those potently virile fungal

phalli. Being as completely inexperienced as she was, she couldn't help but think of rushing in and grabbing as many as she could, as quickly as she could. They were just mushrooms, after all. Surely they couldn't respond to her presence very quickly. Could they?

Daia looked around at all the other odangi patches. The majority of these were tucked in close to the trunks of the massive trees which surrounded the mound, though a few were right out in the open, atop smaller mounds that poked up out of the slimy mud. These latter patches seemed like the easiest to pick for a novice, having only a few mature, peril filled stalks each. On the other hand, they were right out in the open, and the mushrooms themselves weren't the only peril close at hand.

The tiyanni had heard of mushroom zombies, of course. They were what happened when one got too much odangi spoo on their

bodies. Or got it splattered onto the wrong places. Lumbering masses of leafy humanoid fungus, adorned with pheromone emitting blooms, and generally quite insistent that interlopers share in their fungus-bound life experience.

“I really hope I don’t find one of those things,” Daia muttered as she looked around for a patch that wouldn’t leave her quite so exposed when she bent down to pick the stalks. Down to her right was a small patch with five mature stalks, tucked into the crook between a tree trunk and one of its twisted, protruding roots. It seemed like a much safer spot to try her luck.

“That looks like a better place to start,” she thought aloud as she stepped around the root to take a closer look at the mushrooms themselves. “Now...”

Without any warning, the biggest of the mature mushrooms bent toward Daia. The tiny,

slit-like opening atop its tip relaxed.

Spluuuurt!

“AIEEEE!” the tiyanni shrieked as she felt the cool, sticky shroom-spoos suddenly splattering all over her knees and lower legs before she could even register that the mushroom was about to ejaculate on her. She staggered back and tried to rub the thickening fluid off, but it was no use. It had instantly adhered to her skin, and all she managed to accomplish was to spread the sticky goo all over her hands and wrists. “Oh... oh... fuck! FUCK!”

There was nothing Daia could do but watch as the shroom spoo solidified into a lumpy coat of slightly-bluish, off-white fungal matter. She bit her lower lip and shifted about anxiously as a strange, fizzy, almost prickly feeling washed over the surface of her skin wherever the fungus adhered to it. This was followed by a strange smoothness that felt like she’d had

fancy moisturizing lotion massaged into her skin rather than having it splattered with mushroom spooge. It felt... pleasant. Almost too pleasant, like it was already working to convince her that letting it spread over her entire body, transforming her into a mushroom zombie, might actually feel good.

“Dammit,” she huffed as horizontal ridges began to grow from the surface of the fungus on her lower legs and wrists. Their slowly expanding edges shimmered with surreal iridescence in the uncertain, swampy daylight. “It’s... it’s...”

The badly shaken tiyanni took another step back and forced herself to take a long, deep breath. Never in a million years had she expected the odangi mushroom stalks to be nearly so quick or dexterous. She hadn’t had even a moment’s chance to react, let alone actually do anything tangible to avoid getting quite thoroughly spooGED. So far as she could see, there was just no way to avoid it. At the

very least, she was going to get her arms and legs completely covered. But too much more than that, and...

Daia cringed at the thought of what might happen if the fungus managed to find its way into certain places, or even just come to cover enough of her body. There didn't seem to be much choice but to take the risk though. Clearly, if she planned on actually picking any of the stalks, she was just going to have to endure getting splattered all over with their musty, semen-smelling effluent and hope for the best.

Despite the unpleasant conclusion, it wasn't *entirely* unexpected. She'd seen plenty of pictures and videos of of odangi picking colonial girls before. Every one of them involved girls have-coated in layer upon layer of leafy, iridescent fungus, grinning from ear to ear after a successful trip into the swamp. Whether they were grinning on account of the money they were making off each of the stalks

they'd collected, the very pleasant feel of their fungal 'attire', or something else that the tiyanni had yet to discover, was an open question, and one she still wasn't quite sure she wanted to discover the answer to.

"It's okay," Daia tried comforted herself as she took a step back toward the little odangi patch. "All the girls get lots of fungus on them. It comes right off in the deshroomer. As long as I don't get too much..."

This time, Daia actually saw the mushrooms move. All five of the mature stalks aimed their tips toward her, and this time a few of them were aiming quite a bit higher than her lower legs. Instinct took over, and she turned away from the quivering mushrooms just as they unleashed their copious loads onto her legs and back.

Sploort! Sburt! Spluuuurt!

Daia gasped hard as the cool shroom spoo completed its coating of her lower legs,

splattered half-way up the back of her thighs, and all over her mid and upper back. She cringed as the splatter was followed by that eerie tingle, and then that perfect, sensual smoothness. “Dammit!” she hissed as she quickly came to the conclusion that giving the fungus time for a third go at her was probably a very bad idea. If she was going to pick them, she was going to have to pick them quickly. “Dammit... dammit... dammit!”

Daia glanced down at the fungus and dropped to her knees, grabbing at the big, mature stalks as quickly as she could. One after the other, she snapped off in her fungus coated hands, and she thrust them into her basket without much regard to how much more shroom-spoos she was managing to squeeze out onto her arms in the process. “Dammit. I got them. I got them all. Thank the heavens!”

The tiyanni grabbed at the tree root and struggled to get up from the thick mud that

seemed to suck on her legs, trying its hardest to keep her kneeling there in front of the little fungus patch. A strange thought of staying there until the other stalks matured and covered her with their own ejaculate crossed her mind. It was ridiculous, of course. By the time they matured, the fungus already growing on her body would have long since covered her and turned her into a mushroom zombie.

It took a few long minutes, but Daia finally managed to free herself from the muck. She twisted to one side and plopped her round rump onto the smooth, unpleasantly cold tree root beside the odangi patch. Her newly acquired patches of fungal growth were already forming their own ridges. The feel of the light, yet stiff, fungus across her shoulder blades made her feel strange. It didn't really restrict her own movement, but it moved very much as if it were a part of her own body, fixed upon her spine, and ever-so-slowly edging its way up to the base of her neck.

“Five. Only five of these dammed shrooms,” Daia grunted as she took stock of the slowly growing fungus upon her arms and back. “Only five. It’s going to be embarrassing to go back with so few. But... heavens, this stuff. It’s growing all over me!”

The tiyanni could actually see the fungal matter slowly spreading over her skin. Little filaments grew from the edges, slowly forming webs, than themselves slowly closed up into a solid coating. Patches grew toward one another, threatening to join together into a solid coating. And they grew toward those places where she was told the fungus should never be allowed. Those openings in which it could become entrenched, rendering it irremovable, and making her transformation into a mushroom zombie inevitable.

“At least it feels kind of nice,” Daia sighed as she looked back to her little basket with its five mushrooms and prominent biohazard labels. It felt much more than just ‘kind of nice’ now. It

felt genuinely good. So much so that she found herself not really caring how far it spread, as long as it didn't spread to those delicate places from which it could never be extracted. "And I can't go back with so few. I just can't. It's not growing all that fast. Maybe if I can find another patch with just a few. Enough to fill my basket half way. That should be enough for my first time doing this."

The tiyanni stood up and reached down for her basket.

Schluck. Glurp. Blup.

Daia froze. Something was behind her. It was close. Very, very close. Was it one of the other mushroom pickers? Or was it...

"Well, well, well," the interloper purred. "What *do* we have here?"

Daia sighed. It was just one of her fellow pickers. She started to turn, to scold the woman for startling her, but found herself held

in place by two fungus coated hands on her shoulders. Three fingers and a thumb. Fey'li. "Hey! Would you..."

"Come on sweetie," the fey'li giggled as she forced the startled tiyanni to sit back down onto the tree root. "Relax. Enjoy the ambiance. The smell. The sweet, sweet smell. It smells so nice, doesn't it?"

Daia took a deep breath with the full intention of letting loose on the fey'li. Something in the air changed her mind. It was subtle. Insidious. A hint of spice. A faint waft of something warm and meaty. A soft touch of distant floral notes. And something... something that she just couldn't find a name for.

"Mmm," the fey'li purred as she rubbed the tiyanni's shoulders. "It smells as good as your beautiful coat of odangi feels, doesn't it?"

"I... what the... what the hell?!?" Daia sputtered as she turned to look over her

shoulder. “What the... the...”

The tiyanni gasped as she found herself being held down by a creature that looked for all the world like a mushroom zombie. But it wasn't quite a mushroom zombie. At least not yet. The face of the cougaress was still largely free of fungal growth, as was the lower half of her broadly flicking tail. The rest of her body, however...

Daia couldn't help herself but stare into the colorful, vertically split blooms of fungus that grew upon the fey'li's breasts. Another, larger such bloom grew forward from between her legs. Everywhere else was covered with rumply, iridescent ridges. Everywhere else besides her head, which was surrounded by a mesh-like web of spore structure, and capped by a relatively flat, shoulder-breadth mushroom cap that was a very glossy pale blue.

“Get off me!” the tiyanni huffed. “I’ve got to... I want to enjoy this... I mean... I... well... just... just go be a zombie someplace else, will you?!?”

“I know you want to enjoy it,” the fungus covered fey’li cooed, leaning in until the blooms upon her chest began to rub awkwardly against the growing fungal ridges on Daia’s back. “And I’m going to help you.”

“I don’t need... I don’t... I... uh... what do you mean?” the tiyanni replied. Something about that strange smell was making her feel very, very weird. She knew she should have found the almost-zombie terrifying. She knew she should be doing anything and everything that she possibly could to escape its grasp. But it was just so much easier to sit there and inhale the monster’s bizarre odor and look at those pretty blooms on its tits. So much easier and, with each successive breath, so much more pleasing to the sensibilities.

The fungus covered fey'li chuckled. "Don't you wanna know what it *really* feels like?"

"I... uh... maybe?" Daia replied. Again, she knew exactly what the creature meant. There was no doubt in her mind about that. Nor was there any doubt that she should probably be refusing. Or resisting. But on the other hand, it already felt so good. Why shouldn't she let it grow a bit more? They'd told her that the fungus generally didn't invade a picker's nipples. If she let it cover her breasts, would she get her own pair of pretty blooms? How would they feel? Would they feel as good as the rest? Or... would they feel even better?

"Well then," the fungal fey'li purred. "Take a deep breath. Stand up. Because, well, I'm gonna make you feel absolutely incredible!"

Daia took a deep breath and hesitated. She really, really, *really* didn't want to be turned into a mushroom zombie. At the same time, she just couldn't help but really, really, *really*

want to know what being covered in fungus felt like. Was it all going to feel as smooth and silky as it felt on her arms, legs and back? Was it going to feel even better the more it covered? And what about those magnificent blooms? Surely they must feel amazing!

The tiyanni took another deep breath and stood up. She just had to know.

The fungus covered fey'li drew her captive away from the picked odangi patch, toward another that was also tucked in close beside a tree trunk. "This is gonna be so much fun. It's gonna feel so good. You just wait and see!"

Daia couldn't help but notice that the fey'li's fungus coating had grown down her tail until only about a quarter was still free. She could see little threads beginning to grow over her face as well. She wondered if the fungus had somehow delayed its victim's total zombification in order to snare her as well. It seemed unlikely. Unless, of course, it was

somehow insinuating itself into the fey'li's mind, and using her brain as its own source of 'intelligence'.

“Here we are,” the fungal fey'li purred as she stopped her captive in front of the pristine fungal patch. “Oh... this is going to be so much fun!”

Daia looked down at the eight mature stalks. Was she just supposed to step forward and let them spray her with all their shroom spoo, all at once? Or was she...

“AH!” the tiyanni gasped as her captor bumped her knees forward from behind. She fell forward onto the hands and knees, and before she knew it she was staring straight down into the waiting fungal phalli.

Sploot! Spluuuurt! Splooooooort!

In an instant, Daia's face, shoulders and chest were completely covered in shroom-spoo. It was in her ears. In her nose. In her mouth. It

tasted salty, with a faint undertone of roasted beef, and a tingly, soapy tang that made her want to spit it out. But she didn't. Because she couldn't.

The tiyanni squirmed and tried to get up and she fungus solidified around her face and chest. She couldn't see. She could barely hear. For a moment she thought she couldn't breathe either. But as the fungus solidified, it became porous and foam-like, allowing air to pass freely into her lungs.

The fungal fey'li rolled her captive over, presenting the back of her head to the shrooms as they ejaculated for a second time.

Daia wiggled and shuddered as she felt the new mass of fungus solidify around the back of her head and merge into the fungus already on her back and arms. This fungus was already growing around her sides to merge with that which was covering her chest. Only her upper thighs and abdomen were left free of the

growth, but she had no doubt that this would soon be rectified by her captor.

The tiyanni barely noticed as her captor pulled her away from the fungal patch and laid her down upon a particularly large, flat tree root. Her mind swam with the wonderful tingly sensations as the fungus solidified and grew upon her body. The smooth, silky sensation that followed was no longer merely pleasing. It was positively pleasurable, like the most wonderful of high class skin treatments, taken to an impossibly exquisite extreme.

One pair of places were, for the moment, left in a state of constant tingly arousal. Daia could feel the blooms growing upon her chest. They felt snug upon her modest breasts, holding them just so, like a perfectly custom fitted bra. Each of the bloom's colorful leaves felt like a faint, rumply ridge upon her chest, and their central clefts seemed to tug ever-so-gently upon her perky little nipples.

The captive tiyanni panted through her foamy fungal gag as her captor began to take liberties with her prostrate body. Fungal fingers caressed her firm tummy. They slid down over her hips. Further toward her thighs. Smoothly. Gently. Arousingly.

Daia continued to huff and pant as the fungus grew around her head, forming an expanding maze of spore structure while the first shiny patches of her eventual cap began to form over the top of her her head. *It feels so good*, she thought as the fungus slowly spread up her thighs, down over the small of her back and tummy. Any lingering thoughts she might have had about being transformed into a fungus zombie were washed out of her mind by the fungus as it spread down her throat, and up into her sinuses. As on the surface of her skin, it all tingled a bit, and then went so wonderfully smooth. *This feel so perfect. So perfect. So... so...*

Fungal fingers slid down between the

helpless tiyanni's legs. They began to toke at her womanly folds. Press into that spot that made her delicate flesh sing. For a moment, her mind swam as the old, familiar source of sexual pleasure crashed into the new. The fungal smoothness was a kind of sexual pleasure now. A different kind of sexual pleasure. Pure, unfettered arousal of the flesh. Not just the tender pink flesh in a specific, deeply intimate place. An arousal of all the surface of her body, brought about in by her formerly unthinkable fungal copulation. And an arousal which demanded consummation without further delay.

Daia quivered upon the tree root as the fungal fingers pulled away. For a moment she was left to steep in the blissfully smooth, wonderfully aroused feel of the fungus as it slowly spread its filaments up her thighs, and down over her bellybutton. Her ability to form words was gone, buried under the increasingly intense sensations that filled her mind. Indeed, everything was pure sensation to her now.

Pure sensation, and desire to finish what had been started.

The tiyanni shuddered as new squirts of mushroom spoo splattered between her legs and all over her belly. No doubt her captor was responsible. She didn't mind. The faster she could feel the fungus covering every single millimeter of her body, the better.

The new fungus solidified as the fungal fey'li pulled her captive from the tree root and forced her to stand.

More fresh shroom spoo splattered over Daia's rump and thighs. Before she knew it, not a speck of olive flesh was left open to the air. The last tingles of fungal solidification pricked at her skin. The deeply sensual, intensely sexual smoothness that covered her became all-encompassing. Indeed, it became more than just all-encompassing. It became all-consuming.

The fungus encased tiyanni just stood still

as the small fungal ridges which were growing over much of her body spread out and formed layer upon layer of iridescent leaves. The blooms which so snugly held her breasts aloft were joined by third, much larger bloom between her legs. Its vertical leaves hung upon her pelvis and the soft flesh between her legs, sliding and rubbing into her folds with every little movement in her legs.

The brownish, sponge-like spore structure that completely encased Daia's head became firmer, locking her head in a neutral forward position. Atop grew the shoulder-width cap, bluer and perhaps even a bit shinier than that of her captor. And as it grew, her mind slipped further and further into a state where all that existed were sensations and the most basic of primal instincts.

Daia began to feel all tingly again. The fungus was insinuating itself into her flesh, filling her with countless little threads by which it could control her now puppet-like

body. Her skin merged with the fungus that covered it, allowing her to feel its surface as her own. It felt dull. Distant. Except for those three blooms, which felt wonderfully aroused.

The new mushroom zombie shambled away from the place of its creation. Puffs of potent pheromones found their way from within her blooms, each bringing with it a magnificent burst of pure, mind bending pleasure. Fungal orgasms, courtesy of the new organs which had now spread into and subsumed the intimate flesh upon which they'd first grown.

To the creature once called Daia, these constant pulses of fungal pleasure had combined with the feel of her dull fungal body to form the entirety of her new existence. Physical sensation without thoughts, provided by a body that, for all intents and purposes, belonged to a completely different living organism. An organism that desired only one thing: to find other mushroom pickers, and make them into new mushroom zombies.

Mushroom zombies that would one day dissolve to become new patches of odangi, thereby completing the fungus' cycle of life.

TEN

SANDY CLAWS

Sandy Claws seemed to be enjoying the novelty of her new Winter Throne and, in particular, the seemingly magical biogel snow that offered her gift seeking supplicants the sort of trademark Gelitech peril that everyone had come to expect. The little white flakes fluttered down around the cute little leopardess, dressed as she was in nothing but a flowing blue, green, and silver scarf. She was protected by the potently transformative potentials by a similarly covered canvas canopy. This canopy was located at the far end of of an obscure branch of the former Vixanti Facility Three, in a vast subterranean quarry

chamber that served as an open courtyard for old, mostly disused offices that had been carved into the black granite walls.

Dotted around this courtyard were numerous biogel snow covered planters and trees, creating a maze through which supplicants had to pass in order to get to Sandy Claws for their gift, and through which they again had to pass in order to leave. Lining the walls were more than three dozen perfectly identical, snow white, female biogel figures, dressed in holiday colors, and raised up over the snowy rolls and drifts on stone block pedestals. These inanimate, living dolls stood in silent testament to the risk that every guest faced should they dare to seek one of the many Gelitech gifts that were on offer.

The whole sparkling, subterranean winter scene was illuminated by strings of colorful lights, hung from the trees, and the many white concrete office balconies that lined the gray cavern walls. These spacious platforms

were filled with cheery spectators, Gelitech staff and guests who'd already braved the snow peril and received their biogel gifts. They were all now waiting for the last of the gift seekers to make their short journeys through the transformative snow, before their holiday benefactor closed out the event with the sort of uniquely Gelitech show that would ensure that there would be a need for a brand new Sandy Claws every year.

Every Sandy Claws was a volunteer, selected at random from qualifying applicants who met certain special criteria. Every Sandy Claws had to be leopardess fey'li, between the ages of nineteen and twenty-five, and who didn't mind spending six weeks practically naked while spreading holiday cheer around the former Vixanti Facility Three in a fey'li tradition spanning back to the dawn of recorded fey'li history. More importantly, however, they had to be totally willing to face the inevitable and very permanent transfiguration that was the ultimate fate of every Gelitech Sandy Claws.

This year's Sandy Claws was all of nineteen, on the slightly shortish side, slender, and so irrepressibly enthusiastic that it had been almost impossible for anyone to refuse her grand holiday wonderland proposal. Snow. Biogel snow. It would be pretty. And it would also be pretty fun. That the stuff turned out to carry a very real risk of instant glistening just ensured that it would be pretty exciting as well.

Of the four-hundred and ninety-seven gift seekers who'd sought Sandy Claw's gifts on this final day of the holiday celebration, thirty-three had succumbed to the powers of the few potently transformative flakes that were mixed in with the otherwise inert remainder. They all lay where they'd fallen, further reminders of the risks each of the remaining guests faced on their journeys too and from her Winter Throne.

Only one guest remained to make her way though the gently falling biogel snow: a

statuesque, ram-horned, deep violet mitanni. She clad from neck toe in glistening black biogel, but she was no Gelitech employee. The final day of the event was reserved for randomly selected members of the biogel clad public. The lottery had been held on VixNet. It was free to enter, but there was a very large string attached.

It was impossible to know what this bold mitanni was thinking as she waited for Sandy Claws to beckon her forward. She knew the bidding had started. Thousands, no doubt, were trying to claim her body. Or at least the virtually inanimate biogel doll, the gummy, that she risked becoming the moment she began to come into physical contact with the lightly fluttering bigoel snowflakes. If she made it to Sandy Claws and back, they'd be disappointed, of course. But if she was glistened, the last bid before the transformation commenced would own her new physical form, for better or for worse.

Sandy Claws was taking her time, no doubt quite conscious that the conclusion of the mitanni's holiday adventure would also mean the end of her own. Or perhaps she was letting the viewers on VixNet some extra time to bid on the particularly stunning subject. It wasn't long, though, before she smiled across the vast quarry chamber, and beckoned her final guest to approach.

The mitanni didn't hesitate for even the slightest of moments. She stepped straight out into the shimmering white flurry. Her firmly set smile and confident stride made it clear that she wasn't concerned in the least by the peril the glimmering flakes posed. She immediately advanced straight toward Sandy Claws' canopy, stepping over the prostrate form of one the day's previous gift-seekers, half-hidden beneath the fluffy biogel snow.

The spectators on the balconies fell silent as they watched the tall, robustly built figure advance toward the middle of the chamber.

The biogel snow flakes began to fall more heavily. They swirled about and even made their onto the balconies, much to the very mixed feelings of those standing upon them. It was all just part of the typical Gelitech fun, of course. If you were going to enjoy watching everyone else risk their bodies in the artificial storm, you were going to have to share a little bit of that risk yourself.

The mitanni didn't hesitate in the face of the intensified snowfall. She pressed forward, toward her meeting with Sandy Claws, while bidders on VixNet kept adding their 'penny' bids to the ever-rising total. She was already commanding five thousand, glistened, packed, and shipped. If the bidding kept up at its current pace, she'd make fifty-one hundred before she got to Sandy Claws' canopy.

"Welcome!" Sandy Claws purred in a light, girly manner that seemed perfectly matched to her broad, mischievous smile and shamelessly spread legs. There wasn't much to see amid all

the soft, white fluff, but the implied invitation was too obvious for her guest not to notice. “Come! Let me offer you a gift to help you enjoy the biogel lifestyle even more this coming year!”

The mitanni stepped into the relative safety of canopy and stopped a meter in front of Sandy Claws’ finely crafted wooden throne. She smirked as her gaze slid down the leopardess fluffy tummy and caressed the rolls of fluffy flesh between her legs.

“My elves tell me you might enjoy a new program for your biogel furnishings,” Sandy Claws cooed. Elves indeed. Gelitech kept good record of every customers biogel and biogel accessory acquisitions. They knew what floated the mitanni’s proverbial boat, not to mention her entertainment consumption habits on VixNet. That information had been distilled into a simple script for the holiday leopardess to follow, and she did so with just the sort of silky enthusiasm that could get just

about anyone to accept gifts of questionable intent. “Perhaps something... soothing? Or perhaps not. You seem like someone who’d enjoy something... sexy. Intense? Or perhaps... if you dare... transformative?”

The mitanni chuckled. “You seem to know my habits very well,” she rumbled. “Why don’t you surprise me, hmm?”

Sandy Claws giggled. “Oh! Well then,” she replied, grinning as she waved her right hand in the air, batting at luminous holographic controls that were only visible to her. “A surprise. A big surprise, hmm? How about a random premium level program from my special holiday collection, applied directly to your VixNet account... but... name and function hidden until you try it for the very first time. And you will try it soon, won’t you?”

“Thank you, and of course I will,” the mitanni laughed. “And I’m sure I’ll thoroughly enjoy it.”

“I’m very sure you will,” Sandy Claws replied as the mitanni turned to head back the way she’d come. “Have a wonderful holiday! Don’t miss the big party! It’s starting soon!”

The mitanni strode forth with as much confidence on her way out as she’d shown on her way in. About a third of the way through the quarry chamber, however, she gasped and came to an abrupt halt. A snow-white wash spread through the biogel that coated her body in a flash, even as that biogel spread up to cover her entire head. She shuddered and fell to her knees as the shape of her face vanished into a flat, featureless surface. As her body shrunk and shifted into that pleasingly attractive, unusually plain shape that all female gummies shared. As her flesh and bone were transformed into pure biogel, rendering her almost completely inanimate, yet still very much alive.

The live spectators laughed and applauded as the new gummy flopped down into the

biogel snow. This wasn't in celebration of her fate, of course, or even of the impressive five-thousand, four-hundred, fifty-six point twenty-one credits that had been the final bid, almost a full thousand more than the whole event's next-highest. It was because her transformation meant that the grand finale would begin all that much sooner, and that was the real show that everyone had been patiently waiting for.

The heavy snow subsided a bit, but at the center of the chamber it began to swirl about in virtual tornado. Heaps of biogel snow were cast against the natural rock walls, and even up into some of the lower level balconies, much to the considerable, if very momentary consternation of the three unlucky spectators who were suddenly glistened where they stood. No one else gave their fate much consideration, though. They were all focused on the clearing at the center of the chamber floor, and the path leading between it and the canopy.

The wind subsided and the biogel snow fell still. Sandy Claws stepped out from beneath her canopy and cast her long scarf to one side. She walked down the polished, natural stone path, to the large open clearing where a broad, obsidian black disk was embedded into the floor. Its outer edge was carved with ancient pictographs and runes which described the faux-arcane function, a function which would only trigger on this specific day, and only for Sandy Claws herself.

Sandy Claws had no idea what any of it meant. She wasn't supposed to know, after all. It was supposed to be a surprise. All that she'd been told was to stand in the middle of the glossy black disk, and discover just what sort of biogel gift every Sandy Claws received at the end of her tenure.

“This is going to be fun,” Sandy Claws whispered to herself as she approached the disk. “I wonder what it’s going to do to me?”

Sandy Claws stepped onto the disk's slippery surface without hesitation. For a few moments she looked around and smiled up at all the spectators who'd braved the biogel snow to receive their own biogel related gifts, and were now excitedly waiting to see that their benefactor was going to get in return. Their enthusiasm was a chilly reminder that whatever was about to happen, it was definitely going to involve her conversion into a biogel... something. Exactly what that something was, however, was a complete mystery.

Sandy Claws didn't know that her fate was as much a mystery to everyone else as it was to her. It had been put up to a last-minute vote on VixNet, and the results were being kept hidden until the event had actually taken place. She was going to be finding out at the same time as everyone else, though whether or not she was going to enjoy it as much as they did was very much an open question.

Sandy Claws gasped as the disk beneath her feet began to feel wet. A moment later, she felt wet all the way up around her ankles. In another moment it was to her knees.

The living liquid biogel came upon Sandy Claws as two waves. The first, a tight coating of glistening whiteness, spreading up her legs so quickly that she didn't realize what was going on until it was already halfway up her thighs. The second wave followed only seven or eight centimeters behind. This mass of biogel was crystal clear, rising up around her in a beveled rectangular column that was just large enough to fully encase her body as it grew. And encase her body, it did, with a soft firmness that was both extremely comfortable and yet perturbingly confining all at the same time.

“Oh!” Sandy Claws softly exclaimed as the biogel rapidly spread up between her legs, over her hips, and around her waist. She began to huff and pant as it surged up her back and over

her chest. As her arms were pulled to her sides, and held tightly in place by the rising column. As she felt it begin to flow around her neck. “Ah... oh... oh.. glk... gl...”

The snow-white biogel flowed straight into Sandy Claws’ open mouth. It washed up her face, and surrounded her entire head as she shook and shuddered in response to the wave of numbness that came along with its filling of her insides. The clear column followed a few moments behind, closing off her head and fixing it straight forward. It continued for a few more centimeters upward, while simultaneously growing from underneath, lifting its captive’s feet an equal amount above the floor.

The helpless, biogel encased leopardess squirmed and wiggled within her prison. She certainly expected to be glistened at any moment. Instead, the biogel which filled her every opening was keeping her alive within the solid biogel block, though for what purpose she

had no means to tell. All she could do was get comfortable and wait for whatever was to come.

Sandy Claws couldn't tell what was actually happening as her pleasantly jiggly prison was laid down and mounted in a special frame. She could only lay there and feel the strange, massage-like sensations that washed over, and into her body. It felt good. Almost too good. She began to feel tingly. Aroused. And with every successive shift and jolt, her arousal only intensified.

There was no way for Sandy Claws to know that she had been moved into the old, disused cafeteria just off to one side of the quarry chamber where the holiday after-party had just begun. All of her senses were denied to her, save her sense of touch. All she could do was feel, and all she could feel was her prison wiggling and wobbling, and making her feel so aroused that she was sure to climax in very short order.

Sandy Claws wanted to unleash some deeply primal sound as her body reached a crescendo thanks to the all the unknown, unseen hands that were trying to see just how high on the 'gelgasm' meter they could get her. Not high enough for their liking, apparently, as her sudden, thumping release was met not with less manipulation, but instead the activation of a much less forgiving means of stimulus.

Waves of vibration ebbed and flowed through Sandy Claws' biogel prison. In less than a minute, she found herself at the height of pleasure again. Release. Sweet, euphoric release. But the vibration continued, and the rise began again.

With each successive orgasm, the gelgasm meter jumped, and then came to rest at a new, higher base level. For the first ten minutes, it was all solid green. But then the spikes moved into the yellow. In fifteen minutes, the base was yellow, and the spikes were just starting to poke into the orange and red.

Sandy Claws' mind was jelly. There was nothing but vibration and pleasure and release and more pleasure and more and more and...

The base level of the gelgasm meter rose from yellow to orange. It had reached her safe limit of endurance. A soft chime sounded.

Sandy Claws could feel her body go dull as the biogel subsumed her. She could feel her face vanish. Her ears. Her tail. All physical sense of having muscles or ability to move of her own accord vanished. Her shape rapidly shifted into that identical to every other female gummy. Her crystalline biogel encasement shifted too, so that it could hug every centimeter of her body even more closely than it had before. It was an encasement that, she knew, she would almost certainly never escape.

The vibration continued. Her new body responded, though more slowly than her former. The arousal was less intense, but far

more focused. It seemed as if that place between her legs was the only place that retained some modicum of its former sensitivity. After a few minutes, she could feel the strange, rubbery thumping of a true gelgasm shuddering its way through her biogel abdomen.

The vibration continued. Physical endurance wasn't a concern any more. A gummy could go on gelgasming without any apparent limit, each time feeling just like its first.

What seemed like an eternity would pass before the now former Sandy Claws felt the vibrations abate. Soon after, she could feel the movement as she was freed from the frame and taken away to... someplace. It didn't take long for her mind to float off into that dreamy state in which all gummies resided, until movement or warmth woke them up. And there her mind would stay, until someone saw fit to stimulate her.

The former Sandy Claws had been brought to the maze of quarry chambers where all of the other encased gummies produced at the Gelarium were stacked up in piles. Most were anonymous souls, black gummies completely concealed within black encasements, piled up with no particular regard to who they might have been. Far fewer were the black gummies in clear encasements, most of which were stood upright at the end of each stack to provide the chambers with some decoration.

The former Sandy Claws was the first Sandy Claws to be encased in such a fashion. She was also the first encased snow-white gummy. That meant she would receive a special place, a private alcove at a prominent intersection, where every passerby could gaze upon her beauty, and perhaps wake her up for a little bit of manual, encasement jiggling play.

ELEVEN

SWEET & SOUR

The wind was positively howling outside as Kaia made her way down the narrow stone stairs, into the dark basement of the little mountain cottage she shared with her housemate and occasional lover. The flicker of the faux-fire danced on the walls, its inviting warmth flowing up the narrow stairwell in sharp contrast to the chilly drafts that had taken hold above. With this wonderful warmth came the cozy crackle of burning wood, and the magnificent scents that made the entirely technological illusion almost indistinguishable from the real thing. Another note wafted through the air, however. A piquant note,

which seemed both natural and synthetic at the same time. Rubber. Latex rubber.

The slender, blonde cheetah was no stranger to the lovely lavender elf-eared ashiri's artistic inclinations, often expressed through carefully sculpted creations of gray polymer clay, and the expertly molded reproductions in various forms of resin or silicone that she sold to several local specialist boutiques as a way to make a bit of extra money. She always wore enticingly tight, black rubber gloves when producing her various crafty creations, and their smell was a sure indicator that she was hard at work. Exactly what that work might be was hard to tell. It could have been something perfectly mundane, but there had been something in her particularly giddy excitement about the arrival of her latest raw material order that suggested that something new was in the offing. Something interesting. And if luck would have it, something particularly profitable.

“Is it safe for me to come down?” Kaia asked as she paused halfway down the stairs. Molding with certain materials could be a very finicky process at times. Even though she couldn’t hear the vacuum pump that her companion used to remove bubbles from the molding materials as they settled and set, it didn’t mean there wasn’t something going on that she might inadvertently disturb with her presence.

“Yes!” came the reply. “Come on! You’re really, *really* going to love this!”

Kaia rolled her eyes as she continued down the stairs. That was all she needed to hear to know exactly what sort of object her companion was currently crafting.

It was probably inevitable, really. There they were, cooped up in a mountain cabin in the middle of a particularly snow winter, with nothing else to do but putter about with various hobbies. And there her pretty, silky-

skinned lover was, with her access to ample quantities of silicone, molding tools, and the artistic talent to make effective use of them. Her mind would inevitably wander to things less artistic than personally... useful. Enjoyable, in the context of their relationship. And, if handled with the right kind of finesse, downright pleasurable.

“Just tell me it’ll actually fit this time,” the cheetah said as she stepped down onto the cool, flagstone floor and basked in the radiant heat of the glowing faux-fire. Were it not for the prospect of ‘activities’, she would have just curled up on the patch of shaggy carpet in front of the fireplace, in among the old couch, the side tables, and the bookcases that formed a cozy little living corner perfect for drafty winter days just like this. Instead, she turned away from the fire, toward the greater portion of the basement. This was mostly filled with shelves full of winter food stocks, random tools, and other accouterments essential for mountain life.

In the far corner of the basement was the old, careworn wooden workbench where the cheetah's lover did most of her sculpting and molding during the chilly winter months. It was currently lit only by a few faux-candles scattered around its surface among the bottles of various chemicals; glass bell jars, hoses, and valves that made up the vacuum pump apparatus; and other random containers and tools essential to the molding process. Her lover was sitting hunched over in front of her latest work piece, looking for all the world like a frazzled mad scientist clad in a loose fitting, rather awkward looking, blue rubber safety suit. Her long, deep violet hair was tied up in an uneven bun, and her safety glasses were thoroughly cockeyed, resting only on one of her ears with the other side half-way up the side of her head.

“What’s with the suit?” Kaia asked, hesitating to approach. Her companion only wore the suit on rare occasions when she was working with something potentially caustic, or

capable of quickly adhering to skin. For everything else, including anything safe to use as a bedtime toy, a cloth apron had always sufficed. “It’s just silicone, isn’t it?”

“It’s better than silicone!” Ry’sha giggled. “Waaaaay better! I can’t wait to see you try it. Come on! It’s ready to open!”

Kaia cautiously approached and peered over her companion’s shoulder. In front of her was a large cylinder of blue alginate, wrapped in the sort of thin, stiff plastic sheet more typically used to keep layer cakes together on the way home from the bakery. What might have been concealed inside was a mystery. The only clue was the glossy, transparent, pinkish-orange substance which could be seen forming a perfectly smooth layer just within the mold’s opening.

“Trust me, this is going to be so much more awesome than anything you’ve ever tried before,” Ry’sha cooed as she pulled off the little

pieces of tape that held the plastic sheet around the alginate. “It’s a special commission too. Well, the original sculpt is. Might actually make its way into a real, commercial product line too. That means royalties. Won’t that be great?”

“I suppose,” Kaia replied as she watched her lover set the plastic sheet aside, and pick up a small knife. “But you still haven’t explained why you need all that protection for something safe to put inside our bodies.”

“Don’t you worry about a thing,” Ry’sha replied with a smirk as she picked up a small, intimidatingly sharp looking hobby knife. “It’s perfectly safe, but it requires a few precautions like a rubber suit and mats on the bench and floor. It doesn’t stick to rubber before it sets, but skin or wood, or anything porous? Yeah. Definitely didn’t want to have to try and clean that up if I didn’t have to.”

“Ah,” Kaia responded with a skeptical

eyebrow as she watched her companion cut a vertical slit down one side of the mold.

“They sent me a batch as part of the initial payment for the master sculpt, along with a few duplicates to make my own molds with,” Ry’sha went on. “Really neat stuff. It molds so well. No need for the vacuum chamber or anything. Just color it, mix it, and pour it. Comes out perfect every time!”

“Mhmm,” Kaia hummed as she watched her lover peel the blue alginate away from what has looking to be a long phallic shape of barely reasonable proportions. “Oh. Wow! That’s...”

“Amazing, isn’t it?” Ry’sha laughed as she pulled the member from its mold. “Can you even imagine how great it’s going to feel?”

The cheetah definitely couldn’t. It was just so different from anything she’d ever seen before, let alone felt insider of her. It took the form of six ribbed tubes, twisted around one another in helical fashion, and fused together

within its core. These connected its big, bulbous base to the weirdly shaped, vaguely conical tip. Its vibrantly pinkish-orange substance was perfectly clear, and completely free of even the smallest of air bubbles. It wasn't free of all internal features, however. An opaque, dark something filled the bulbous base, and formed threads which ran through of the intertwined tubes, and into the little opening in the middle of the tip.

“Now, just gotta get the inner mold out,” Ry'sha said as she took the artificial alien member and placed it in a container of clear liquid. “Thankfully, it's water soluble.”

“Hmm,” Kaia hummed as she watched her companion massage the strange shape. She might have found the vision of rubber gloved fingers stroking and squeezing such a thing quite stimulating were it not for the thing's rather unsettling form. It was hard to imagine how anyone could look at it and see it as something one might want to put in their body.

Then again, maybe that was the point.

“There,” Ry’sha commented as the last of the inner mold dissolved. She took the member from the water and squeezed it until it was empty. Then she put it into a second container. “Just needs a rinse, and then it’ll be good to go.”

The ashiri massaged and squeezed the alien member within the clean water until she was satisfied, then took it out and laid it on the rubber mat in front of the various detritus of it creation. “There. What do you think?”

“I’m not sure what to think,” Kaia responded with a shrug. “It certainly looks... interesting.”

“It’s quite functional as well,” Ry’sha noted, picking the alien member again. “As you manipulate it, the tubes flex and twist for extra pleasure. And you can fill it with various passive or active pelvic injectables too. It won’t just let you squeeze them out though. It’ll only let loose after you’ve played with it for a while.

Kind of at random. So you'll never know when it's going to go until it does. Neat, huh?"

"I suppose," Kaia replied. "I mean, that's not much different than some of the other toys we've got, right?"

Ry'sha chuckled. "Yeah, but this does it all without any technology involved. No need for recharging!"

"I suppose that's... good," Kaia responded with another shrug. It was certainly an interesting idea, but she had a distinct feeling that it wasn't going to be nearly so incredible as her companion seemed to think. No doubt it was just some kind of rubber that wouldn't get soft enough to squeeze until it got warm enough from play. Or something like that. Simple, yes, but cheap and no doubt quick to degrade over time like any of the other similarly chintzy garbage one could buy for a few credits on CoreNet. "I mean... if it lasts. This can't be all that durable, can it?"

“That’s what you’re about to find out, isn’t it?” Ry’sha giggled with a mischievous wink. “Well? You gonna take those sweatpants off and try it out? Hmm?”

“Now?” Kaia answered with a sigh. “To be perfectly honest, I’m not really feeling that...”

The ashiri held up a little perfume bottle and squirted a little bit of seemingly unscented mist into the cheetah’s nose. “A little Cat’s Tail to help?”

Kaia rolled her eyes as her body immediately started to relax into that particular physical mood that made intimate engagements significantly more difficult to resist. Fey’li such as herself were hardwired to respond to others’ own arousal. There was no escaping the effect. One little sniff of those potent pheromones was all that was required. It didn’t matter if it came pure from the glands of another fey’li, or from a bottle in the hands of a playful lover of less feline physical

persuasion.

“Fine,” Kaia gave in as her companion reinforced her budding sense of intimate desire with another squirt of pheromones. It was just a sense of desire, however, and not a compulsion. There was nothing forcing her to play with the new, alien looking toy. It certainly didn’t click with her. But the beautiful woman who’d made it certainly did. And if there was any chance that one was going to lead to the other...

Ry’sha grinned as the cheetah reached under her light gray sweatshirt and untied the cord that held her dark blue sweatpants atop her feline hips. “That’s the spirit!”

“What about you?” Kaia asked as she let her soft, warm sweatpants fall to the floor around her ankles. The basement didn’t feel nearly so warm as it had with the pants on. She looked to the couch and the fireplace. The carpet looked even more inviting now. She’d be right

in front of the fireplace, and warm as warm could be.

“I’m going to enjoy the show. Take some notes for the next design. You know. Business stuff,” Ry’sha replied as she stood up and turned her back toward the cheetah. “A bit of help?”

Kaia reached out and tugged at the blue safety suit’s zipper. It didn’t want to unzip, compelling the cheetah to take hold of the collar with her other hand and give it a few firm tugs before it was willing to move. As it descended, the smooth, nearly blemish free lavender skin of the ashiri’s back was exposed.

The arousal induced by those two squirts of potent pheromones was just a suggestion. That induced by the sight of that magnificent spine was much more of a compulsion. The moment she was done pulling the zipper down, she slid her hands under the thick rubber, and over her lover’s shoulders. Ever so slowly, she slid her

hands outward, savoring the delightful feel of her silky skin on her finger pads.

Ry'sha giggled as the safety suit fell from her shoulders. She pulled off her black rubber gloves with a pair of sharp snaps, while her companion began to slide the suit lower down her arms. After a few moments, her arms were free, and the whole suit fell to the floor around her feet.

Kaia couldn't help but caress every centimeter of her lover's body with her eyes, as her hands slipped from her arms, to her pleasingly robust hips. The ashiri hadn't been wearing a scrap of fabric under the safety suit, and the sight of her completely naked body sent the cheetah's sense of erotic desire skyrocketing. "When I'm done with that toy," she murmured into her lover's ear, "you're next."

"Oh, am I?" Ry'sha again giggled as she kicked the safety suit from beneath her feet.

“Well then, we’d better get started, because I can barely wait.”

Kaia giggled in reply, stepping out of her sweatpants while also taking off her sweatshirt. She too hadn’t been wearing anything under her outer layer, though that was more of a fey’li custom than something intended to titillate. They already had a natural layer of fur for underwear, so why add another?

“I’m going to lay down on the carpet,” the cheetah declared as she turned toward the flickering fireplace.

“Alright,” Ry’sha replied. “I’ll be right there.”

Kaia proceeded to the thick, shaggy blue carpet and laid down on its magnificently soft, wonderfully warm fuzziness. She rolled onto her back and basked in the warmth of the faux-fire. It felt especially nice on her tummy. She could have just closed her eyes and fallen asleep.

“Come on,” Ry’sha cooed as she stepped around the couch, alien toy in hand. “Spread those legs and let me see that fluff.”

Kaia looked up at her lover’s body and savored the view as she leaned over and offered the new toy. Her small, perky chest hung and wobbled enticingly. The curve of her side, over her hips, and down her thighs was almost irresistible. She wanted to reach out and caress it, but the only thing that found its way into her hand was the thick bulb at the toy’s base.

The cheetah examined the new toy with just a bit more than her usual care. The alien shape felt strange in her hands. The bulb was soft and silicone-like on the outside, but beneath the surface is was far too firm for her to squeeze. The tip was similar, though not quite so firm on the inside. The shaft, with its six intertwined tubes, was more flexible, though still firm enough to keep its shape when held sideways from the base. Just as promised,

these tubes shifted and flexed as she applied a bit of twist. If nothing else, it was going to feel interesting. Whether or not it was going to be pleasurable was yet to be seen.

Kaia frowned as she looked more closely. Had her companion filled the toy with anything? If so, it was clear enough that she could only just make out the slender inner tubes, and the hollow in the base. The usual synthetic ejaculates were translucent and whitish in order to more effectively simulate their natural equivalents. “Is there anything in here?”

“Yep,” Ry’sha replied as she laid down on the couch and gazed down at the cheetah with a silly grin.

“What is it?” Kaia inquired.

“Secret sauce,” Ry’sha responded with a chuckle. “Something new. Trust me, it’s going

to feel absolutely incredible.”

“Okay then,” Kaia answered as she ran a finger over the little hole at the toy’s tip. “I’ll give it a go.”

It wasn’t the first time that the ashiri had introduced new pelvic injectables to her in similar fashion over the seven months they’d lived together. It was an ashiri cultural thing, as she understood it. When presented in a proper setting and under appropriate circumstances, such gifts were to be partook of without question, and without any consideration of what the actual effects might be. Considering how accepting her lover was of her own fey’li intimate practices, the cheetah considered it only appropriate to accept those of her lover in equal measure.

Kaia spread her legs and reached down with the new toy. A brief rub at her nubby little clit was sufficient to get her juices running. A sharp tingle of arousal rose between her legs,

and she began to feel a bit of moistness upon her feminine lips. She needed no other lubrication than that which nature provided, and slowly slid the irregularly shaped tip into her barely parted folds.

“That’s it,” Ry’sha purred. “All the way in.”

Kaia slid the toy in. The ribs rolled over her well lubricated flesh, causing the toy’s intertwined tubes to flex and spread apart a bit. The deeper it delved, the wider it opened her vagina, and more intensely arousing the sensation of its passage became. She gasped as its shaft vanished into her body, and the big bulb began to press into her folds.

For a few long moments, she hesitated, slowly flexing the alien shape from one side one side to the other. The intertwined tubes didn’t move together, let alone from side to side. Instead, they twisted about and bulged one way or another, in ways that seemed barely connected to how she was shifting the

base.

Kaia bit her lower lip and began to withdraw the alien toy. At least, she tried to. It was much more firmly entrenched within her body than she'd expected, expanded as it was like a pump-up toy or plug. She couldn't just pull it straight out. She had to grip the base firmly and twist while she drew it from its living, mucous slathered sheathe.

“Oh!” the cheetah exclaimed as the member came out, offering her body just as much pleasure as it had on its way in. It seemed to tug on all the right spots, and this without any particular effort on her own part. “Ah... oh... this is...”

“Mind blowing?” Ry'sha cooed.

“Yeah,” Kaia huffed as she pulled the toy almost all the way out. Warm vaginal mucous dribbled between her legs, and onto her sharply twitching tail. No doubt onto the carpet, as well, which was going to need yet

another washing when all was said and done. “Wow. Really. It feels so... wonderful.”

Again, the cheetah slid the new toy into her thoroughly aroused genitalia. Tingly arousal quickly shifted to a tense, pressing yearning for ascent toward that precipice that seemed far too near than it had any right to be after only two thrusts of a strangely shaped artificial phallus. Again, she held in inside and wiggled it. She almost wiggled it too much. She had to stop, and hold it still until she'd fallen back from the peak, if nothing else for the sake of trying to enjoy the rise just a little longer.

Ever so slowly, Kaia withdrew the toy, doing her best to carefully pace herself in order to limit just how close to the peak her body wandered. It was hard. Indeed, it was almost impossible. The next thrust was going to send her over the edge, no matter what she did.

The cheetah took a deep breath. She gripped the base firmly, and pressed the toy inward

with more force than before. She twisted it a bit too, forcing its center to bulge out just as it passed into her body. This brought with it a sudden surge of stimulus. As the bulge slid into her tender flesh with a soft, gooey sucking sound, the pounding muscular contractions of orgasm thumped through her pelvis.

The rapid rise and succession of sensations was as heady and heady could be. Euphoria washed through Kaia's body and mind. She exhaled and stared up at the dark wooden beams that supported the cottage's main floor. She held the toy firmly and waited for the orgasmic pulses to fade.

"That was quick," Ry'sha giggled as she watched the cheetah's moment of post-orgasmic bliss.

Kaia didn't have a chance to respond, let alone begin the rise toward a second orgasm. The toy's big bulb suddenly went completely soft. In her firm grip, it collapsed. Its unknown

liquid contents squirted into the furthest depths of her vagina. A strange, piquantly sweet, fruity aroma filled the air as it found its way around the toy, and mixed with the mucous that continued to dribble onto her tail.

Time seemed to slow to a halt as the sweet aroma acquired a strangely sour note. It reminded the cheetah of cider vinegar. Her senses of sight and hearing faded, leaving her in a dark, silent world. Her entire existence was reduced to the strange, sweet and sour odor, and the sense of her own body, seemingly floating in space. Was she still conscious? Was she hallucinating? Or was it some kind of dream?

Kaia felt something strange happening down within her pelvis, where the alien looking toy remained deeply entrenched. It felt... uncertain. Like a bubble of liquid shifting about between her hips. A bubble that was expanding inside of her, subsuming her flesh as it grew.

The growth of the liquid bubble began slowly at first. This left the cheetah with more than enough time to realize that some physically transformative process was taking place. A transformative process that she was completely helpless to resist. She had no choice but to float there and feel as it spread through her body.

Kaia didn't know what to think. The dull nothing was flowing out to her hips, up toward her bellybutton, and down to that intensely aroused place between her legs. The physical arousal seemed to intensify as the liquid nothing pushed its upper edge downward. A wave of pleasure came upon her as the edge began to roll over her pelvic bone, and consume her outer folds.

Pleasure vanished to nothing in a release that consumed the cheetah's mind in a wave of euphoria no different than that she experienced in the wake of a real orgasm. With euphoria came a strange sense of clarity. The

outside world seemed a bit closer. A bit more real. She could even begin to feel the soft carpet on her back.

Time began to speed up again. The liquid bubble within her abdomen began to grow more rapidly. In what seemed like a few seconds, it was up over her bellybutton, and halfway down her thighs. Time sped up further. In a flash it was up to her neck, and down to her ankles. Before she could even register it, the liquid nothing had taken the rest of her.

The outside world disappeared almost entirely. There was only her floating mind, and a sense of physical fluidity. She was a blob. A puddle. Of something. Something sweet. Something sour. Something no doubt transparent... and tinted in a vivid pinkish-orange.

A strange, passing memory wafted through Kaia's mind. A memory of something her lover

had said, not all that long ago.

‘I wish I could mold you into something crazy,’ she’d said. ‘Something super sexy. Wouldn’t that be fun?’

In the final moment before much of her conscious mind dissolved into the same liquid nothing as her body, the liquid blob pondered that question. Would it really be fun? There was only one way to know. And she was very much certain that she was going to be finding out the answer, and no doubt quite soon.

TWELVE

THE MESA

The conical mass of twisted, intertwined tendrils of volcanic obsidian rose up from the surface of the dusty mesa like a writhing demonic beast poised to lash out and devour the body and soul of any interloper who dared to fly too close. No less than sixty meters in height, it glimmered with numerous patches of cool white luminescence, spread around around the whole of the horrific edifice in four disturbingly level tiers. While many of these irregular patches were small and opaque, a few were larger and seemed to be translucent, inviting potential victims to come closer and get a better look at what strange, alien

structures might be located in the voids beyond.

Close alongside the terrifying monstrosity, a perfectly level patch of bare stone stood out amid the highly irregular, slightly sloping upper surface of the mesa. By the powers of some unseen eldritch force, this very particular area was completely clear of the ruddy, iron rich dust that seemed to cover everything else. It was ringed with little dots of dull red light, while a cross of luminous amber slowly pulsed at its very center.

The casual observer would find it quite easy to liken this oddity to the sorts of luminous beacons that so many terrifying deep sea predators developed as a lure to attract unsuspecting prey directly into their waiting mouths. This comparison was reinforced by a short, rough path through the rubble that ringed the alien monstrosity's base, connecting the clear area with a particularly large patch of ground level translucent luminescence.

Countless bare footprints covered the surface of the path, though not one faced away from the beast. They all lead into that patch of light, bearing silent witness to the voracious creature's astonishing rate of success.

A hot, dry wind howled across the high mesa. It came from the southwest. It was a sure sign that a violent sandstorm was soon to come. Such events were all too common in the V'k'n't Valley, in the deeply arid region of Gorgenna. Though they might blanket the valley in up to a foot of dust and sand, they would rarely overtop the former volcanic core upon which the beast was perched. That was just as well. No one wanted to stay in a hotel without a nice, year round view, and the view from this particular hotel was particularly spectacular.

The mesa stood in the very middle of the long V'k'n't Valley, a lone igneous edifice among a vast field of parallel mountain ridges. In the distant past, when the ancient volcano

had first been formed, the valley had been located beneath a vast inland sea. As geological time passed, the waters had drained away, leaving behind a lush river valley, whose rushing waters had worn away the flanks of the long dead volcano, leaving behind nothing but its dense, erosion resistant igneous core. Those waters themselves had long since vanished, drained away into vast subsurface aquifers by a planetary crust fracturing event whose origin and nature have been lost to the mysteries of time.

It might well be hard to imagine anyone surviving in such a foreboding, intensely arid place, let alone thriving. A closer look around the valley offered surprisingly ample evidence to the contrary, however. Where there was a history of water coverage and geothermal activity, there was sure to be ample mineral intrusion among the various layers of volcanic and sedimentary rock. These formed rich veins which included ample quantities of valuable minerals such as iron, tungsten, silver, gold,

and virtually every other valuable element necessary for the development of a technologically advanced civilization.

Everywhere around the valley was clear evidence of mining activity. Waste rock and tailings piles could be found virtually anywhere one looked around the windswept walls of the valley, and adjacent to these could be seen the remains of countless adits, shafts, and open stopes which showed just where the valuable ores had been extracted from deep beneath the surface. Foundations for ore mills, smelters, and other buildings were dotted here and there, while the long since dried out and crumbling remains of wooden structures could be spotted by the particularly observant. A few steel head frames still stood, though only a single, relatively modern looking example could be seen among the small collection.

Countless narrow paths crisscrossed the terrain despite the frequent sandstorms, suggesting that at least a few dozen of the

mines weren't quite as abandoned as they might have outwardly appeared. These all originated from particularly large mine portals, capable of accommodating at least two lanes of large mine vehicle traffic. Clearly, whatever activity had once been taking place on the surface had been moved completely underground. All that the mines needed to was to send their goods to a central collecting point. A warehouse from which the mined mineral riches could be distributed to factories and turned into useful, and profitable, goods.

While it might have looked quite solid from the exterior, the V'k'n't mesa was honeycombed with countless passages, chambers, and halls. Those near the valley floor were reserved for storing the mineral bounty of the area, pending its shipment to the more populous and industrialized of the world's many subterranean cities. Above the warehouse chambers were the machinery and utility spaces which were used to keep everything within the mesa running and in

good order. Above these were the hangars where small cargo carry vessels would dock to take on the produce of the mines and offload goods ordered by the mesa's residents, who lived in the remaining levels between the hangars and the surface.

Several thousand native gorgons called the V'k'n't mesa home. They lived in the maze of corridors, private apartment chambers, public baths, and communal halls which were all carved from the living rock in an architectural style resembling that of the monstrous hotel which jutted up from the mesa's surface in so bizarre and intimidating a fashion. Coated in a thick, black lacquer, these thirty levels of deeply unsettling form were unlike any of the typically spartan mining towns found on other worlds. Luxurious almost beyond belief, virtually every want and need of the miners and support staff who called the mesa home were seen to by the community collective, and everyone was regarded as an absolute equal, irrespective of position of rank in the

administrative hierarchy. That wasn't to say that the gorgons of the mesa's need were always easy to fulfill.

In particular, one dietary matter was invariably problematic. Despite the world's technological advancement, the people of Gorgenna were inevitably subject to conditions of near famine with respect to normal dietary fulfillment. Extracting sufficient water from the underground aquifers to guarantee sufficient food supplies would inevitably cause geological problems on a worldwide scale, possibly even exceeding the effects of the fracturing event which had rendered the planet so horribly arid in the first place. The gorgons were well equipped to deal with this, though. They were capable of replacing a portion of their diet with energy extracted from the life essence of others.

Since the beginning of recorded gorgon history, the people of Gorgenna had become accustomed to the idea of sacrificing

themselves for the good of their community, allowing themselves to become sources of life essence sustenance when food supplies became insufficient for their community as a whole. Even in modern times, many who provide this form of sustenance are native gorgons. For communities such as that within the V’k’n’t mesa, where almost everyone is essential to the continued success of the operation, that option just isn’t available.

For the acquisition of new life essences to feed upon, the people of V’k’n’t had to rely largely upon luck. Luck and the sort of good marketing that preyed upon the naive willingness of prospective tourists to engage in otherwise unthinkable acts, just for a chance to do what might otherwise be considered impossible. Few dared to lay eyes upon the world of Gorgenna in person, as that invariably meant becoming food for the natives, either deliberately or by accident. But market that as an exotic, once in a lifetime opportunity to experience all that the world, and its people,

had to offer, and they would come. And come, they did.

T'n'ss bit her lip and waited her turn in the line. It was that time of the month again. The massive airship K't'w'n had delivered a fresh batch of passengers who's aerial grand tours had come to a conclusion at V'k'n't. The town had paid quite handsomely to 'sponsor' this particular trip for the guaranteed delivery of its guests, who were rumored to be a particularly enticing selection of the classier, generally more risk-averse sort. They had potential. Sweet, juicy, soul sucking potential. Only time would tell if they would end up delivering.

The new guests were just about finished with their five days of obligation free relaxation. They had been steeped in the twisted obsidian ambiance, and saturated with continuous, subtle, even subliminal, messages

of sensuous acceptance of their now inevitable transition from living person to living object, and from living object to living source of sustenance. It was now time for them to fulfill that end of their arrangement, and give up their souls to repay the hospitality that they'd been so freely given.

If the tall, well endowed, and very naked gorgon had any particular thoughts on exactly what sort of guest she was hoping to set her luminous, purple eyes upon, she had no particular inclination to share it with her companions. So many of the others were so obnoxiously obsessed with physical appearance. On the sorts of 'artistic qualities' that would be most suitable to complement their existing décor. It was hard to know if they were actually serious, or if they were just mindlessly parroting the marketing to keep up appearances, and keep themselves from saying anything that might interrupt the seemingly unending supply. After all, who knew what would happen if visitors knew the whole

truth? Would they keep coming if they understood that all any gorgon really cared about was how they tasted?

T'n'ss waited for the skinny gorgon ahead of her to pick a titanium tag from deep inside the first of two plain, terracotta vases. It was an old tradition that went back a few hundred years, to the beginning of her people's interactions with visitors from other worlds. The intent was to provide impartial fairness to the process for both gorgon and guest alike, though for most of the initial, less than completely voluntary guests, fairness was purely semantic. Things were different now, of course, and the completely willing guests were waiting well out of gorgons' faze until their appointed moment. Each had been given a number, to be selected at random from the second vase, but first each gorgon had to learn whether or not they would be getting a guest from this particular group. For that, they had to pick from the first.

Only those who had received a guest from one of the past three groups were obligated to pick from the first vase. Those who hadn't would go straight to the second. Those who had gotten more than one in the last three groups wouldn't get a chance at all, unless there were enough guests to allow for it.

T'n'ss hadn't gotten a new acquisition in the last two groups, so she reached into the first vase and pulled out her titanium tag. It was annodized in a purple hue. Her 'serpentine' prehensile tentacle 'hair' quivered with delight as she smiled at the affirmative result. Consumed by a sudden feeling of nervous anticipation, she immediately took a step forward and thrust her hand into the second vase. Out came a silver tag with the number four-twenty-two, written in the twisting, almost random looking gorgon script.

There was no hesitation. T'n'ss strode straight to the bank of special elevators whose sole purpose was to take gorgons up to meet

their new acquisitions, and to bring the results back down to the subterranean town once all was said and done. She quickly stepped into number four, as her selection was to be found on the fourth floor of the hotel, in room twenty-two. The door closed behind her. Up the elevator went.

T'n'ss stood before the oval door of the hotel room. She stared into her own reflection upon its finely polished black surface. There was only one thing left for her to do before she entered the room. She had to suggest a pose in which the guest might best present herself. Or himself. The gorgon didn't know anything about the guest, and wouldn't until the moment the door slid aside.

The guest didn't actually have to offer themselves in the requested pose. They could offer themselves however they wanted. It wasn't considered very polite to refuse,

however, so most did exactly what was asked of them.

T'n'ss thought of her private chamber, and the quartet of dark granite pedestals that were placed two to each side of her luxuriously huge, softly pillowed bed, and its shimmering, blue silk sheets. Of the three kneeling subjects who held the lantern bowls. The lantern bowls who's dim, flickering flames soothed her to sleep every night of the off weeks, as she rested away the effects of the previous week's difficult work, nearly a thousand meters below the valley's surface. There was one space that needed to be filled, waiting for its new occupant to hold a lot that fourth flame that she was so sorely missing. That new occupant that was waiting on the other side of the hotel room door.

The increasingly giddy gorgon reached out to the small control panel beside the door. She didn't need to do anything fancy with the settings. Kneeling, with hands out to receive

the lantern bowl. It was her saved default pose. She selected it. The guest would have a couple of minute to look at the request, with its example images, and take the pose. Then the door would open.

T'n'ss didn't really care what her new acquisition might look like. All she cared about was the power of his or her life essence. Her current three were all of the lowest sort. Plain marble, in varying states of decay owing to her constant, albeit very careful sucking on their souls. Only of of these had come to her the usual way. The other two she'd acquired privately, in exchange for a very carefully, and very covertly arranged tour of one of the older, and therefore unoccupied mines.

As a matter of the community collective, it wasn't generally considered particularly sporting to obtain visitors in such a sneaky way, but no one really cared. While it might not have been sporting, such visitors who sought to see bits of the world away from the

formal tours were very much fair game to anyone who sought to acquire them. Whether or not the guests in question actually got what might have been promised in exchange was usually considered irrelevant.

T'n'ss had played fair with her special guests, despite not having any obligation to do so. She'd showed them what they wanted to see, hobbling her own potentially transformative gaze with a pair of standard miner's video spectacles, which offered a perfect view in the subterranean darkness without requiring any actual light source. Then the two cute ashiri sisters had showed her what she wanted to see. Naked. Kneeling. Hands forward. And then she looked into their eyes.

A chime sounded, snapping the gorgon back to the present. The door slid open with a soft hiss.

Before T'n'ss was the large bedchamber that had served as her guest's abode for the past

few days. Surrounding it were various alien egg shaped pods, each of which had some specific function of which the guest might be inclined to avail herself of. Bathing. Relaxation. Entertainment. Even pleasure. As with everything else in the hotel, all of these were covered with twisted tendrils of perfectly polished obsidian blackness.

The only splash of light in the bed chamber came from the broad window above the bed. This was perfectly transparent from the inside, and offered quite a stunning view to the west, where the mountain ridges cut across the landscape from north to south, and seemed to go on all the way to the horizon. The sheets on the bed were silver and gold, adding a bit of metallic color to the room, but the comforter on top was just as glossy black as everything else.

T'n'ss nose wrinkled at the faint, pheromonal scent that wafted into her nose. It was something she'd never smelled coming

from a waiting guest before. It was subtle, but there was no mistaking it. Her guest was aroused. Very aroused. And it was the sort of arousal who's accompanying scent made it quite contagious.

The gorgon gazed in wonder at the leopardess fey'li who was kneeling upon the little, four centimeter high posing platform at the foot of the bed. How could she possibly be so horny when she had to know that she was going to be permanently transformed into a marble statue the moment the door opened. Or at least she would have been turned into a statue if her eyes hadn't been closed.

“Op'n yor ey'ss,” T'n'ss softly requested in her best, heavily accented common.

The leopardess bit her lip. “Can I smell you first?”

T'n'ss was taken slightly aback. Her guest was so horny it was starting to make her feel tense between the legs. She was keeping her

eyes shut, and for what? So that she could smell the body that she would so soon be feeding?

“Please?” the leopardess asked with soft earnesty.

“Wye?” T’n’ss responded with more than just a bit of befuddlement. Was this leopardess horny because she had that petrification fetish that seemed to common among guests? Or was it actually possible that this leopardess was horny... for her? Or was it just gorgons in general? Or the idea of gorgons in general? All of those options seemed quite ridiculous, but...

“I’m just... curious,” the leopardess replied.

T’n’ss didn’t really understand, but if that was all the leopardess wanted, then it seemed harmless enough. “Eye... s’poze,” she assented as she walked up to the where the leopardess was kneeling. She really didn’t know anything about the fey’li or their culture. How close should she stand? Close? Or should she be

touching?

The closer the gorgon got to the waiting fey'li, the more aroused she felt between the legs. The more aroused she felt between the legs, the more curious she became about the fey'li whose pheromones were causing it. On a pure, random whim, she decided to see just how interested in her the fey'li really was. She stepped onto the little platform and pressed her abdomen into the waiting nose.

“Mmm,” the leopardess purred as she rubbed her nose on T'n'ss lower belly. “You smell so nice.”

The gorgon bit her own lip as the fey'li went lower, down toward her pelvis and that soft, increasingly moist place that was rapidly becoming the focus of most of her attention. The nose bumped into the very front of her soft, feminine folds. It pressed against her well hidden clitoris.

“Ah!” T'n'ss gasped as a sudden surge of

arousal took hold between her legs.

The leopardess giggled. “I’ve heard that licking a gorgon between the legs will turn me to stone just like your eyes. But... slower.”

T’n’ss stepped back. It was true, of course. But it just seemed so... uncouth.

“It’s okay,” the leopardess responded with another giggle. “I want to see what you look like, even if it is just for one little moment.”

T’n’ss took another couple of steps back from the little platform.

The leopardess shifted back into the upright kneeling pose, and offered her hands as if for a torch bowl. “Is this how you want me?”

T’n’ss took a deep breath. “Yiss,” she replied, even though she was still quite curious about why the fey’li was still so confoundedly aroused. As much as she wanted to know more, there was really no place for treating a guest

as anything more than a source of sustenance at this point of the process. She had already indulged the woman enough. “Op’n yor ey’ss.”

The leopardess opened her eyes. At first, she gazed down at the gorgon’s feet. Her eyes slowly wandered up her legs, and caressed the subtle spots that ran up her outer thighs. They paused between the gorgon’s legs, where her nose had poked into the soft folds, and where a little strand of glistening mucous dangled in evidence of her own physical arousal. They continued up her belly, and over her perky, well endowed chest. Up over her shoulders, with their own subtle speckles, and the writing tentacle ‘hair’ that dangled over them. Up to her softly smiling face, and the deep purple eyes that...

Ssscrrrrrrrrrrrack!

The wave of petrification consumed the leopardess. It spread out from her spine, transforming her body so quickly that the only

evidence that she was aware of the event was a brief quiver in her eyes before they themselves were turned into stone.

T'n'ss gasped as she gazed upon her new living statue. Everyone had been expecting a bit extra out of this particular batch of guests, for sure. Never in a million years had anyone imagined it would include so potent a soul as this one. And to think that she, of all the gorgons, would be the one to take possession of it!

The marble which the leopardess had become was no common white with gray inclusions. Not even remotely so! The base stone was a gray so dark it would have looked perfectly black were it not for the polished obsidian of everything else in the chamber. All throughout it were a web of sharply defined, golden tan inclusions. While it was by no means the rarest of all the kinds of marble a gorgon-petrified subject a visitor might become, it was still so rare that not one had

ever been seen on the V'k'n't mesa!

T'n'ss had never had anything more than the most common types of captive soul before. Given her insatiable taste for soul energy, they rarely lasted more than six or seven years. This one, however. This one would last her at least five or six hundred years! Assuming she lived that long, of course. All things considered, that wasn't entirely out of the question. But that was a contemplation for another time. For now, she had to get her new acquisition into its place in her apartment.

The gorgon reached out and tugged on the statue's extended hands. The platform, previously firmly attached to the floor, floated free. Without any particularly effort, she pulled it out of the hotel room, and toward the waiting elevator. It would be long before it was occupying the empty pedestal in her bedroom, but she just couldn't help herself. She reached out with her mind and latched on to the captive soul within the stone.

T'n'ss wrapped her mental lips around the nipple of the leopardess' soul and began to suckle. Euphoric energy flowed through her body. It was heady. Rich. More like dessert than a proper meal. And it gave her same deep, primal satisfaction as she felt from a mouthful of smooth, creamy milk, freshly suckled from a fellow gorgon's breast.

The gorgon had no way of knowing just what the captive soul was feeling as she drew upon its milky life essence energy. Nor did she care. All she cared about was the magnificent flavor. Because that was all that mattered. And that was all that ever would.

THIRTEEN

LAST RESORT

Sho'yune yawned. She was tired. Far more tired than her day's lack of activity gave her any obvious reason to be. Who knew that lounging around all day could be such hard work?

The pleasantly soft and cuddly looking red pandi plopped herself down onto the pastel blue mass of jiggly gelatin that served as the resort room's bed. A colorless gelatin pillow invited her to rest her head, close her eyes, and steep herself in the private chamber's very particular sensory stimulating ambiance. Fruity scents. Thick, sloppy, liquid sounds. And that strange, almost hypnotic aura that made

even the most thoroughly grounded of souls to start feeling a bit less... solid.

Sho, as her friends were wont to call her, laid back. She savored the feel of the cool, soft gelatin pressing into her back as she willingly accepted the pillow's compelling invitation. She closed her eyes, and began to ponder upon just how perfectly the resort's builders had managed to craft such a specific and carefully composed combination of stimulus that neither she, nor anyone else who dared accept the free stay, could help but find their minds being directed in a very specific, very singular direction.

The red pandi had known exactly what she was getting into when she'd booked her two week stay. That part of the mind bending game had never been a secret. Facing the constant, and constantly reinforced temptation was just the price that one had to pay for the chance to access the astoundingly incredible produce which served as the resort's real means of

making money. It was the only way. And, according to just about everyone who'd escaped the temptation to tell the tale, it was more than worth the risk.

Sho opened her eyes and looked around the room as she settled in for yet another nice long nap. Everything around her was made of gelatin in one form or another. The ceiling was a deep, almost opaque sort of purple, filled with little luminous silver sparkles in imitation of the night sky. The walls were covered with a more liquid sort of gel, strips and blobs of backlit color that shifted, twisted, and flowed in seemingly random patterns. The dark blue couch was as soft and jiggly as the bed, while the nightstands and wardrobe were made of a much more solid dark blue gel. Only the floor was made of conventional material, in this case dark gray slate tiles, heated from beneath to make barefoot walking more comfortable for the guests.

All of the resort's guests were expected to be

nude at all times. In fact, it was a custom on Zembax that all guests were to denude indoors. This unusual tradition came from a not-too-distant time when virtually all visitors to the world were hostile in one form or another, attempting to exploit the otherwise pacifistic natives for personal gain. A nude guest was a guest who couldn't harm their host, after all.

Although such threatening times had passed, the custom of nudity for all guests remained. This did nothing to discourage the new sorts of visitors who flocked to the world's particularly exotic pleasure resorts. They were more than happy to take off their clothes, and keep them off, just for the chance to surrender themselves to the impossibly wondrous organisms of pure physical pleasure that the natives were all too pleased to provide.

Sho again yawned. She looked toward the one wall that was clear of furnishings, and devoid of any intruding features. The room had

no obvious doorway, only a curtain of flowing gel that separated it from the large courtyard, with its open sky and magnificently sensuous gel pool. All one had to do was touch the sheet of gel, and it would open up like a big, wet, squishy sounding curtain.

It was from the gel pool that the red pandi had just come. She'd spent at least a few hours lounging in the sun, and enjoying the thick, sloppy mess that seemed to vibrate in a barely perceptible, rhythmic fashion. She found it soothing, in a very strange way. The longer she bathed, the more comfortable she became. And the more comfortable she became, the less she could discern where she ended, and it began.

Sho sighed. There was no escaping it. Everything, everywhere, was focused on making her feel like she was on the cusp of losing her sense of shape. Her sense of definite physical form, and along with her physical form itself. And it was all doing a disturbingly good job of making her feel like

she might actually enjoy it.

The red pandi couldn't help but shift her eyes to the gold and silver pod that was half-embedded in the gel wall opposite the courtyard. The pod was crafted of brightly polished silver, with a scattering of golden accents. The visible portion consisted mostly of the sliding door through which one might dare to enter, if one were so inclined to give in to the resort's gelatinous temptations. Most of the door was a window, allowing others a view of the pod's effects on those within.

Embedded in the wall next to the pod was a silver and gold dispenser. To its overhead nozzle was fitted a large crystal sphere, somewhere between the size of a volleyball and a small beach ball, mounted on a simple golden base. It was into this that the pod's final produce would be dispensed, the very produce who's pleasures attracted tourists like Sho, and which made the resort so profitable among the natives.

Two more of these crystal spheres were present in Sho's room. One stood upon each of the two nightstands to either side of her. Both were about three quarters filled with undulating blobs of transparent slime. No doubt these were former guests who'd given in to temptation. Or perhaps they were captives taken in days past, their hostile intentions neutralized by a far less than willing application of the process. That was what the natives had specifically developed it for, after all.

The blob to her right was a pale pink in color. To the red pandi's understanding, that meant that whoever they'd been, they had been of barely above average physical quality, without much in the way of the kind of social standing that seemed to make certain individuals more desirable to the natives. To the left was a somewhat more intensely colored yellow blob. This one was what the natives would consider above average in all qualities, though not noteworthy enough to

give it a high value on the world's demanding market for such living status symbols and toys.

Both of the blobs had already proved to be just a bit more than Sho could handle. She didn't know whether or not that was just how they were, or if she'd been given a particularly assertive pair. They would just straight up and latch on to her body, and go at her with wild abandon without any regard to what she might have wanted, or expected, them to do. Only when they were good and ready would they release her, and at that point it she was almost too exhausted to usher them back into their spheres. And if she'd forgotten to activate each orb's auto-retrieve, or didn't get them back in quickly enough herself, they'd just latch back on and start all over again.

“Maybe that is why I am always so tired,” the red pandi sighed. “But... it just really does feel so good.”

Sho took a deep breath. Did she really want a nap? Or had she become so ensnared by the little blob's purported telepathic abilities that her body was just giving her all the signals to get her into bed, just so she'd have a reason to let them have their way with her again?

"I really do have to wonder," she murmured as she looked over at the patiently waiting yellow blob. "They always seem so... enthusiastic. Do they really like to touch my body? To play with it like they do? What must it feel like to them, wrapping around the whole of my hips... and my bum... and between my legs... feeling it all... all at the same time."

The red pandi couldn't deny that she was slowly sliding down a very slippery slope. She wanted to reign in her imagination, but all the conditioning she'd faced over the course of the past eight days had been far more effective than she'd ever imagined that it could have been. She simply had to try to imagine what the blobs felt when they hugged her and had

their way with her willingly helpless body.

Warm. Soft. Curves. Creases. Clefts. Tight. Wet. Quivering. Flexing. Writhing. Shuddering. Pleasure. Pure, unadulterated pleasure!

“Oh,” Sho moaned as the wild sensory images in her mind turned into a much more concrete sort of arousal in her body. Her hand wandered toward the button on the bottom of the yellow blob’s orb. “I really do wish I could know what it is like.”

As her outstretched fingers hesitated before the orb’s controls, the red pandi’s eyes shifted to that perilous gold and silver pod embedded within her bedroom wall. “I wish... but... I... I do not know. I could. But...”

Sho withdrew from the pod and got up from the bed, feeling oddly and quite pleurably refreshed. Was it from the burst of adrenaline that had resulted from the imagined pleasures of being one of those sexy little blobs? Or was there something else going on? Was something

else prompting her to go to the pod and toy with the idea of stepping into it?

The red pandi hesitantly bit her lip as she approached the enticing pod door. As she looked into her own reflection in the darkened window that revealed virtually nothing about the pod's interior. Why was she doing this? Why was she letting herself get so close to the point of no return?

As much as she wanted to say to herself that it was all conditioning and manipulation, she couldn't. Conditioning and manipulation like this only really worked on those who were already receptive. Already curious. And if you weren't already curious about what it might be like to actually become a little blob of pure ecstasy, then you weren't going to travel all the way out into the frontiers to visit a place like this.

"Of course I *want* to know" Sho whispered to herself as she stood in front of the recessed

sliding door and contemplated the pod's lone control. "But... do I *need* to know..."

The red pandi stared at the golden button. It was slightly raised above its silver housing, just to the left of the pod door. There were no markings. No instructions. Nothing whatsoever to explain its function.

The pod only had one function requiring a guest's personal input, of course. That was to open the door. If no one stepped inside after a preset time had passed, then it would close itself. And if someone did offer themselves to the machine's transformational ministrations, there were no settings to be set, and absolutely no reason whatsoever to stop the process once it had begun. At least, that was how the natives saw it.

"I do not actually have to step inside," Sho murmured as she reached out to press the golden button. "I just... want to see what it looks like. That is all."

There was a soft click as the very solid feeling button pressed inward, locking into a position level with its silver housing. A quick series of low, metallic thunks, followed, like the retraction of the studs which might be found locking the door of a safe or vault in place. There was a momentary soft hiss as the door's seals relaxed, before a humming electric motor rolled the thick door away to the right.

Sho wasn't quite sure what she'd been expecting to see inside of the narrow confines of the alien machine, but the sight that now greeted her was as much deeply unsettling as it was somewhat anticlimactic. There was nothing exotic or alien about the mass of tubes, pipes, and other sorts of liquid manipulating structures which covered the walls. From these came a rhythmic whooshing, complemented by a periodic bubbling, with an odd, slushy slopping acting as an occasional counterpoint.

In the center of the recessed floor, if it could

even be called that, was a raised ring which formed the rim of a pool of clear slime. This undulating mass was the only source of illumination within the pod, glowing with a soft white light that seemed to pulse with borderline-hypnotic power. It drew the eye and, no doubt, along with the eye came the feet of anyone who dared to gaze upon it for more than a few fleeting moments.

The red pandi was already one short step away from giving in to curiosity, and she knew it. She averted her eyes and looked up to the pod's high, domed ceiling. There, many of the tubes and pipes came together in a single spherical connection. Another pipe hung down into the pod from this connection, ending in an open cone that invoked the mental image of a vacuum, waiting patiently for her to enter the pod so that it could suck up her liquefied body and pass it into the machinery to undergo some process known only to the divinities in heaven.

Again, Sho took a deep breath. The air that entered her lungs had a strange new quality to it, a heady sharpness infused with a soft, vanilla sort of sweetness. She began to feel comfortable with the pod. Far more comfortable than her own already overly curious inclinations ever would have led her to be.

Feeling comfortable with the machine wasn't the same as wanting to enter it, of course. The red pandi took a step back and wondered if it was actually the smell that was making her feel like the pod was something perfectly normal. Like it was just a simple piece of furniture placed in a room to be used with as much casual indifference as a chair or table.

“Oh, goddesses divine... how I do so want to know what it feels like. Just once. Just for a little while,” Sho murmured as she stood and stared into the inviting opening. “But there is no just a little while, is there?”

There would be no going back if she stepped past the threshold. Once the pod door closed, her existence as a warm, soft, incomparably cuddly pandi woman would come to a very permanent end. Her future as a blob of pleasure would be final. Absolute. But... would she even care at that point?

“Would I?” Sho pondered aloud. “Would I care what I used to be?”

The red pandi didn't really know the answer to that question. But she did know one thing. If she was transformed into a zuka, she wouldn't *need* to care, because she wouldn't have a care in all the world. Her existence would be nothing but resting and wrapping herself around the bodies of willing partners and driving them crazy with astoundingly intense pleasure.

“Goddesses divine... should I?” Sho asked. “Should I... try it? Should I actually try it? It is just so... so inviting...”

The divine goddesses didn't offer her any clear answer. Or perhaps they already had. Chance had led her to come to this place. Chance and a sudden outburst of uncharacteristic curiosity brought upon by watching all those videos that's she'd stumbled upon while trying to find instructions for the proper use of crystalis therapeutic slime for furred individuals. Videos that had brought out something deep inside of her that she hadn't known existed. Something deep. Something carnal. Something that was now right on the very border of becoming irrepressible.

Sho wavered. She began to wonder if there was really any other point to traveling all this way. There were so many other places to satisfy one's desire for mind bending pleasure. So many other places where one could steep their bodies in sweet, sexy slime of one sort or another. But here... the only reason to come here was the availability of transformation. Transformation into the slime that pleasures others. And what was the point of coming to

someplace where such a transformation was made so quick and easy to accomplish if she didn't actually intend to partake of it, even if she hadn't been aware of her deeply hidden desire when she'd booked the trip?

"I really want to," the red pandi murmured as she took a step back toward the pod. "That is why I came here, is it not? It must be. Why else would I?"

Another moment of indecision washed over Sho. She pondered the life she seemed to close to leaving behind. The mountain forest monastery, with its babbling brooks and magnificent vistas. The daily chores that seemed to consume so much of her time. The many Sisters with whom she shared so many things, and who made life such a wonderfully enjoyable experience.

But... the red pandi couldn't just return to that life now. In booking her trip away from the monastery, she had set herself upon a Path.

There would be no going back until she'd made good upon the goals of a Path. Until she'd done something to uplift lives in the place she'd chosen as her Destination.

Zembax wasn't a Destination that any rational Sister of Ka'wai would ever contemplate. Not that anyone tried to stop her. Her Sisters were more interested in seeing how she intended to uplift a group of native aliens who seemed to have only one off-world source up uplifting. If nothing else, the prospect that she might feature in some future video seemed to amuse them to no end.

Sho had never taken the prospect seriously. She'd had a different plan. She knew that the natives were quite keen on gaining the cooperation of those who might spread word of their desire for more guests to become zuka, and their male equivalent zuxa. Who better than a Sister of Ka'wai?

At least, that had been the plan. But she'd

have to finish her stay at the resort before she'd come into contact with anyone who might be in a position to accept her proposal. That was when they tried to coax the surviving stragglers into letting themselves be transformed just before departing. But it was becoming quite apparent to the red pandi that she was never going to get that far.

She could barely keep herself from stepping straight into the pod now. Even if she managed to pull herself back from the brink, she still had six more days. Six more days steeped in gelatinous pleasure, trapped in the presence of the machine she could barely resist. It seemed impossible.

“I suppose there is no point in putting it off, is there?” Sho asked softly as she slid her toes along the slightly elevated lower rim of the pod's still open doorway. “I just cannot help myself, can I? I simply *must* know what it feels like!”

Sho took a deep breath, bit her lip, and stepped into the pod.

There was no real place to stand inside the machine. She did her best to step onto the narrow rim of the little pool of luminous clear gel. None of the machines she'd seen in the videos looked anything like this one. Perhaps she was supposed to step *into* the gel?

Without even the slightest bit of warning, Sho was pulled off her feet and into the air. By the time she realized what had happened, she was floating above the little pool of gel, facing open pod door. For a brief moment, nothing else happened. Then the door hummed closed. The seals hissed. The locking lugs thumped back into place.

The machine began to throb. The liquid sounds became louder and stranger. The fur on her feet began to stand on end. Her toe pads began to tingle.

“Oh, goddesses!” Sho gasped as her toes and

the bottoms of her feet began to feel cold and wet. She began to pant as the wetness began to feel sharp. Fizzy, even. Then it began to creep up her legs, flowing through her fur in a deeply unsettling way. “That feels... that feels... awful!”

It was nothing like the videos. They’d all been gasping and moaning with pleasure as the clear glowing slime slipped so sensuously over their bodies. This was anything but pleasurable. At best it was uncomfortable. If it kept on going, she had no doubt that it was going become nauseating by the time it got all the way up her legs.

The red pandi had a hard time imagining that anyone would actually enjoy the feel of the fizzy slime as it coated their body, dissolving their fur, and making them look like a luminous, borderline orgasmic angel of some sort. Now anyone could be aroused under such circumstances was beyond her. Then again, she wasn’t exactly trying.

There was really nothing else to do to distract her from the increasingly uncomfortable slime as it made its way up over her knees. She reached down with one hand and began to toke upon the very front of her fluffy folds. Much to her considerable surprise, her womanhood reacted as if the part of her mind responsible for sexual pleasure was completely divorced from the part that was almost completely consumed by the discomfort caused by the slime. Completely involuntarily, her legs squeezed together with each press and rub. Intense muscular tension took hold as her fingers rubbed harder, and pressed deeper into her dripping-wet womanhood.

Sho began to pant harder as the sharp juxtaposition between deep discomfort and glorious arousal did things to her mind that made her feel less and less like a sapient being and more and more like a mindless beast driven purely by physical sensation. She could barely form rational thoughts. Of the few that flashed through her mind, only one would

come out as a nearly involuntary vocalization, a last, huffing and gasping expression of a mind trying to comprehend what was happening to it. “So this is what it is like... to have your mind turned to jelly...”

Primal yearning filled the red pandi’s mind as the slime slithered up her thighs. Harder and harder she toked. Deeper and deeper she pressed. First with one hand. And then with both.

The slime slid up between her legs. Over her fingers. Into her folds. Even the pleasure was fizzy now. But it was a strangely pleasant kind of fizzy. It felt nice. Very nice. The discomfort was forgotten. All she could feel was the pleasure now.

Time itself seemed to twist and bend as the slime pushed its way upward. Thought it flowed at a consistent rate, to her it seemed to hesitate and jump ahead in a random fashion. The further it progressed, the harder she tried

to arouse herself to the point of orgasmic release. But the harder she tried, the further the slime seemed to jump. Complete desperation took hold as the cool, fizzy slime reached her neck. Then it was halfway up her face, forcing her to close her mouth as she gasped for air. Then it was up over her eyes. And ears. And the top of her head.

She couldn't breathe. The slime was asphyxiating her. She didn't care. All she cared about was what was going on between her legs. She began to feel dizzy, but the yearning for that final moment, that final orgasm, was all-consuming. One toke. Two tokes. A sudden surge. Three tokes. A wave of pleasure cresting. One more... one more and...

The first pulse of orgasm brought with it not merely mind bending euphoria, but a sudden sense of uncertain shape. The second pulse flowed through her form like a wave, making her edges ripple and undulate. The third brought with it a sudden clarity of

consciousness, and an intense awareness that the red pandi's body was dissolving into slime from the outside in. The fourth...

Sho could only imagine that it sounded just like it had in all those videos. That loud, sloppy pop, as her shape suddenly collapsed into a floating sphere of roiling slime. In that instant, every last vestige of the body of her birth was gone, and with it almost every shred of evidence that she had ever come to Zembax, and existed there as anything other than a thing of slime.

The blob barely had a chance to figure out her new body before it was sucked into the pipe dangling from the ceiling. There, she could feel her shape being torn asunder, separated into a dozen or more distinct quantities, each of which seemed to be dragging some part of her conscious mind along with it. For a few moments that would have been terrifying if she wasn't already in such an uncertain state, her mind was, quite

literally, rent asunder.

Each part of the blob's still living mind would experience something different as the mass of slime carrying it underwent its own unique sort of distillation. Everything that was no longer required of each component was evaporated, while those that were useful were concentrated to greater intensity. A few new traits were added, to enhance the final product in interesting and unique ways.

By the time that the blob regained its full state of awareness, it was no longer even remotely recognizable as the woman it had once been. It was a truly bestial creature who's only desire was to wrap itself around a warm, living body and compel it to feel intense physical pleasure. What memories it retained were only those useful to its purpose, and even these had been distilled into forms that were focused entirely on facilitating the enticement of living bodies, and the temptation of those bodies into offering themselves as new zuka.

The blob had not quite yet become a zuka itself, however. It had to undergo one final distillation. One final process that would cement it into its new form, and prevent it from growing and posing a danger to those whose bodies it would soon pleasure.

The blob began to shudder and throb as flashes of exotic energy burst through its mind. Each flash illuminated a greater existence. An incomprehensible web of shapes, twisting through countless spatial dimensions. Winding through all these shapes was a single, fleeting thread. A thread that attached to the blob's mind at one end, and to the other... that, the blob could not possibly comprehend.

As quickly as it had begun, the shuddering and flashing stopped. The blob was squeezed through a narrow tube, before falling into a spherical vessel. An orb. Its new home.

The orb was the entirety of the new zuka's physical world. There was nothing else.

Nothing at all. But the new zuka didn't care. The new zuka didn't have the ability to care. It just existed, sitting happily in its own exotic aura. Its own fundamental energy, which pleased it immensely.

Time had no meaning to the new zuka, but even then the opening of its new home seemed to come quite soon after it had been created. It could feel a slender hand pressing into its surface. A slender, furry hand. A slender, furry hand with a living soul in charge of it.

The new zuka adhered itself to the intruding hand and began to wrap itself around the attached arm. It flowed up the arm, over the shoulder, and around the warm, gently heaving chest. Soft breasts with firm, erect nipples aroused the new zuka. Its fundamental energies burned brighter. Its exotic powers flowed into the magnificent creature upon which it clung.

The red pandi Sister of Ka'wai named Sho

had once thought that she might convince the natives of Zembax to let her help recruit new zuka as a way to fulfill her current chosen Path. No doubt she would have found it rather appropriate that the creature she'd become would be endowed with a selection of abilities about as well suited for the purpose as they could possibly be. As she moved downward from the warm body's chest to her goal between the legs, the new zuka ate away at her subject's inhibitions. As the new zuka wrapped herself around her subject's legs, she vastly enhanced the mind bending qualities of the physical pleasure imparted in that tender place.

The new zuka had no inhibitions about where and how deep it delved into its now quite helpless subject. Such was its nature that no matter where it explored, the process would be cleansing to its subject. Thus, the new zuka was more than happy to entrench itself within both of the available orifices, as deeply as its subject's body would allow. And, being a fey'li,

its subject's body proved to have some very unexpected qualities to that regard.

No doubt the woman the new zuka had once been would have been surprised at just how much this fey'li subject's tail end could accommodate. They weren't a species particularly known for enjoying that kind of copulation. No doubt she would have been quite astonished at how deep the fey'li vagina could be stretched as well. And the lack of any resistance to entry into her womb... and beyond.

Then again, perhaps the woman that the new zuka had once been would have been at least somewhat cognizant that the fey'li had evolved to be able to engage in successful sexual relations with almost anyone, or anything, they might be inclined to make an attempt with. The new zuka, however, didn't know anything about that, despite being very able to appreciate just how much its subject seemed to enjoy such a complete filling.

As the new zuka settled into its subject's body, it brought yet another of its special abilities into play. Not merely content to offer its subject completely disinhibited, intensely enhanced carnal pleasure, it now soothed its subject into a deep meditative trance. With every slimy stimulation came a wave of pleasure. With every wave of pleasure came a sharp inhalation, soon followed by a euphoric gasp. Inhale. Gasp. Inhale. Gasp. Inhale. Gasp.

The hypnotic rhythm seemed to go on and on. Through arousal, through crescendo, and even through release, only the volume of the fey'li's vocalizations gave any indication of where on the cycle she happened to be. Over and over again, the cycle repeated, as the new zuka was steadfastly determined to drive its subject to total exhaustion. The last thing it wanted to happen was to be put back into its orb before it had a chance to make use of its final, and most compelling ability.

It wasn't long before the fey'li, in her

entranced state, drifted off to sleep right in the middle of her fifteenth orgasm. It was time for the new zuka to let its subject's body rest. But its subject's mind...

The fey'li had only one dream. One, amazingly realistic dream. She dreamed of floating within the chamber. Her hands were between her legs. She was consumed by pure, unadulterated pleasure, and covered in cool, wet slime. Orgasm. Orgasm and then... pop. Liquefaction. And then the dream ended, leaving in its wake a deeply entrenched desire to know what the next sensation was. What it felt like to actually become a zuka. It was with this desire that she eventually awoke, still in the new zuka's embrace.

The new zuka, sensing that its work was done, flowed up its subject's body, down her arm, and back into the orb. It wouldn't be long before the fey'li was a new zuka herself. And then there would be another to tempt. And then another. And then another, ad-in-finitum.

There was no way to know if the woman the new zuka had once been might have found pleasure in that prospect, but to the new zuka itself, there was nothing in the whole world that could have possibly pleased it more.

FOURTEEN

INFLATION

A sharp tingle ran down Shurie's spine as she watched the pretty violet elf-ear squirm upon the softly padded table. The air in the small chamber was heavily steeped in the piquant scent of fresh latex rubber, freshly sprayed from a commercial style aerosol can. The can itself was held in the grip of a robotic arm which dangled from a mounting on the ceiling. This seemed poised to let loose with another squirt at any moment, though given the astonishing effect that the clear droplets had already had upon the elf-ear's increasingly helpless body, it would almost certainly have been quite superfluous to spray her with more.

Then again, this was Gelitech, where there was definitely no such thing as too much rubber.

A cacophony of rubbery squips, squerks, and squeaks filled the air as the rapidly transforming subject strained against the increasingly restricted movement which the process was imposing upon her now nearly helpless body. This strange, rubbery transfiguration had already reached her chest and showed no sign of slowing. What it left in its wake was little more a hollow, inflated skin of highly polished, transparent violet rubber, complete with faux-seams and 'simplified' anatomical features. Together, these combined to created the perfect illusion that she was being transformed into a cheap looking inflatable sex doll.

Shurie bit her lip and watched the transformation flow upwards over the elf-ear's perky little breasts, eliciting a sharp gasp from their barely mobile owner. The soft lumps of tender flesh became glossy and their hard little

nipples vanished. They then rumped up a bit, before turning clear and inflating into generic looking bulbous protrusions upon her chest.

That's... that's just plain nuts, the jaguaress thought in silence as she sat cross-legged atop her own padded experiment table. No matter how she tried, she just couldn't get her head around the idea that someone might seriously consider having themselves transformed into such an unpleasantly basic looking toy. I mean... those shiny black gummies. There's so unique. So strange. So... sexy. Why would anyone do this when they could do that if they wanted to? And for free!

The jaguaress' nose wrinkled as a particularly strong waft of rubbery something filled her sinuses. There was absolutely no doubt in her mind that the air was absolutely filled with countless invisible droplets of that rubbery concoction. She was breathing them in. They were landing on her fur. Ever so slowly, it was all building up toward some

threshold. One invisible drop past the limit and she'd be helplessly wiggling and squirming her way through exactly the same sort of ridiculous inflatable dollification as the elf-ear's.

Exactly where the threshold was, no one seemed to know. Or perhaps they just didn't care to tell her. After all, the exact quantity didn't really have much bearing on the current experiment. All that mattered at the moment was just how safe it was to be in close proximity to a target of the aerosol, within a closely confined space, and apparently with somewhat poor ventilation.

As to just why this question required such a perilous live experiment, Shurie couldn't even begin to fathom. Nor did she particularly care. The offered compensation had been far too generous to pass up.

Why did I agree to do this again? the jaguaress asked herself as the elf-ear's

transformation reached the base of her neck, accompanied by a serenade of rapid and increasingly rubbery sounding huffing. At first she'd dismissed the whole bit about there being a rather less than fifty percent chance of coming out with her tail intact and the big payday. Gelitech liked to play on the whole 'peril' thing when advertising for test subjects. It wouldn't be nearly as exciting if everyone thought they'd be actually have a good chance of walking away with all that cash and Gelitech store credit, would it?

“Ah... ah... AH!” the elf-ear panted as the rubber doll transformation flowed over her upstretched chin. “Oh... oh... ohno... no... oh... OH!”

Shurie held her breath and gawked as the transformation flowed up over the woman's gasping, wide-eyed face. It was almost the perfect visual representation of how the jaguaress was now feeling about the whole affair. It had been one thing to hear the dry,

dispassionate description of the basic idea behind test. But now that she was actually locked in the test chamber, seeing exactly what 'Form 334B' was, and with all that rubbery aerosol threatening to turn her into an example of it...

It was clear that Gelitech hadn't been exaggerating. When they'd said the chance of getting out with one's tail intact was less than fifty percent, they'd actually meant it. Indeed, it seemed that for this particular test, fifty percent was just the base, guaranteed dollification rate!

Please don't be me. Please don't be me! the jaguaress cringed as another, even more intense wave of rubbery something filled her nose. The elf-ear's final moments of transformation swept away what little was left of the top of her head, leaving behind the most oddly unsettling of plain, oval shapes. *Just a little bit longer. I just have to last a little bit longer.*

The elf-ear made one last crinkly squeak as her fully transformed body stiffened. Shurie couldn't help herself but stare at the new doll's disturbingly basic looking sex doll mouth. It was the only real feature on her face aside from the horribly generic looking faux-printed nose and eyes. The elf-ear's long, deep purple hair had been transformed into an oddly balloon-like set of bangs, with a long ponytail hanging down in back. The tip of the ponytail was fitted with a pool-toy style air valve that completed the illusion that the new doll was nothing more than just that.

I can't believe I just watched that happen, the jaguaress though as the chamber finally fell into silence. She began to ponder whether or not the elf-ear had become a literal, inanimate, perhaps even 'dead' doll. Dammit... that... that could have been me! That could have been me! Goddesses above... is she... is she dead? Or is she... is she like... an actual gummy?

Shurie had heard the so-called 'Form 334B'

referred to as an ‘inflato-gummy’. If it was actually like other kinds of gummy, that meant the doll was still alive. It might have been deaf, blind, and bereft of taste and smell, but it could still feel. And when it wasn’t feeling anything sufficiently stimulating, it would dream. That was the theory, at least. Science had confirmed it, but still... she had to wonder.

The jaguaress sat in silence, staring at the completely inanimate doll while the robot arm and its aerosol can hovered menacingly overhead. Just because it was facing the other way didn’t make it any less of a cause for concern. It had been facing in her direction only a few minutes before, as it went round and round in a circle before its target had been ‘randomly’ picked for a squirt between the legs.

Shurie wasn’t entirely convinced that the robot’s choice had actually been random. The scientists seemed to have been rather interested in the elf-ear’s particularly

attractive physique. She had that kind of expressiveness that made for the kind of candid xenoexperience experiment video that people seemed to find most enjoyable too.

The nervously stiff jaguaress had been far more reluctant to spread her legs for the camera, let alone for the robot and its menacing spray can. But spread her legs the jaguaress had, and the robot had made 'its' choice. That choice had been the elf-ear, much to the jaguaress' relief. Whether or not that relief was misplaced was yet to be seen, but it was definitely looking like she was going to be escaping with her fluffy rump intact.

As Shurie waited, her mind started to wander. *I wonder what I'm going to buy with all that Gelitech store credit, she pondered. All that fancy decorative furniture with embedded gummies! So many things I'd love to have. Or... or should I really give it a try? Buy the full bedroom. Live inside the blackness. I could use all the cash too. Get a remodel, starship style.*

Everything biogel. That would be...

The jaguaress shook off the daydreams that threatened to take her just a little too far off the deep end. Reality had other ideas for her at the moment, and those seemed to include a long spate of interminable waiting. How long would it take before they declared that the aerosol wasn't a hazard? Minutes? Hours?

Doubt set in. *They are going to declare it isn't a hazard, aren't they? Oh... oh hell. What if I've already gotten enough to get turned into a doll? What if it's just taking a long time to start?*

Almost as if on cue, the silky computerized voice that had given out instructions at the beginning of the experiment came back to life. "Congratulations, subject gamma eight-hundred forty-nine dash fifty-eight! Phase one of this experiment is now complete," the disturbingly impersonal machine declared. "Phase two of this experiment will now begin."

“Phase two?” Shurie sputtered. She hadn’t been told anything about a phase two. “No one ever said anything about a second part!”

“Phase two of this three phase experiment is purely voluntary,” the computer noted. “Subject gamma eight-hundred forty-nine dash fifty-eight shall be offered a short time to interact with the new inflato-gummy if the subject so chooses. If the subject does choose to interact with the new inflato-gummy, the subject should be sure to check for personally acceptable levels of surface texture, firmness, joint flexibility, and functional orifice tightness, stretch, and lubricity.”

“Oh,” Shurie replied with a sigh of relief. “I guess that’s okay. I’ll have a feel. I guess.”

“Excellent,” the computer responded. “The subject’s consent has been noted. The subject may now proceed to examine the new inflato-gummy.”

The contract hadn’t mentioned anything

about interacting with the results of the experiment. Granted, it seemed harmless enough. She'd just watched the pretty elf-ear get turned into a new kind of doll. That had left her some newly formed curiosities to fulfill, even if she did happen to find the appearance of the thing so distastefully cheap. It was nice of them to give her a chance to fulfill them. And that chance would lead to new opinions that they'd certainly be interested in hearing during the phase three exit interview. Phase three was the exit interview, wasn't it?

The jaguaress stood up and walked over to the side of the new inflato-gummy's padded table. She began to wonder if there was some sort of catch. It was Gelitech, after all. There was always a catch, even if that catch was 'merely' being subject to unreasonably irresistible temptation. Were they trying to tempt her into becoming an inflato-gummy herself?

With considerable hesitance, Shurie reached out with one hand to touch the doll's shoulder, half-expecting it to jump up and slap her for being so presumptuous. That certainly would have been quite the surprise. Thankfully, nothing of the sort occurred, but that didn't mean she wasn't in for a shock. The doll definitely should have had some residual warmth left, even if it was filled with air. Instead, it was cold. Colder than the table. Colder than the air in the room. Not quite icy but quite close to it.

“Oh, she's... chilly!” the jaguaress murmured to herself as she began to run her fingers over the perfectly polished rubber. It was smooth. Almost slick. And if she pressed into its oddly firm softness, it gave off a very satisfying squeak. All in all, it didn't seem very much unlike the real gummies she'd touched at the Gelitech Gelarium.

Shurie smiled to herself and gave the doll's arm a squeeze. She couldn't feel the faux-seam

at all. It was entirely an illusion created by a darkening of the biogel color through the two millimeter or so thickness of the pleasantly supple rubber. While the doll had felt rather firm around the shoulders, her arm felt softer. It wasn't nearly the sort of softness backed by firmness one might expect of an actual arm. Instead, it was something that seemed far less real, and far more like a figment of her imagination. It was a cold, soft tube that held its overall stiffness between the joints no matter how firmly she squeezed it. It was... strange. Bizarre. And she couldn't help but start to wonder what it felt like to the captive consciousness within it.

A shudder ran down the jaguaress' spine as she pondered whether or not the new doll could actually feel her touch as her hands slid over its chest and squeezed its puffy little breasts with their faux-printed nipples. They were about as far from being pleasingly jiggy as could be. They were squishy, though, and in an odd way that the jaguaress found rather

amusing. Boobs were nature's stress balls, after all, and these felt far more the part than the natural variety.

Shurie's hands slid down to the doll's legs, where she began to explore how readily those limbs actually moved when manipulated. Much to her surprise, the non-existent joints moved about in astonishingly natural fashion, albeit requiring quite a bit of carefully directed force to shift. The doll's hollow skin seemed to stretch and compress as each leg was shifted, all the time looking as if the current pose was exactly how the doll had been first crafted. There were no rumples or creases to be seen anywhere, even those that would have been present on the body of the woman from whom the doll had been made.

The jaguaress began to feel more than just a bit awkward as she began to caress the doll's tummy. Supposedly, gummies could only feel when they'd been woken by warmth. Were these inflato-gummies different? Could they

feel even when the were cold?

Shurie opted not to think too much about it, lest she start to feel guilty about where she was about to put her fingers. The new doll was certainly interesting enough to touch and squeeze from the outside, but she hadn't just been asked to examine the dolls exterior qualities. Exactly what the computer had meant about interior lubricity was a mystery, but if what she'd felt of the proper gummies displayed in the Gelitech Gelarium, she could very well imagine that the interior tubes of the inflato-gummy were just as oily-slick.

While the rest of the inflato-gummy had felt suspiciously solid, the orifices provided for user entertainment purposes revealed that it was indeed filled with air. Each of the interior tubes extended straight inward from each of the three openings. They were somewhat stiff, tight, and slick to the touch, but were only anchored to the doll's outer skin. As a result, they wobbled about quite freely inside the doll

when manipulated from within. This felt quite unnatural, but on the more pleasant side, they did seem to be quite happy to conform to whatever shape protrusion was inserted.

Shurie was curious about exactly how big a protrusion would fit up there between the new doll's legs. She was sorely tempted to try her whole forearm. But it wasn't just a doll, was it? She just couldn't shake the sense that the elf-ear was still very much aware, and judging every little touch and toke.

Starting to feel just a bit embarrassed, the jaguaress withdrew from the new inflato-gummy and took a step back from the table. Out of the corner of her eye, she sensed movement. She looked up toward the robotic arm. It was still hanging from the ceiling, aerosol can still in its grasp. Maybe she was just imagining things, but it seemed to have shifted from aiming directly at the doll, and toward the place where she was now standing.

“Does subject gamma eight-hundred forty-nine dash fifty-eight find the new inflatogummy’s surface texture within the range which she considers personally acceptable?” the computer inquired.

“Yeah,” Shurie replied. “It’s kind of nice.”

“Does subject gamma eight-hundred forty-nine dash fifty-eight find the new inflatogummy’s variations in firmness and softness within the range which she considers personally acceptable?” the computer asked.

“Well, I... I don’t know,” Shurie replied, finally noticing the odd language the computer was using. Shouldn’t it have asked whether or not she personally considered it acceptable? Considering it personally acceptable could mean something very different. “It’s... interesting. So... I... guess?”

“Does subject gamma eight-hundred forty-nine dash fifty-eight find the new inflatogummy’s ranges of externally induced motion

within the range which she considers personally acceptable?” the computer inquired.

“Yes,” Shurie responded. Regardless of the computer’s language, it seemed like a safe response. It was natural enough, or at least close enough to a normal gummy. “I mean, it seems pretty normal, right?”

“Does subject gamma eight-hundred forty-nine dash fifty-eight find the new inflato-gummy’s interior orifice tightness within the range which she considers personally acceptable?” the computer inquired.

“Sure,” Shurie answered, still wondering why the computer was using the language it was. Was it an oversight on the part of those running the experiment, or was the computer trying to put an idea in her head?

“Does subject gamma eight-hundred forty-nine dash fifty-eight find the new inflato-gummy’s interior orifice ability to stretch within the range which she considers

personally acceptable?” the computer inquired.

“Yeah,” Shurie replied. Did the computer really have to repeat her contract number every time it addressed her?

“Does subject gamma eight-hundred forty-nine dash fifty-eight find the new inflato-gummy’s interior orifice lubricity within the range which she considers personally acceptable?” the computer inquired.

“It’s nice,” Shurie answered. At this point, all she wanted to do was be done with the questions.

“The opinions of subject gamma eight-hundred forty-nine dash fifty-eight with respects to the studied physical qualities of the new inflato-gummy have been duly recorded,” the computer stated. “Phase two of this experiment is now complete. “Phase three of the experiment shall now commence.”

“Thank heavens,” Shuri responded with a

thoroughly relieved sigh. She still assumed that phase three was the exit interview, and the quicker she got away from that menacing aerosol can, the better. She didn't quite trust the robot to not have an 'accident' while she was still in the room. The last thing she wanted was to get sprayed right when she was about to get away with her tail intact.

"Given that subject gamma eight-hundred forty-nine dash fifty-eight has found all significant qualities of the inflato-gummy to be personally acceptable," the computer stated, "it has been deemed extremely desirable for inclusion in the nest stage of inflato-gummy trials."

"What? Nest stage of trials?" Shurie replied, crossing her arms and glaring at the still locked test chamber door. She'd been wondering what the catch was. Now she knew. "I definitely didn't sign up for any more trials."

"Subject gamma eight-hundred forty-nine

dash fifty-eight is instructed to return to its designated test table and restore itself to a seated position,” the computer stated. “Once this has been done, an appropriate period of time shall be provided for the subject to contemplate consenting to its inclusion in the next stage trials.”

“I’m really not interested,” Shurie huffed. “Like, really. Seriously.”

“Subject gamma eight-hundred forty-nine dash fifty-eight may declare her consent to participation in the next stage trials by spreading her legs toward the aerosol applicator at any time,” the computer stated. “Should the subject fail to do so, the experiment will end once the allotted contemplation time has passed.”

“Fine!” Shurie sighed. “I’ll sit down. But how long am I going to have to wait?”

“Subject gamma eight-hundred forty-nine dash fifty-eight shall wait until the next

research assistant is available,” the computer replied. “No further information shall be provided.”

“Fine,” The jaguaress sighed. There was no point in arguing. The contract had said the test could take up to four hours. As far as she could tell, only about three quarters of an hour had passed since she’d undressed for the experiment. Maybe a bit more. Knowing Gelitech and their tempting ways, there was a good chance that she was going to be sitting there for the rest of the full four hours.

Shurie shook her head and turned back to her own padded table. There really wasn’t anything else she could do but sit down and be very careful about not spreading her legs in the direction of the robot. The robot, in turn, followed her, keeping the spray can pointed directly at her as she made her way to the side of her table and mounted it with considerable caution.

All the increasingly nervous and self-aware jaguaress could think of was what might happen if she accidentally moved the wrong way without thinking. Exactly what ‘spread legs’ were was certainly open to interpretation. Was it spread wide open like the computer had requested at the start of the test? Was it spread just enough for the average person to call it spread? Or was it just flashing her fluffy folds toward the robot for the merest moment?

Despite her worries, Shurie managed to get her legs up onto the table and curled up to one side without exposing herself to the robot. At first, she couldn’t take her eyes off the spray can. All it would take was one little twitch of the robotic ‘finger’ that was resting atop the spray head...

Without warning, the air around the other experiment table began to glow with a strange purple light. Shurie watched in mild astonishment as it spread to completely

surround the new inflato-gummy. With a series of rubbery squips, snaps, and crinkles, the doll rose up to hover over the table in an eerie, almost angelic pose, surrounded by the force field's luminous darkness.

Maybe it doesn't look quite as bad as I thought, the jaguaress thought to herself as she took a second look over the doll. Its shape was certainly rather plain, but not in any particularly unattractive way. *I wouldn't want to be it, but I definitely wouldn't mind giving it a cuddle or two.*

With a soft, airy whoosh, the doll was whisked across the chamber. Shurie almost slipped up as she shifted to avoid it as it seemed to be headed right for her. She caught herself at the very last moment, just as she was about to shift her legs from one side to the other. Instead, she froze and winced at what seemed like an inevitable collision.

Much to her relief, the floating inflatable

stopped right beside the table. Its little air filled rubber tits hovered just about level with her nose. The scent of rubber that still pervaded the room seemed to intensify.

“Really?” the jaguaress muttered, shaking her head at the doll’s chest. As much as she wanted out to squeeze the little rubber tits, she kept herself in check. It was almost surely just a distraction meant to get her to shift the wrong way. “You really think staring at that is going to convince me to get myself turned into a cheap sex toy?”

There was no reply.

The little cap at the end of the doll’s ponytail popped open. It immediately began to deflate, filling the air with a genuinely overpowering odor of latex rubber. But... it wasn’t the only thing making its way into Shurie’s sensitive fey’li nose. that Shurie.

The jaguaress could only just barely smell the other, far more insidious notes that were

hidden beneath the scent of rubber. She could smell the elf-ear. Or, rather, she could smell the pheromones that the woman's body had been pumping out as she lay writhing about in the final throes of her dollification.

While she'd certainly been able to detect the pheromones as the elf-ear's transformation as taking place, they had been at their natural level. That hadn't been nearly concentrated enough to have any noticeable effect on her own body. This was despite fey'li being quite naturally susceptible to involuntary pheromonal manipulation. It was a natural weakness that many completely natural plants, animals, and even other sapient species had evolved to exploit.

It was also a weakness that could be exploited through less than natural means. No wonder, then, that fey'li could be such enthusiastic consumers of xenoexperience offerings even when they were initially quite disinterested. At it took was a bit of the right

scents in the air.

The right scents were definitely in the air. They were spewing out of the inflato-gummy in such volume that the jaguaress wondered if all the doll's missing mass had been converted into pheromones. There was no mistaking them. Nor was their any avoiding them.

“Oh! Uh...” Shurie sputtered as a wave of unbidden feelings washed through her. She started to feel a strange, anxious anticipation for something to happen. This quickly intensified into a near need for something to happen. To happen to her. To her body. Something strange. Something uncomfortable. Something unnatural. “Fuck... just... fuck... like... so... not... fair!”

“There's no way she enjoyed that!” Shurie stammered as she struggled to blunt her body's completely involuntary response with rational thought. “There's just... no... way.”

The jaguaress knew that she should look

away. That she should focus on something else. Something solid. Something concrete. Something devoid of enticing emotional attachments. But watching as the purple force field pressed the inflato-gummy flat was just too intensely fascinating to ignore.

Crinkle. Squip. Snap.

Shurie gasped as the doll seemed to shrink as it was deflated. In this regard, it was far more like a balloon than a typical inflatable doll. It more or less kept its features and relative proportions as it shrank, and its color became much more intense, albeit also much less transparent. As the final hiss of pheromone laced air exited the open cap, it began to wrinkle like a deflated balloon as well.

The hissing finally came to a stop. The force field had squeezed every last whiff of elf-ear out of the doll. The little cap snapped closed.

The jaguaress wasn't given long to

contemplate the shriveled husk that now hovered beside her. With a series of sharp rubbery crinkles and snaps, the doll was neatly folded up into a little rectangle with its plain, faux-printed face positioned on the front.

Shurie bit her lip as a clear plastic envelope appeared from somewhere beneath her own padded table. The deflated doll dropped inside. The envelope sealed shut. Then it vanished back under the table along with its contents.

“Goddesses above,” the jaguaress murmured at the abrupt and disturbingly unceremonious end to the elf-ear’s journey from vibrantly alive woman to cold, inanimate, inflatable rubber doll. “She’s... it’s...”

Though the doll had vanished, her intense pheromones had not. Over and over the image of its deflation played through Shurie’s mind. It had looked so strange. And it had felt so...

The jaguraess didn’t quite know what to make of the second-hand feelings. They didn’t

seem entirely pleasant, truth be told. But they didn't seem all that unpleasant, either. The elf-ear had certainly been fascinated enough by it. Fascinated enough that among her final expressions was desire.

But... desire for what? Did she really like it so much that she wanted more? Or to go back to the beginning and do it all over again? There was no way for Shurie to know the reason. Not unless she gave in and...

“Subject gamma eight-hundred forty-nine dash fifty-eight,” the computer stated. “Please spread your legs to consent to participation in the next stage trials.”

Shurie's hips rolled to center themselves on the table. She leaned back. Before her conscious mind had caught up with her virtually automatic subconscious response to the computer's prompting, it was too late. Her legs had fallen to either side, exposing her fluffy folds to the robot and its spray can.

Hisss!

The jaguaress could only stare slack jawed and let out a gasp of horrified fascination as the robot proceeded to completely empty the can all over her thighs and pelvis. Everywhere it touched, her fur instantly dissolved away. This exposed a perfectly polished rubber skin which was colored in a very cartoonish looking mimicry of her natural fur color and pattern. So cartoonish, in fact, that she found herself completely unable to believe that this glossy sheen was actually her own body.

Part of her body it was indeed, a fact which came upon her confused mind as a sudden, strangely pleasing discomfort. The shiny skin was so smooth. So perfect. So... uncomfortably tight. It was pressing inward so firmly. And in places where it might have felt arousing were it not for the harshness of it.

Shurie's reached down with her right hand to grasp at her dollified womanhood. Her

fingers slid inside the slick rubber tube without any effort at all. At first it felt quite warm. The flexing of her fingers seemed to arouse it, making it grip a bit tighter. Amid the discomfort, she could feel a smoother sort of tension within the tube. A pleasurable sensation, imitating arousal with the same sort of cartoonish mimicry as the pattern on her rubber skin. A sensation that felt quite good, yet at the same time didn't feel even remotely real, as physical sensations went.

The solid interior beneath the rubber skin began to dissolve in a wave of electric fizz. Her 'vagina' began to feel a bit less firm. She toked and tugged as the flesh around it vanished, and it began to flop about just like the other doll's rubber 'vagina' had with her own inflated body.

The sense of harsh tautness around the edges of the rubber skin began to spread down her legs and up her fluffy belly, around her rump, and toward the small of her back.

Beneath the spreading rubber skin, the electric fizz dissolved her flesh. The emptiness left behind was, no doubt, filled with her own pheromones. Pheromones which expressed her confused fascination with the physical sensations that were consuming her body. That embodied the uncomfortable pleasure being teased forth by her fingers. That made it quite clear that she was feeling unnaturally comfortable with the whole affair.

Indeed, Shurie wasn't at all uncomfortable with what was happening to her body, now that she was in the thrall of it. There were so many things happening, all at once. So many sensations to feel. Sensations that felt different to each part of her body as they spread. She just couldn't help but want to feel them everywhere.

Squip. Squitch. Squeak.

The jaguaress began to squirm as the

rubbery transfiguration ran down over her knees and up around her waist. She couldn't move her hips. And then she couldn't move her knees. Or her waist.

Shurie gasped as she felt the fingers buried between her legs begin to puff up, forcing them out of her rubber pussy. The transformation had spread to her hand. As the tight, puffy wave spread down toward her feet and up over the base of her ribcage, she stared in wonder at the cartoonish rubber paw that had replaced her hand.

“Goddesses...” the jaguaress murmured as the transformation spread over her feet, turning them into puffy rubber paws just like her hand. She could feel the rubber starting to tug beneath her warm, soft breasts.

“Oh! Oh... oh... oh,” she panted as she gripped her right breast with her transformed left hand. “Ah! Oh. No... oh... ohno... oh!”

Shurie could feel as the skin of her breast

transformed into a sheen of glossy rubber. A few final dribbles of creamy milk wet her fingers as her nipples were tugged downward by the spreading rubber. Then, with a sharp, deeply uncomfortable twang, her nipples became part of that rubber. They wrinkled. They shrank. And then they completely vanished.

“Ah! Oh! Ah!” the jaguaress panted as her breasts themselves dissolved away from the inside. She squeezed tightly as the heavy, squishy glands were replaced by springy, rubbery little balloons stuck onto her chest. “Oh... that... that was... that was...”

The transformation didn't wait for her to compose her thoughts into something coherent. Instead, it spread onto her left hand, and began to advance more rapidly. She began to struggle to breathe as her chest, and her lungs, were dissolved away into air. She wanted to speak, but couldn't manage more than a low, sonorous huffing.

Up her arms the transformation washed as she wiggled her shoulders and tried to feel her rubber body. There was little to feel. Soft, cold air outside. Soft, cold air inside. The soft, cold padded table upon which she so gently rested.

Oh... oh fuck... why? Why did I spread my legs? Shurie asked herself as she stared up at the ceiling and waited for the rubber to spread up from her neck and over her head. It was already tugging beneath her chin. *Dammit. I... I... fuck. What does it even matter? I don't really give a shit, do I? I didn't have a choice. I just... had to. Had to know why she liked it...*

Shurie's face went taut. Her fur dissolved as she let out her final, rubbery gasps. She could feel her throat turning into a rubber tube. It was vibrating in a strange, wobbly way. She wanted to feel what it was like to stick something into it. Did it feel like her dollified vagina did?

Her sense of taste got all rubbery, and then

faded away as her muzzle was transformed into a cartoonish, puffy version of itself and stuck onto the front of her balloon face. So too did her sense of smell. A translucent something spread over her quivering eyes, and then she went blind. The sound of the test chamber's ventilation began to warble with a rubbery twang. Then she went deaf. Her hair was pulling together. It was forming a ponytail. It was puffing up, with something hard on its very end.

The electric fizz followed the dissolution of her senses. Her brain dissolved away, though at no point was her consciousness impeded in any way. A few moments later, and there was nothing left of the jaguaress. There was only the inflated rubber doll that she'd become.

Shurie felt quite cold as something firm seemed to surround and begin to squeeze her. Her ponytail cap popped open. Her pheromone steeped air flooded out. Her skin was shrinking. She was shrinking. And wrinkling.

And being pressed flat.

It was all happening so fast. Was it really going faster, or was it her perception of time that had changed? She didn't know. She couldn't know. All that she knew was that she'd been pressed flat and folded up into a neat little rectangle.

She could feel herself falling into her envelope. She could feel it seal shut. She could feel herself being whisked into a slot. She could feel something being pressed onto one side of her package. And then the other. And then she was falling. Falling onto something. Something that she couldn't help but feel was familiar.

A firm surface pressed down atop one half of the new doll's envelope, and then onto the other. There was a shifting. A shaking. A movement. An abrupt stop. What was happening? Where had she been taken?

The new inflatable doll couldn't remain fully

aware forever. Just like any other gummy, her mind began to cloud. She began to feel much of her individuality melting away into the mist. The world became little more than physical sensation. And then that too faded away into a strange dream. She dreamed of her fingers, exploring between her legs. Twiddling about inside the floppy tube that had once been the source of great pleasure. Twiddling and twiddling and twiddling, for the rest of eternity, each moment seeming like the first moment, with no memory of what had come before, and no anticipation of what might come in the future. Eternity... at least until someone opened her package and offered her the sort of sensations that might bring her back to reality...

FIFTEEN

COLONIZATION

“I’m all for historical reenactment... but... are you... are you kidding me?” Marra heavily panted as she crouched down behind a conveniently placed boulder. “Did you see... did you see what they did? To... to everyone else? Did you see?”

There was nowhere else to hide in the little wooded copse. Nor was there anywhere else to run. Not unless they wanted to head back out into the open. The very thought of doing that sent a shudder down the tigress’ spine.

There had been almost two dozen of them, running for the hills when the bugs had come.

Running through the field of half-grown grain, from the brand new village that had been built solely for the purpose of the so-called reenactment. Running, not because it was part of some carefully planned out act, but out of sheer, genuine terror.

They'd been caught completely unawares, bathing nude together in the little pond above the Shina family farm. It was one of the few things that had existed in the secluded mountain valley prior to its development for the big event. A big event that had always been rather nebulous in nature. By the time everyone who'd signed up to participate had moved in, the whole thing had mostly been forgotten about. Months had passed. Then a year. And then...

The bugs had come without warning. Before anyone in the little group knew it, they were crawling up and over the low, field stone dam. There were six of the beasts. They were eight legged scorpion-like monsters with off-white,

grub-like bodies. Four of them were small, with strangely vulvic mouths that spit musty smelling clear goo at anyone they could get close enough to. This goo gave off a potent odor that had made everyone sexually aroused. Those who'd actually been hit with the stuff seemed to have become so focused on their arousal that they were helpless targets for the monster's stingers.

Eight of the girls had been jabbed before anyone had even had the chance to start running. Whatever the poison was, it had seemed to strip its victims of all inhibitions. Perhaps it even made the bugs seem sexually attractive to them. They certainly acted like it had. Every one of them had quickly knelt down, bent over, and presented themselves for the taking.

And take their victims, the beasts certainly did. The two much larger ones had mouths that concealed long, thick phalli. These dripped with translucent white effluent who's

somewhat differently musty odor seemed to impart of sense of wanting to be dominated to victims in close proximity. They quickly buried their oral members into their victims' presented posteriors with unceremonious immediacy. One deep thrust. One powerful squirt. And then...

No one had bothered to hang around to find out what effect the ministrations of these initial assailants might have upon their victims' bodies. Right behind the grub-scorpions had come the flying monsters. A few had been creatures that looked an awful lot like rowa workers, albeit with wings and a stinger tail in place of legs. Their spit was just as potent as that of the small grub-scorpions, though their aim was much less precise. Their tails too seemed to carry the same sort of poison. In moments, a trail of upturned asses began to form as, one by one, the fleeing group was caught.

As if these horrors hadn't been enough,

giant grub-bodied flies descended from the heavens. Unlike the other bugs, these weren't so kind as to give their victim's a pussy-throbbing high before delving into their bodies. Their heads possessed two pairs of giant mandibles. The smaller of these would clamp around a victim's neck, while the larger would go around her arms, pulling them to her sides as it clamped firmly around her torso, just beneath her breasts. With a single motion, it would lift her a few inches off her feet, while thrusting its long, dripping tail deep into her anus. And then...

Marra had seen enough to know she had no desire to learn more. A cute little leopardess had been snatched right in front of her. It had been hard enough to keep from colliding with her, as the bug had pumped her full of its foul ejaculate. She could see the woman's body beginning to transform. In the mere moments that it had taken for the jaguaress to pass the woman, the fur around her midriff had already started to fall out. The skin beneath was

shaping itself into grub-like segments. As to what the poor soul was becoming... that she didn't know. And, to be quite frank, she really didn't want to.

“Seriously?” K'noor replied, rolling her eyes at the confused, horrified tigress. “You voluntarily signed up in order to participate in a fully historically accurate reenactment of traditional rowa hive establishment, including fully agreeing to unlimited consent to all potential consequences thereof. Pray tell, what did you actually expect that meant?”

“Something other than running around trying to avoid getting fucked up the ass by nasty giant bugs,” Marra huffed as she scowled at the bemused, pale blue mitanni. “Did you... did you see what...”

K'noor chuckled. “Of course I did see,” she said as she swished her long, deep purple hair from side to side. “It is all very exciting, is it not? What a privilege it is to be able to witness

the rowa hunting in their natural way! Chasing us all down with absolutely no regard whatsoever as to our own feeling on the matter. Nor any regard at all as to what our potential usefulness to them might be, should we be left to reside in the bodies of our natural birth. Does that not fascinate you?”

“Not really,” Marra replied with a deep frown as her racing heart began to slow.

Again, K’noor chuckled. “Come now. You certainly understood what you were volunteering for. Did you not read the introductory booklet?”

“I... I just kind of skimmed it. I think. There was an awful lot of paperwork and... I thought I was signing up for... like... I don’t know,” Marra replied with a deep huff. “Everyone said it was going to be like Hive Week with a few extra steps. Like... a place where you could come all the time, go outside, pull your pants down, and get turned into a little bug-butt. I

didn't think it was going to be... like... for real!
With these... monster... bugs... and..."

The tigress stopped short. She grimaced upward as she watched one of the big, bulbous flies buzzing overhead. It was flying well above the dense trees and tangled undergrowth. All she could do was silently pray that the vegetation was sufficient to hide the pair from view.

Granted, Marra wasn't too worried about herself. By the standards of nature, she would have been well camouflaged in a modest patch of tall grass. So long as she didn't move quickly, her orange and black stripes blended into just about any sort of natural vegetation. Of course, she was assuming that the rowa were as red-green colorblind as most animals were. Being bugs, their vision had to be shifted up the spectrum into the ultraviolet, so they had to be, didn't they?

The pale blue mitanni, however, stuck out

like a sore thumb. A tall, broad hipped, big breasted thumb, with hooves that could be heard a few hundred yards away even when walking in soft grass. The fact that she'd somehow managed to evade the bugs had been a miracle. Then again, the grub-scorpions didn't seem to have eyes. Perhaps they couldn't see their victims. But if they couldn't see them, then how could they have found and attacked them?

“At least we're safe here,” Marra said softly as the fly vanished from view. Safe, of course, being an entirely relative term. “They won't be able to find us as long as we lay low. Hopefully they'll go away by morning. Then we can try and find a way out of this place. How far is it from here to that mine path? The one that leads up to that old silver mine? It's not far, is it? We can take and then...”

“I do not think they will be going away any time soon,” K'noor interrupted with a smile that seemed far to mischievous for the tigress'

liking. “And why in all the magnificent Heavenly Hells would you want to be finding a way out? Do not you want to experience what it might feel like to succumb to the potent rowa toxins? To know what it is like to have one’s most tender flesh so completely saturated with rowa genetic material that it has no choice but to completely remake itself in their image?”

“Uh... no. Not really,” Marra replied with a skeptical glance at the bubbling mitanni.

“Surely you would not have agreed to come here if you did not desire to savor the sensations of being transformed into something so completely unthinkable,” K’noor cooed. “Surely you want to know just what it is like to have your mind reduced to something so... so beautifully monstrous? So devoid of individuality. So barely sapient. So... So... Well, surely, you must be curious!”

“Not enough to let those smelly, slaving

monsters fuck me up the ass,” Marra replied with a snort.

K’noor grinned. “I am quite sure that you will most thoroughly enjoy the experience of having a rowa phallus rammed up your tight little tailhole with wonderfully bestial brutality,” she remarked as another fly buzzed over the trees. “All the fey’li do, do they not? Why else were the rowa so successful in conquering so many colonies if they were not so irresistible to the sexual sensibilities of your people?”

“How should I know?” Marra huffed. A distant sound made her ears twitch. A soft rustling, high up in one of the trees. “Shhh! Quiet!”

“Why?” K’noor inquired with another mischievous grin. “What is the point of trying to hide our tender bodies from them, when they already know that we are hiding somewhere within this stand of trees?”

“What do you mean they already know?” Marra questioned as she looked around for any sign that the rowa might be approaching. “Where are they? I don’t see them.”

“I would certainly not expect to see them, at least for the moment,” K’noor explained. “The lesser forms of rowa which have been tasked to hunt us are not nearly as unintelligent as you may have been lead to believe. Although their minds have been reduced to barest state of genuine sapience, they are all very well equipped for their areas of specialization. Should it so happen that your acquisition as a new member of the hive fits within their abilities... well, you have not the slightest chance of evading them for very long.”

“Suuuuuure,” Marra sighed, rolling her eyes sarcastically.

“Do you genuinely think that they did not observe our entry into this area of vegetation?” K’noor replied. “They know that we are here.

And they know that there is far too great a swath of open ground in all directions for us to be able to leave this patch of cover unobserved.”

“That’s making some pretty big assumptions,” Marra noted with another look around. “Especially for the ones that don’t have eyes.”

“They are more than capable of following our unique scents,” K’noor responded with a broad grin. “And in case you have failed to notice, they have their ways of making quite sure that we cannot possibly avoid leaving the most potent of trails for them to follow.”

“What ways?” Marra asked, eyeing the mitanni with growing suspicion. It was obvious that this woman had quite a fetish for the rowa. Not enough of one to let them just have their way with her, apparently. But certainly enough of one to try and get her companion to put on a show for her.

“You are still rather aroused, are you not?” K’noor inquired.

“Kind of,” Marra replied with a shallow shrug. She hadn’t really noticed until the mitanni had mentioned it. Then again, she’d had an awful lot else on her mind to worry about. “That smell...”

“That smell, indeed,” K’noor observed. “All rowa oral mucous has the property of triggering a certain degree of arousal in all sexes, but only among members of sapient species who’s bodies are susceptible to being overcome by rowa genetics. Most are familiar with that exuded by the oral cavities of workers and worms. These relatively weak effluents serve to relax potential victims and perhaps help to desensitize them to the otherwise disgusting nature of the species. The hunters, however, have a far more potent discharge. A mere sniff of their sticky spit is enough to arouse even the most chaste. A single drop on the skin and... well, you have

certainly seen what that can do, have you not?”

“Yeah,” Marra grunted. This mitanni definitely knew far too much about the rowa. Just sitting beside the woman was making her feel more than a little skeeved out.

“But... the true purpose of the hunter’s mucous is not to arouse our tender flesh in order to entice us to volunteer our bodies,” K’noor continued. “Granted, it may have that effect on victims whose particular inclinations or curiosities might have already led them to such an act. The reality of the matter is that the hunter’s mucous arouses our bodies in order to force us to produce our unique blends of pheromone. These both identify us as suitable subjects for inclusion into the hive, and to make it truly trivial for the hunters to track us as we make our futile attempts to avoid the inevitable.”

“Whatever you say,” Marra muttered, looking down to the glistening dampness that

had turned the otherwise soft white fluff between her legs into a sticky, clumpy mess. “But I always heard their stinky spit get us wet so it was easier for them to shove their... whatever into us.”

“That is a useful side effect, is it not?” K’noor chuckled.

“If they know we’re here, then why aren’t they coming to get us?” Marra asked. Just the thought that they could track her pheromones was enough to get her heart pumping again. Of all the Fey’li Empire’s many peoples, the fey’li were, by far, the most prodigious producers of sexual pheromones. So much so that they often referred to some extremely difficult task made easy by a convenient shortcut as being like ‘playing horny hide-and-seek’. If the rowa hunting her were even half as good at that game as she was...

“Rowa can be quite cautious creatures when the available time suits them,” K’noor replied.

“They will not charge in to attack potential victims who might have the will and the means to defend themselves. They will formulate some stratagem, even if that is to merely wait until we come out of our own accord.”

“And if we don’t?” Marra questioned.

“They may choose to make an attempt at taking us unawares at a particularly vulnerable moment,” K’noor answered. “I imagine that will be the case, as they are sure to understand that no one in this valley has any means to properly defend themselves. But... well, I very much think that neither of us would particularly enjoy what the rowa do to those who prove to be particularly obstinate in refusing to be caught.”

“Pray tell,” Marra said, again rolling her eyes. She was staring to wonder if the mitanni was really a rowa fetishist, or just a horny nerd with a proclivity for getting way too into the nitty-gritty background details of peril-

porn.

“That would involve an excruciatingly intimate encounter with a rowa soldier,” K’noor noted. “Naturally armored, four armed brutes strong and virile enough to make even as tough a mitanni woman as I blush at the thought of being picked up and veritably skewered upon one’s massive, juicy masculine member. Of course, I sincerely doubt that such a ride is even remotely worth the terrible price. I cannot even begin to image letting such a creature slide its needle-like secondary mandibles through my ears and into my brain. Having my brain itself physically unwound as I remain fully conscious. Fully conscious until the very last moment when my life itself is finally unraveled? Being fully aware as each thought. Each memory. Each little bit of what I am, being sucked out and absorbed so that the beast can learn the secrets of my ability to resist for so frustratingly long a duration.”

“That’s... that’s...” Marra stammered as she

made the mistake of actually trying to imagine what the mitanni was describing. The horrors of the bugs that had chased them seemed almost tame in comparison to being actually killed in such a terrifying fashion.

“Beyond contemplation,” K’noor agreed.

“Why do you know all this stuff about the rowa?” Marra asked. She wasn’t quite sure she wanted to hear the answer but, at least for the moment, it was better than the proposal that she was sure the mitanni was about to make.

“It has been my privilege to study the rowa and their habits for quite a many years,” K’noor replied with a smile. “One might rightly say that it has become more than a simple obsession of mine. But... the act of mere study has its limits. Long have I toyed with the idea of having myself transformed into one form of lesser rowa or another. But... I could never quite bring myself to actually offer my body to them.”

“Why?” Marra asked. “Everyone else does.”

“Because each answer led to a new question,” K’noor responded. “There was always something more to learn. Always something new to observe. The potential for discovery never seemed to end.”

“Then what are you doing here?” Marra asked. “If there’s so much more to learn, then why come here? Why put yourself in a position where, according to you, there’s no way to escape getting bug-fucked?”

“Well, if you really do insist on knowing,” K’noor replied with another, even more mischievous smile. “It was I who arranged for this valley to be given over to the rowa as a place where new hive could act in a more natural fashion. All for the benefit of both science and tourism. All to begin with a momentous historical reenactment of the natural rowa colonization process.

“So, I arranged for this valley to be given

over the rowa as a place where a new hive could act in a more natural fashion, for... well, science,” K’noor replied with another mischievous smile. “And that would all begin with a historical reenactment of the natural rowa colonization process. A reenactment that would see several thousand fully consenting individuals experience the horrifying erotic fury of a real rowa invasion. A magnificent encounter with the most primal of rowa behaviors, unleashed without restriction upon the bodies of all involved! My own body quite deliberately included, of course.”

“You’re... nuts,” Marra quipped as she looked up to see not one, but two rowa flies passing by overhead. “But if you really wanted to get your own ass bug-fucked, then why did you hide here with me, anyway?”

“Well, despite all this being my very own idea,” K’noor replied with just a hint of a frown, “my personal presence was not really a matter of my own choosing. The Palace was

quite insistent that I agree to partake of my own proposal in order for it to be approved. So, despite my full consent to bug-fucking, I was just as completely unprepared for the sudden shock of the rowa attack as everyone else. But...”

“But what?” Marra sighed, looking up for any sign that the flies were homing in on their location. If vultures could zero in on fresh roadkill only minutes after it had been hit, surely these bugs could zero in on her pheromones given enough time. If their noses were even a fraction as sensitive as the mitanni had suggested they were, it was only a matter of time.

“You absolutely must admit, it was quite a bit of fun, was it not?” K’noor cooed. “Running for your life as alien creatures surrounded you. Adrenaline pumping. Heart racing. Pussy dripping as you watched your friends fall, paralyzed by their own bodies’ desire to consummate union with their unthinkably

disgusting assailants, and for no other reason than to achieve erotic release, with not even the most momentary of thought to the consequences. Was that not at least just a small bit fun?”

“I don’t know,” Marra replied with a shrug. The mitanni definitely had a very strange idea of fun. But perhaps she did have a point. A pretty perverse point, but a point nonetheless.

Thousands getting together to willingly reenacting ostensibly violent events with permanently transformative consequences was certainly in vogue. That was what the Biogel Games was all about, wasn’t it? Did anyone ever watch a battle and think the girls weren’t having more fun than a cat girl in a sex shop? Did anyone ever watch a gelfighter getting suddenly tentacled in every hole and think ‘That can’t be fun!’ as they took their time giving her a shiny black pounding before she was dissolved into the hovering orb to which the tentacles belonged?

No. Certainly not. Because, no matter what happened to them, they really were having fun with it all. So much fun that they just didn't care if things turned from chasing each other around with glorified paint ball guns, trying to turn each other into sex dolls, into suddenly getting dissolved into a crystal clear blob that they didn't see laying flat on the glossy black floor. They smiled. They laughed. No matter what was happening to their bodies. Because it was fun.

Then again, getting chased down during the Biogel Games by another gelfighter, or getting suddenly snared by an erotically inclined biogel trap, was more than just a little bit different than getting chased down by the rowa and aggressively bug-fucked into bugdom. Or... was it? Was it really all that different, or was it just a matter of perception? Was it just a matter of subjective taste?

Marra certainly had at least a little bit of a taste for the rowa. She liked watching videos

of girls getting turned into workers or worms. She even went out jogging during Hive Weeks, just to watch other girls get swarmed by handsy little workers who knew just how to skirt the whole ‘nudity equals consent’ rule.

They weren’t allowed to just go and take people’s clothes off. But if they did it playfully enough, their mark would just go along with it until enough was exposed to qualify as naked under the law. It was sneaky. It was underhanded. It was totally reprehensible, considering the inevitable results.

It was a wonder the Hive Week rules hadn’t been changed. Then again, no one ever complained. And like they always said, if you were a rube enough to fall for the game and wind up with your pants down around your knees and a robotic bug cock in your mouth, then chances are the results would actually mean an increase in intelligence when all was said and done.

Marra was no rube. But she had once let the workers play their game for a bit. It had been quite a thing feeling those bony little fingers edging under her sport top and shorts. Probing for fasteners. Tugging at zippers. Seeing how far they could slide the shorts down over her hips until she noticed.

That had certainly gotten her adrenaline pumping, especially when they managed to get the fastener over her tail undone. Her heart had raced as she reached down to yank her shorts back up, even as the hovering robot rob was preparing to stick its robo-dong in her mouth. She'd been saved by just a few millimeters of exposure. One more tug and she'd have had a mouth full of bug juice and a legal obligation to swallow. But she hadn't run off in terror, had she?

No, Marra hadn't run away. She had just pulled her shorts up and playfully scolded the workers for being too quick to pull them down. It had all just been part of the game. Part of

the fun. And it wouldn't have been any fun if there wasn't a very real risk of actually getting that mouthful of bug juice, would it?

"The fun," Marra murmured as her thoughts broke free from silence. "Yeah. I guess the rowa can be... a bit of fun."

"Wonderful!" K'noor exclaimed with a clap and a broad grin. "Then let us make our way out and see if this new hive might be so generous as to offer us a bit more excitement!"

Marra shook her head. "I... I don't know."

It was one thing to imagine what it had been like to *almost* fall prey to the gentile, if sneaky, rowa workers. It was something else entirely to imagine actually falling prey to their subterfuge. And even that was nothing compared to imagining what it would be like to be taken by the far more monstrous sort of rowa who had taken the others. But what was the use in trying to imagine, when agreeing meant doing. And doing meant...

“Do not think with the organ inside your head,” K’noor softly cooed in the jaguaress’ ear. “This decision is not a matter for which such an intelligent organ is even remotely appropriate. No. This matter demands than you think with the organ between your legs.”

“I don’t think that...” Marra began, but before she could get much out her companion was rubbing a strange, fizzy wetness onto her shoulder. “What... what is that? What are you doing?”

“The mucous of the little scorpions remains fluid for quite some time,” K’noor mused as she continued to rub the goo into the jaguaress’ fur. “After so many years of studying the creatures, I have become quite insensitive to it. Nowadays, even when a rather ample quantity comes into direct contact with my skin, it only serves to make me pleasantly horny. But you...”

For a moment, Marra didn’t feel much of

anything. Then it happened. A sudden surge of arousal between her legs, so intense that she felt an almost instantaneous urge to consummate it. But not with her hands. For some strange reason, she just couldn't imagine even trying to take herself to orgasm. She had to let someone else do it. Or something. Anything, really.

“Oh... oh... I've... I've gotta... gotta fuck,” Marra sputtered. “Oh... it's so intense...”

“Your responsiveness to the mucous is quite... magnificent,” K'noor giggled as she shifted up onto her knees. “It would be such a shame to waste the opportunity for unimaginable pleasure presented such a gloriously aroused organ, would it not?”

“Ah... oh... dammit... I just...” Marra stammered as the mitanni stood beside her.

“Now come,” K'noor cooed as she pulled the jaguaress up onto her feet. “Let us take our tender, horny bodies and together offer them

to the new hive.”

“I... I guess,” Marra relented. She still wasn’t entirely sure that being caught by the rowa was actually inevitable. They could have still waited for dark. They could have made a run for the mountain path. They could have tried, even if it meant getting caught in the end. But...

Even the reluctant jaguaress had to admit that trying to escape and getting violently caught wouldn’t be very much in the way of fun. It would be sudden. It would be quick. It would be over before there was a chance to clear one’s mind and actually *experience* it.

It wasn’t so much that Marra actually wanted to experience what it was actually like to be transformed into some form of utterly vile and disgusting rowa monster. But if she absolutely *had* to, then she wanted it to be more like letting the workers toy with her during Hive Week than what she’d seen happen

to her friends. If they offered themselves as willing and horny supplicants... maybe, just maybe, they'd be as playful as the workers had been.

"Come," K'noor giggled as she took the jaguaress by the hand and started to pull her toward the far side of the wooded copse. "Let us take a different path."

"I suppose," Marra replied, following the mitanni as she quite noisily pushed her way through the thankfully thorn-free underbrush. "But wouldn't it be easier to..."

"That would not be very much fun, would it?" K'noor replied. "I am quite sure it will be far more exciting for both of us if they are obligated to do treat us in the same fashion as they did the others."

"I don't know... I mean... wouldn't it be more fun if we just let them... oh. Oh. Oh woah," Marra sputtered. Now that she'd had a few moments to adjust to the sate of things

between her legs, her mind had become surprisingly clear. The world seemed... in focus. Her senses were heightened. Everything seemed so vibrant. So magnificent. So beautiful. “What... what is... everything is...”

“Astonishingly wonderful to the senses?” K’noor responded with a laugh. “The mucous does more than just arouse. It amplifies the senses in a very particular fashion. The whole world everything which comes next becomes quite intense. Sights. Sounds. Smells. Flavors. Touch.”

“But wouldn’t that make getting caught even worse?” Marra questioned as she caught side of the light coming in from the edge of wood.

“I must admit that I do not know,” K’noor answered with a shrug. “I do suppose that one’s opinion of better, or worse, is rather subjective. But let us not worry about such minor details. Let us instead take what comes, and savor every moment no matter how

absolutely terrifying, or how astonishingly pleasurable, each of those moments may prove to be.”

Marra didn't have much time to contemplate the mitanni's words before they two of them crashed out from the underbrush. All at once, her well thought out escape plan was dashed to bits upon the hard rock of reality. The picture that she'd formed in her mind's eye was that of a quick run to a nearby mountain path. It was a picture formed from unreliable memory of a single visit, made from a very different direction.

The jaguaress gasped as her eyes were instead confronted with vast open field of well manicured grass. In the distance she could see signs of a road leading up to a long bridge. Beyond the bridge was a farm with seven broad terraced paddies. These leaned upon against the southeast side of a rocky precipice. But the old miner's path wasn't on the southeast side. It began on the north side,

which itself was just as far from the farm as the farm was from her.

“We wouldn’t have had a chance,” Marra murmured as the two slowed to a brisk walk. There was no point in running until they had something definite to run from. “There’s no way we could have made it so far.”

K’noor nodded. “That makes acceptance of what is to come so much easier, does it not?”

“Yeah,” Marra replied. “We can’t get away. So... I guess there’s nothing to do but try and make the best of it.”

K’noor looked around. “How very strange,” she remarked with a raised eyebrow. “What possible reason could the rowa have for abandoning us?”

“Maybe they thought we’d been caught when you rubbed that... stuff on my shoulder,” Marra suggested. She was still as horny as horny could be, but it seemed to be fading just a tiny

little bit. Either that or she was just getting used to it. It was hard for her to tell. “Or maybe they’ve decided to just block the exits from the valley and let the stragglers come to them?”

“The rowa may be intelligent, but that is not a strategy that they are known to practice,” K’noor replied. “They go to quite great lengths to avoid offering their victims a concrete objective upon which to rally. Such great lengths, in fact, that it can be used against them in battle. It was how the rowa advance was brought to a halt, after all.”

“Really? How... uh... what’s that?” Marra responded as a faint sound caught her ear. A soft whooshing. She turned around. There was nothing. She looked up. “Oh... flies!!!”

“Run!” K’noor giggled, grabbing at the jaguaress hand. “Run like you want a good and proper ass pounding!”

Marra didn’t really need the prompting. She

turned her tail toward the flying monstrosities. She ran. But... she didn't even try to run anywhere nearly as fast as she could. What was the point if getting caught was inevitable? And wouldn't it be just a little more fun if she let the mitanni get ahead of her by just a little? Just enough so that she could watch the fly ram its prehensile bug-dick hard into her rowa loving mitanni ass?

Whatever horror the jaguaress might have felt in anticipation of being snatched up by one of the flies was blunted by the fantasy of watching her companion falling victim to the same. She barely even noticed as a sticky wad of mucous splattered onto her back. It had a different odor than the mucous from the little scorpion-like monsters. It smelled more masculine. More like semen. And it's touch caused her level of sexual arousal skyrocket to the point of being nearly disabling.

Only momentum carried Marra forward as the first set of mandibles clamped hard around

her neck. The fly's wings began to buzz loudly as its body slammed into her back. She faltered, stumbling forward as the second set of mandibles took hold of her arms and clamped them to her sides.

“Ah!” Marra gasped as a feeling of total physical helplessness consumed her. She was little more than a rag doll in the fly's grasp. And a glance toward her companion made it clear that she wasn't the only one. “Oh... oh... it's...”

K'noor's captor had already entrenched its writhing tendril deep into the her anus. She gasped and sputtered as visibly throbbing pulses flowed down through the member and into her helpless body. One. Two. Three. Whitish ejaculate began to bubble from around the entrenched bug penis. Then it began to ooze. And then it began to squirt.

The intense focus imparted by the rowa mucous had left Marra particularly susceptible

to changes in her perception of time. Only a couple of short seconds had passed between her looking at K'noor and her squirting bug spoo out of her still deeply penetrated ass. But to the transfixed jaguaress, it seemed more like twenty, maybe thirty seconds had passed.

Marra began to wonder if her own fly was actually going to jam its manhood into her ass. Or was it going to stick her in a different hole? Or was it saving her for something else entirely? Was she somehow special? Somehow worthy of better treatment?

The normal flow of time came back into focus with brutal abruptness. It felt as if she'd been hit with a hammer right between the butt-cheeks. A poorly aimed hammer than had somehow managed to avoid both her tailbone and perineum. A very large headed hammer that plowed right into her tight little virgin tailhole and filled it so completely that it felt almost like the thing was pushing up behind her bellybutton.

Marra blushed as thoughts of the horrible mess which the sudden penetration should have made somehow managed to poke their way to the forefront of her mind. She had once read that the rowa were particularly clean, regardless of the physical manner in which they administered their bug juice. Nothing was left to waste, not even their victim's body waste. It would be almost instantly consumed by the penetrating organ's initial lubricating coating of bug juice. This would transform it into a part of the initial mutational spark that would both spread the rowa's genetics into her own living cells and tune it to a specific final result.

The thought that her shit was going to dictate what was about to happen to her body was more than disgusting enough to make Marra gag. Or perhaps it was the feeling of that first real pulse of bug spooze being forced through an opening that nature had never prepared for such a passage. In it popped, and an instant later, she could feel her guts being...

changed.

Before she knew it, bug semen was spraying out from around the fly's prehensile penis. The around her midriff was already starting to fall out. In its place, she began to feel stiff and... leathery. Dull, insensitive swaths that ran around her body were separated by more sensitive, far more flexible seams. Her waist began to shift in ways that her mind could barely comprehend.

Marra tried to look toward K'noor. To see what was happening to the mitanni's body in anticipation of what was going to happen to her own. It was no use. The sensations were so intense that all she could do was loll her head from side to side, panting and gasping for air as more and more of her midsection transformed into grub-like segments.

"Ah... oh... oh... no... no... please... no," the jaguaress begged as the leathery feeling spread down to her tailbone. Around her hips. Toward

that place between her legs. Toward that moment that all rowa victims would experience with great intensity as their genitalia were reduced to smooth, leathery nothing.

“Ah... ah... AH! AH! AAAAAH!” she moaned as the transformation pulled on her vulva. She could feel it inside as well as outside. A vanishing within. A pull. A tug. A final, defiant burst of arousal so strong it felt like it was going to tear her tender flesh asunder. “AAAAAAAAAAH!”

For one, fleeting moment, Marra felt a hint of the most incredible orgasm she might ever have had in her life. In a flash, it was replaced by a dullness in her vulva. Then her vulva just... fused together. Vanished into a perfectly smooth flatness between her legs.

No sooner had her womanhood been erased from existence than the fly pulled it squirming tendril out of her ass. Just as it did so, her anus

too was washed away by the leathery flow. Her tail was pulled down, its base merging with her butt cheeks. The transformation continued down her legs, but they didn't remain legs for very long. They began to fuse together, along with her tail, from the top down.

For a few moments, Marra wondered if she was becoming a rowa worm. A vile, pussy-faced, mucous spitting worm that seemed to exist only to disgust people. Then she began to feel pressure coming from points around her ribcage. Even beneath her still fluffy breasts.

“Uh... oh... ah...” the jaguaress gasped as black needle-like appendages pushed out through the leathery segments that were taking shape around the base of her ribcage. Out from the furless sides of her ribcage, just beneath her breasts. And then...

“Oh... no... NO!” she panted as two more black needles pushed out of her breasts, to the sides of her still aroused nipples. There was no

pain, only deeply unsettling discomfort. And then another pair slid out from the ribs just atop her breasts, even as those tender lumps were shedding and shrinking into flat, leathery nothing.

The further the transformation progressed, the faster it seemed to be going. She sputtered and gasped as the eight black needles grew into long, spindly spider-like legs before her eyes. Her arms began to fuse to her sides as the fur began to shed from around her neck. Her legs had come almost completely together. And... if her senses weren't deceiving her, her whole bug-body was shrinking as well!

Marra looked down her front one last time as the fur on her face began to fall out. All she could see was segments. Long black legs that wiggled and flexed in ways she could neither quite comprehend or control. More segments. And more. And more, narrowing down into a long tail. all of it squirmed and flexed now, up and down, side to side, in all directions with

almost arbitrary flexibility. And down there. Down there where her toes should have been. Down there was a hard black lump. And out of that lump had grown a long, terrifyingly sharp stinger.

I'm turning... into... one of those... scorpion things! Marra thought as her nose became pleasingly tingly. The sides of her muzzle fused and morphed into vertical folds of tender pink flesh. Her tongue disappeared, and her mouth became a soft tunnel that slowly burrowed its way directly toward the of her head. Her cheeks became solid black chitin. Blunt mandibles formed around her vulvic maw, closing to hide them from view, before opening again to let out a spray of thick mucous.

Marra's hair fell out and her ears were flattened away into the black chitin of her head. Thin, flicking antennae thrust up directly above her eyes. Then her eyes seemed to fall back into her head before being washed away by the chitin that grew to fill the holes where

they'd been.

The new rowa scorpion could feel things changing within her head, and within her body. Memories of things she'd seen and read, increasingly vague, suggested that her brain was being physically reconfigured. Her cerebellum was being split in two, and shoved off to the sides in protected pockets. Her visual cortex just ceased to be. It was no longer necessary, after all. So too did most of her frontal lobe. Everything else was shrinking and being moved into other protected pockets. They needed to be protected, given what else was still growing.

The oral-vaginal tube pushed its way all the way to the back of the new scorpion's head. Around it formed large, highly productive mucous glands. Among the mucous glands formed the glands which filled that mucous with potent aphrodisiacs. These would be perfect for disabling prey for the larger, and slower, male giant scorpions.

The new scorpion's first rational thought about its purpose in life proved to be its last rational thought. Memories of what it had been dissolved away, replaced by a selection of instincts and limited knowledge sufficient to permit it to hunt down and disable humanoid victims. In a flash, the new scorpion knew everything about its body. How to move. How to stalk. How to attack. How to pass time when no prey was available.

The new scorpion suddenly found itself standing on its own legs. The ground was hard. Rocky, even. There were enticing smells in the air. Smells of... males? And females?

A thought came to the new scorpion. Words in a language that it did not understand at all, and yet understood with absolute perfection. The Queen of the Vale Hive demanded this errant female be taken.

The new scorpion was not alone. There was another. And a male giant scorpion. And

several of the flies. They began to move together toward where the smells seemed strongest. They would find these hiding creatures. And when they did, the hive would grow, and the Queen would be pleased!

SIXTEEN

XINTA TEMPLE: TOURISTS

There was a certain, unmistakable smell in the air. It came borne on a cold wind from the west. A damp, earthen odor that seemed completely out of place amid the hustle and bustle of the big city. It was a sign. An omen. A clear declaration by Mother Nature of what was soon to come.

The clouds had been growing darker by the hour. The first, hesitant drops of rain had already begun to fall. The surrounding city grew eerily silent as their light patter echoed among the ancient stones of harsh black granite. Their tender touch spread a perfectly polished sheen over the massive, angular

shapes. The sparkling lights of the city glittered upon the smooth, wet faces, highlighting the little crystals embedded within the stone, an even mix of clear quartz and vivid purple amethyst.

The dark, foreboding edifice had always seemed to linger on the edge of reality. Even when dry, its stone appeared to draw the very light from the air around it. But now, as mid-afternoon began to look more like midnight, the temple's nine massive obelisks looked as if their rain-wet surfaces were becoming gateways to another dimension, holes in reality which the eyes of mere mortals strained to comprehend.

Equally difficult for mortal minds to comprehend was the sheer scale of the sacrifice which had once occurred within the temple's menacing obelisks. No one really knew how many had simply vanished from the mortal realm within their black granite masses. How many millions had been cast,

according the ancient stories, directly into the embrace of the Nine Heavenly Hells by the temple's purple slime 'magic'? One hundred? Two hundred? According to the physical evidence, enough to wear away the hard granite steps leading into the monuments a dozen times over, at the very least.

This is so damned boring, Kyah quipped to herself as she followed the lazy flow of fellow tourists up a short flight of newly resurfaced steps and onto the low platform which surrounded one of the ancient temple's eight lesser obelisks. All she does is talk. There are hardly any exhibits. What's the point of it all?

The lavender skinned, elf eared ashiri certainly had cause to be annoyed. The brochures had been full of titillating suggestiveness about what had taken place within the ancient temple walls, many millennia ago. Full of hints about what might still be found in its darkest recesses. Lurking. Waiting for the right moment to come back to

life. To consume all that might wander within reach of its magical purple slime powers.

So far, however, all that Kyah had seen was a bunch of bare workshops and bland bedchambers where the temple servants had once lived and worked for their key'vin'ta masters, or mistresses, as the case happened to be. There had been nothing exotic or mysterious about it all. Nothing even remotely stimulating of the imagination. And no real sign of all that purple slime that was supposed to be biding its time, in wait for some new power to take control of it.

The only thing even remotely titillating about any of it was the fact that she, and all of the other women visiting the temple were required to do so completely in the nude. The tour guide had said it was 'traditional servant's attire day' or something like that. Apparently, key'vin'ta servants weren't allowed to wear clothing. The fey'li didn't seem to mind. Or the mitanni. But everyone else seemed just as

awkward and embarrassed as she was.

Kyah began to wonder if any of the other tour groups were having a more interesting time of it all. It was clearly a very busy day at the temple, despite the looming storm. Each group consisted of six to eight visitors, led by a lone tour guide. Her group's tour guide was clearly one of the less lively ones, and didn't seem particularly invested in anything they'd come across so far. Not that there had been all that much to become invested in.

Dammit, Kyah thought as the sparse raindrops to began to get larger. We'd better not get stuck here! It wasn't supposed to start raining for at least another four hours!

The morning forecast had definitely said the storm wouldn't be starting in earnest until at least the early evening. There should have been plenty of time for a full tour of the temple, an early dinner, and a nice, slow walk back to the hotel before things got too intense to safely be

out and about. Now, it seemed, the storm was nearly upon city, four hours early. With all the benefits of modern technology, how could the forecast have been so wrong?

Are we seriously going to get stuck in this yawn-fest for two whole days? Kyah wondered as the guide directed the group into the tall, obelisk shaped portal that led into the obelisk's interior. It was dark as dark could be. She could make out a raised platform in the back of the tall interior chamber, but that was about it.

Lightning flashed off to the west, illuminating the temple in a momentary, and deeply unsettling sort of blue-white glow. A roll of distant thunder soon followed, rumbling its way through the city before echoing about among the temple's hard granite structures. A less grounded mind might have heard it as the thunderous speech of some dark god, coming down from the heavens to command his following to commit unspeakable acts in the temple's deepest, darkest recesses. The ashiri

couldn't help but wonder if the ancient key'vin'ta who'd built the temple had done something to create that effect on purpose.

A shrill *whoop whoop* followed close after the rumble of thunder. The leading edge of the storm proper was approaching the neighboring city of Runai. It was time to find shelter, and stay there until the storm had passed.

Kyah groaned to herself as she followed the others into obelisk. The storm was still at least twenty minutes away, but the guides didn't seem very interested in helping them find some more sensible place to take shelter. Indeed, they seemed almost giddy at the prospect of a long stay inside the completely inadequate structure. So too did many of her fellow tourists. In fact, it almost seemed like they'd planned for it.

"This is gonna be so much fun!" one of the leopardess tourists giggled to a friend. "I'm so glad we made it in time!"

“Yeah, huh?” the friend, also a leopardess, replied. “Five more minutes and we’d have missed our chance!”

Kyah certainly didn’t share the fey’li’s sentiments. Her mood certainly didn’t improve when it became quite clear that the guide had no intention of hurrying things along. If they didn’t get out of the tower before the storm swept in, then it surely wouldn’t be safe to go out until it was all said and done. It was just plain crazy. Where were they supposed to sleep? Were there even any sanitary facilities? Surely they weren’t going to be expected to...

All of a sudden, the displeased ashiri found her tour group of six being split in half. The tour guide directed the latter up some stairs and onto the elevated platform. She and the two giddy leopardesses, however, were directed toward the center of the chamber and onto a strange depression in the floor that looked almost like a fountain of some sort. The outer edges were raised by about ten

centimeters, while a larger ridge in the center was raised by just over half a meter. In the middle of this was a meter wide hole that led down into pitch blackness.

The hole in the middle of the depression was matched by one in the high ceiling overhead. A dull purple light illuminated the area above, and then another area above that. And another. Exactly how many chambers might be located above the obelisk's ground floor was impossible to tell, but clearly there was more to the structure than first met the eye.

“Go ahead and sit down,” the tour guide cooed as she joined the others on the raised platform. “Get comfortable. In a few moments, the lift will descend, and you'll be able to gaze upon on the temple's eight grant mechanisms by which the ancient key'vin'ta drew forth the power of their captive's soul energy in order to energize the central obelisk and its series of transdimensional lenses. While you're doing that, I shall show the others where you all will

be spending the duration of the storm. Once you're done, you'll swap places."

"Awesome!" the first leopardess giggled.

"This is so much fun!" the second replied.

Kyah reluctantly sat down along with her fellow tourists. *Finally, something interesting*, she thought as the platform began to feel a bit wobbly beneath her. *Woah... this... this isn't...*

The ground suddenly gave way beneath the confused ashiri. At least, that was how it seemed. The lift, so far as she could tell, wasn't actually attached to anything. Nor was it gravity-anchored like a modern free-lift would be. It rocked back and forth, only a few centimeters each way, in an undulation that shifted its axis a few degrees with each wobble. To say that the feel of it was disconcerting would have been a considerable understatement.

Thanks the divines I don't get motion

sickness, Kyah thought as the lift slowly dropped down through a short shaft and into the pitch black abyss.

“Oh... wow!” the second leopardess exclaimed as a purple light beneath the lift platform illuminated the square chamber into which they were now descending. “That’s... that’s...”

“Awesome!” the first sputtered with unabashed delight at the sight.

It took a few moments longer for Kyah’s less sensitive eyes to adjust to the strange lighting. Once it they had, the ashiri found herself gazing upon an array of large, oval half-bubbles which covered all four of the chamber’s walls. They looked as if they were made of opaque glass, though exactly what color they might have actually been was impossible to tell in the dim purple light.

The half-bubbles were all arranged in a very precise vertical pattern consisting of rows of

four, in between which were partially overlapping rows of three. Each of the four walls were indistinguishable from one another. Besides their vast number of perfectly identical lumps, they were devoid of any other features. There was nothing to suggest exactly how the whole thing worked, and no sign at all of the sorts of enticingly erotic purple slime ‘magic’ hinted at in the highly suggestive brochures.

“Those are all purple slime, aren’t they?” the first leopardess said as the lift kept descending. “Every one of them... can you even imagine? A girl inside every one of them, getting their soul sucked into the Heavenly Hells to power the temple!”

“And as soon as they go, another one comes to take their place,” the second said. “I didn’t believe it when they said that millions were brought here to get their souls sucked into the Hells... but... yeah. Look at all of them. And this is just one of th eight!”

“Do you think it’s true?” the first asked. “That when lightning hits the obelisk... that the purple slime re-energizes and sucks up anyone who’s inside?”

Kyah looked at the leopardess with a distinct sense of alarm. Granted, the storm was still probably about twenty minutes away. Surely, they wouldn’t be floating around down beneath the temple for that long. But still...

“Did you just say that this place will suck your soul out if lightning hits hit?” the ashiri asked.

“That’s what everyone says,” the second leopardess replied. “And it happens really often too. Every time there’s a storm tour like this. Goddess, I’d pay to be able to watch it happen! That would be so awesome, wouldn’t it?”

“Yeah, but wouldn’t we have to actually be in here when lightning struck?” Kyah inquired. “Wouldn’t that mean that we’d be the ones getting our souls sucked out?”

“Well... yeah,” the second leopardess responded with a shrug. “But if you want to see some things, well, I guess you just have to risk getting into them yourself, right?”

Kyah rolled her eyes. She’d always heard that fey’li curiosity often outweighed their survival instincts, especially when it came to anything that might be considered passably erotic. Clearly, she’d heard right.

Seeing where the ancient was more than enough for Kyah. She had absolutely no interest in finding out what being a key’vin’ta captive was really like. Not on a personal level, at least. But if someone else wanted to show her using their own body as the example, she definitely wasn’t going to complain.

The lift kept descending, passing a seemingly endless series of solidified purple slime ovals. Whatever initial fascination Kyah might have had with the featureless shapes was quickly wearing off. *No wonder the tour*

guide was so boring, she thought to herself as she watched the glistening half-bubbles pass. Even in the middle of the place where the key'vin'ta sacrificed all their captives, it's just as plain and boring!

“Wow, this is really deep, isn't it?” the first leopardess murmured as the lift platform continued to descend. “How far down are we going to go?”

“Not much further, I hope,” Kyah responded with a frown. She was starting to wonder if the whole thing was timed to ensure that they'd still be in the chamber when the storm reached the temple. Perhaps the whole lightning thing was just a story, but if it wasn't... “You don't think they're trying to make sure we're in here when lightning strikes, do you?”

“Probably,” the first leopardess giggled. “But that's all part of the fun, isn't it?”

Kyah was about to respond with a comment

about their very different ideas about the definition of fun when a strange, fizzy sound buzzed through the dimly lit chamber.

“What was that?” the second leopardess asked.

“I don’t know,” the first replied. “Weird, wasn’t it?”

“Lighting?” the second inquired.

“No,” the first responded. “I don’t think so. The storm’s still...”

The fizzy sound filled the chamber. This time it was quite a bit louder. It also lasted considerably longer. Kyah looked around. Nothing seemed amiss, although...

My eyes must be playing tricks on me, she thought. For a very brief moment, it had looked as if a very faint column of purple light had shimmered down from above, through the hole in the lift platform’s center, and down into

the darkness below. By the time she'd noticed it, however, it was already fading away. *Dammit. I could have sworn...*

There were a few seconds of near perfect silence. Then the fizzy sound roared into the chamber like a waterfall of hissing electric static. A column of vivid purple light sliced down the center of the chamber. It flickered and flared before settling into a stable beam of hissing purple energy.

“What the...” Kyah sputtered in shock as she shifted away from the platform’s center. There was little room to move, however, and she found herself gripping the raised outer rim of the wobbly platform with one hand, but too reluctant to move the rest of herself toward the edge by more than a few centimeters.

“Wow!” the first leopardess exclaimed, staring wide-eyed into the stream of alien energy. “That’s... that’s incredible!”

“But what does it mean?” the second

leopardess asked. “Do you think it means the temple is...”

“Oh... oh wow,” the first leopardess interrupted. “The purple slime! It’s... alive!”

Kyah looked away from the hissing energy, toward the walls of the chamber. All of the half-bubbles were now glowing with the same purple luminescence as the energy stream. Ripples flowed over their surfaces as they transitioned from solid to liquid. They began to undulate. Those nearest the level of the platform even seemed as if they were stretching out toward the three women sitting upon it.

“What... what’s happening?” the first leopardess stammered as the lift platform suddenly stopped its descent.

“I... I don’t know,” the second responded with a look of mixed confusion, amazement, and nervous anxiety fixed upon her face.

Whatever was happening, Kyah was quickly coming to the conclusion that she didn't want any part of it. She carefully peered over the edge of the platform in hopes that some means of escape might present itself. Her hopes were almost instantly dashed. There were only more of the glowing purple slime bubbles, and beyond, at the very bottom of the vast chamber, was an upward facing pyramid shape.

The pyramid's tip was the source of the energy beam. Or perhaps it was the receiving end. It was impossible to tell. All that was for certain was that the only entrance into the chamber was from above, and unless the platform suddenly decided to head back up, there was no escape.

Goddess, I hope this is just a show! Kyah thought as the nearest of the purple slime bubbles began to seem quite intent on leaving their places on the walls and jumping onto the platform. They wobbled. They wiggled. They

stretched. And then...

Time seemed to slow to a standstill. Kyah could see the thick tendril break through the surface of one of the bubbles. It flew toward her with such speed that she couldn't have avoided it if she'd been given the chance to try. All she managed to do was get up on her knees and turn away from it.

Kyah's jaw dropped as she saw another tendril of slime wrap around the first leopares's waist and bodily lift her up off the platform. The second was not far behind her friend. Exactly what the slime was going to do to them, that was something she really wanted to know. But, just as the tendrils began to reel in their feline prey, the stunned ashiri found herself in the midst of her own very slimy ensnarement.

Thick, cold wetness pressed into the small of Kyah's back. It instantly adhered to her violet skin, ensuring that there would be no

escaping its grasp. “AaaaaaaAAAH!” she cried out as it oozed around her sides and down her back. It took only a few short seconds for it to completely wrap around her waist. In an instant, she was being lifted off the platform, and being pulled back toward the purple slime bubble form which the tendril had come.

“Oh... oh... ohno... ohno,” Kyah sputtered as the tendril leaned her forward. Her feet pressed into the surface of the bubble. For a moment it seemed as if the slick, rubbery feeling surface wouldn’t give way. Then, with a loud, wet pop, she was in up to her knees. “Ah... oh... oh shit... oh shit!”

Kyah barely had time to process what was happening. It took barely a second for her to be pulled in up to her thighs. In another second, the slime was pressing up between her legs, and sliding over her womanly folds. There was a sharp flash of strange, alien... something. She became instantly aroused in a purely physical, purely sexual way. It took less than a second

before she felt as if she was on the precipice of erotic release.

“Oh... oh goddess,” Kyah sputtered as the intense physical urge to mate rapidly overcame whatever willpower she might have mustered toward some effort to escape the slime’s grasp, no matter how vain it might have been. “Can’t... ah... ah... just... can’t...”

Kyah was soon into the slime over her hips. The slime was into her as well. She’d hardly felt it go in, but now as the tendril surrounding her waist merged back into the slime bubble, the slime began to throb inside of her. It didn’t feel like sex. It didn’t make her any more aroused that she already was. It just held her there, at the edge of an orgasm that she just couldn’t seem to achieve.

More slime was now pressing all up and down her back. It bound her arms behind her, and wrapped around her neck. It tugged on her hair, pulling her chin up, while it shifted her

into a forward leaning position. Her legs and arms felt like they were dissolving away into a strange, wet, blissful nothingness.

Kyah wanted to moan, but no sound came out of her mouth. She'd stopped breathing altogether. Her heart had stopped beating as well. The nothingness that her limbs had become seemed to be spreading out from her throbbing double-penetrations, dissolving her from the inside out.

There was nothing Kyah could do but hang there within the slime, perfectly still and staring straight across the chamber with a slack jaw and an expression of blissful erotic terror on her face. She was dead. But she was also still very much alive. The slime was keeping her in this half-state. It had to, if it was going to harvest any energy from the connection between her mortal body and her immortal soul that resided in some higher-order dimension. And to do that, it was going to keep her at the cusp of orgasmic release for

as long as it could.

Kyah didn't understand how she somehow understood what was happening to her. She just... knew. Had the slime somehow communicated this to her? Or was it some deeper power within the temple?

Kyah could feel the flow of energy. It was a spiral. A whirlpool that came from some place beyond comprehension, and ended in her physical brain. The stronger it became, the more confused her thoughts became. Memories began to mix in strange ways as the sheer power passing through her began to reconfigure neurons in unpredictable ways.

No matter how much Kyah's mind was blended and reshaped, the pure physical arousal stood at the very forefront of her living stream of consciousness. It was the only thing that she could clearly understand. Arousal, and the consummation that would give her pleasure beyond mortal belief.

Another whirlpool was beginning to form. A darker whirlpool, leading down into some incomprehensible abyss. That was the path she wanted to take. The path of erotic release, descending into eternal bliss.

As the new whirlpool grew within her mind, the old faded away. The slime just couldn't resist her primal need to pass through orgasm. The old whirlpool snapped away from her brain. Intense muscular contractions pulled at her pelvis and abdomen. All the confusion in her mind was washed away in a wave of pure, unbridled pleasure.

What remained of Kyah's body melted into the purple slime as the mind blissfully spun about as it fell into the darkness. The world became nothing, even as some semblance of order returned to her mind. Memories returned. Thoughts became familiar and coherent. But something was different. Something had changed.

Kyah no longer had any sense of self preservation. No survival instinct whatsoever. She didn't need any of that, of course. She was dead, after all. Wasn't she?

A new world seemed to be forming around the ahsiri. A world of shapes shrouded in mist. Strange shapes. Moving shapes. Sounds of horror. Sounds of pleasure. Voices. And one, darkly effeminate voice which seemed to rise above the others.

“It would seem that the old temple has brought us a new plaything,” the voice slithered directly into Kyah's mind as her felt her body begging to re-form amid the mist. “What pleasure does it find most vile, hmm? Do we keep it as it is and give it to the sensual beasts who disgust it the most? Or to we give it a pleasurable shape which it finds monstrously horrid? Or do we let it wander until fate decides for it? Decisions, decisions...”

Kyah fell to her knees on a patch of soft,

warm sand. She didn't know what to do. Or what to say.

“Such a pretty little one, isn't it?” the voice cooed. “Such a delicate little mind. Let's let it wander, and terrify itself into something more suitable for its purpose. That would be fun, wouldn't it?”

All at once, the voices vanished. Kyah was alone in the mist. Alone with who-knew what else. Alone in the Nine Heavenly Hells, where she was fated to spend an eternity of pleasurable horror, serving its otherworldly denizens as little more than a toy.

I can't believe this place is actually real, Kyah thought as she stood up and headed into the densest part of the mist. Well... I'm going to get fucked by demons one way or another, aren't I? I guess there's no point in putting it off, is there?

SEVENTEEN

SHETIRA & SHAWI

COSPLAY PERIL

“Oh... oh WOW!” my beautiful Asian lioness exclaims with giddy excitement. “Those are *awesome!* They look *just* like the real thing!”

sigh

Now, don't get me wrong. I really don't mind hearing what my beloved companion has to say about the unusual sorts of alien attire we often see hanging in the windows of interstellar fashion boutique. Perusing all of the odd alien goods to be found in shop windows is one of the things that make our weekly sojourns into the big city so wonderfully entertaining. But

here? In this place? Well, let's just say this isn't Market Street. Really.

Looking around, I honestly never imagined this place would be so sketchy. The further we move away from the bright lights and tourist friendly vibe of University Station, the more insidious and sketchy it seems to get. Maybe it's just the sickly, yellow-green tinge to the lighting that make the vast concrete canyon look like a scene from a low budget peril flick. Well, I certainly hope it's just that. The mix of piquant odors in the air, however, are definitely telling me otherwise.

The whole place smells of latex rubber. That's not really a surprise. It's not quite as intense as I'd imagined it would be, but it's certainly intense enough to mask the more subtle notes that are wafting their way through the air. Even my rather dull nose can clearly identify those.

This place stinks of horny pussy, I think to myself in silence as my eyes wander along the rows of Gelivend machines lining the wall to our left. I have to wonder if all those pheromones are being artificially induced to help convince visitors like us to surrender ourselves to the biogel lifestyle. To go over to one of those machines and put in a measly five hundred credits, sit inside, and let the glistening black goo spread over our bodies...

No, I say to myself as I do my best to shake off the imagined sense of slick, wet slime spreading up between my legs. That scent of feminine arousal makes the effort far more difficult than it has any right to be. No. Not here. Not that. We're just here to see the sights.

Of course, there's a far more likely explanation staring me in the face, and probably having a nice longer gander at my soft feline rump to boot. The places is crowded with girls just like us, wandering through the display areas tucked in beneath the arena

‘stands’. All of us are fixated upon the myriad selection of kinky curiosities and displays of various Biogel Games gear. And then there’s all those Team Pink girls bouncing about, explaining it all, and doing their level best to get the rest of us into all of the various, intimately interactive displays of arena perils.

I’m not going to lie. It’s really, really fun to watch some random girl strip naked and get snatched up by some glistening biogel beast, or slowly vanish into a glossy black surface barely a hair’s breadth thick. There’s so many perils to be seen, and so many girls who want to test them out that the show seems almost endless. Endless, and extremely deleterious to one’s already questionable ability of hormonal self-control.

The pheromones that are slowly eating away at my willpower are probably just a result of so many women being in such constant close contact with so much shiny black kinkiness. So many fey’li women, in particular. All it takes is

one of us to get their motor running and anyone else nearby is sure to follow, fey'li or not. The horniness spreads outward like a pressure wave of physical inhibition. Before you know it, half the group is so aroused that convincing them to do crazy things with their bodies is just a matter of pointing the way. And once enough of the crown starts moving in that direction, the rest almost can't help themselves but follow.

The real question I have is what brought all these women here to Anwae Arena, at this specific time. I've always been told that the place is never really busy except right before a game. Today's game isn't for another six hours. Home Team Pink isn't even playing, which is a real shame. Shawi and I are big Team Pink fans, though to be perfectly honest, we haven't quite worked up the courage to attend a game in person yet.

Well, I haven't worked up the courage yet. I'm sure the moment my lovely lioness finds a

way to get me into the stands without my realizing what's happening until it's too late, she will. And I'm just as sure she's also going to contrive some way to get me out of the stands and into the game itself too. It's what she does, and she does it far too well. But... goddess above, she's always so damned *cute* when she does it!

Anyhow, whatever the source of the pheromones, they're making me feel far less inhibited than I'd otherwise be. I've always had a bit of a thing for form-fitting shiny blackness, and here in the bowels of Anwae Arena, the form-fitting shiny blackness is absolutely *everywhere*. There's shiny black statuary. Shiny black employees. Shiny black visitors who've given themselves over to the shiny black lifestyle.

To make matters even more tempting, there's all those vending machines selling countless sorts of shiny black accessories, not to mention shiny black biogel suits that would

look just so perfect gracing my lovely lioness' magnificent body. I'm sure she'd love to feel that goo spreading over her body. And there inlies the problem. I might have the wherewithal to resist the temptation. My kinky lioness, however...

"Come on!" Shawi chirps like a cat who desperately wants to get at the birds at the feeder outside the window. "They're so cool! Let's go look!"

"Fine, fine," I sigh as she tugs on my arm. What's cool is, of course, a matter of considerable opinion. It's a matter on which my mischievous lioness and I often disagree. And that's where all the trouble starts. "What's... uh... oh..."

Trouble indeed. My beautiful lioness is fixated upon a small vendor stall that's tucked in between the rows of Gelivend machines that line a considerable portion of the arena basement's outer wall. There's a tall glass

display case to either side of the shimmering black biogel curtain that covers the temporary shop's doorway. Each one contains a mannequin. And each of those mannequins are wearing...

“Oh! Wow! Cool!” Shawi sputters as she brings us to a stop in front of one of the cases. “Team Glitter cosplay suits! They look just like the real things, don't they?”

I'm not sure what's more unsettling. Is it my giddy lioness' enthusiastic bubbling over the glistening black and off-white biogel suits? Or is the fact that I'm looking at full body suits designed to make their wearer look like a sexed up, glossy skinned rowa worker?

I definitely can't deny just how realistic they look, though. The black arms and lower legs are just shiny versions of a rowa worker's chitinous equivalents, with some accommodation made for a wearer's far less slender arms and legs. And the grub-like

segments that cover the rest of the body are exactly the same, off-white color as the real thing, and complete with black eye-spots on each. The breasts, belly and crotch, however, are little more than a thin, glossy black layer. These patches make the suit seem far more attractive and inviting to the casually curious viewer, not to mention the Biogel Games audiences who are watching games involving the rowa Glitter teams, who's permanent biogel body modifications the suits have been made to mimic.

I've honestly never been all that enthused by the whole Glitter team thing. The rowa are, honestly, disgusting. The smell like wet pussy. The drool and spit their oral-vaginal mucous all over anyone nearby. And they're always trying to get their 'bug juice' into your orifices, to transform you into a walnut brained insectoid servant creature just like them. And, I'm going to have to admit from more than one very intimate, and very vile, personal experience, they're awfully good at it. Almost

as good, in fact, as my wonderful lioness is at getting me into other, equally transformative troubles.

“Look!” Shawi says, pointing toward a sign on the glass case. “Geligirl Certified Inert Biogel Team Glitter Purple Cosplay Suit. They’re inert so that means they’re totally safe to wear, right?”

Here we go again.

“Come on!” Shawi begs. “They’re only two hundred credits! It’ll be so much fun to run around with rubber bug butts! Can we? Yes? Please?”

“Shawi! Really?” I protest. I mean, it’s not like we don’t have the money. It’s just, well, bug butts are bug butts, and I’ve honestly had quiet enough of those to satisfy at least a few lifetime’s worth of curiosity.

“Really! Come on! It’ll be fun!” Shawi responds.

“But...” I sigh, looking for some excuse to avoid the inevitable. “Aren’t we Team Pink girls?”

“Team Pink doesn’t have *these*,” Shawi giggles, pulling me in until we’re shoulder to shoulder. “What about Team Glitter Purple, huh? We could be Team Glitter Purple girls. They’re playing tonight too, aren’t they? Oh! Oh! We could get the suits and buy tickets and wear them to the game like all those other glitter fans in the videos! That would be so much fun, wouldn’t it?”

“You... you seriously want to put that on and root for Glitter Purple?” I ask, again sighing deeply. I already know the answer, of course, but I might as well try. Maybe, just maybe, she’ll have another idea before committing. Although... I’m not entirely sure I want to know what sort of idea would be sufficient to distract her...

“Why not?” Shawi purrs, licking at my ear playfully. “I mean, we’ve been bugbutts before, right? And we don’t have anything else to do. Let’s do this!”

“I really don’t think...” I begin, struggling to find words for one last, vain effort to dissuade my rubber-bug-butt infatuated lioness.

“Hi there!” a voice chirps as the shimmering rubber curtain that covered the shop doorway is pushed aside. “You sound like you’re ready to suit up and go all-in for Glitter Purple, so come on in and let me help you get your bug on!”

I knew it. I just knew it. Just when I was starting to find the right words to convince my lioness that there was more fun to be had elsewhere, this glossy, bug-assed leopardess just comes out of nowhere to push my lovely lioness over the edge!

“Let’s go!” Shawi declares, yanking me toward the shop door while the leopardess

holds the curtain aside for us. “This is gonna be soooooo awesome!”

I roll my eyes. It’s all I can really do at this point. “Whatever you say, honey. Whatever you say.”

“This is so exciting!” my kinky lioness coos with unbridled delight at the opportunity to actually run her fingers over one of the glistening rowaform cosplay suit’s soft, supple gelatin surface. She seems particularly enthused with the grub-like segments that cover so much of the suit’s area. “Wow. Just... wow! I can’t wait to put this on!”

I, on the other hand, am anything but enthused. I just can’t get past my prior experience with the rowa. With the feel of the

slow, uncomfortable progression of the changes that their foul genetic essence imposed on my body. With the creepy, leathery sound of the segments rubbing together as I moved. With the weird, empty feeling of the total lack of physical sex. And with that final, horrifying experience of enduring my mind being dissolved into only the bare necessities of life as a virtual slave to the rowa hive-mind.

Now, here I am, absolutely surrounded by racks containing at least a hundred of these glossy, sexed-up rowa suits. Yeah, they're just biogel. Allegedly inert biogel. But still.

At the very least, I can console myself with the fact that these cosplay suits don't stink like actual rowa do. How anyone can convince themselves to put on that HiveWear stuff is beyond me. All that smelly mucous, slathering all over the place. Just... eeeeeew!

"You don't look so convinced, do you?" the leopardess observes with a sly smirk.

Yep. This one is definitely up to no good. Not that I should really be surprised. It's her job to get bods like ours into these cosplay suits, isn't it?

"You know, I *could* perhaps sweeten the deal for you," the leopardess purrs with just the sort of deeply sensual, enticingly inviting tone that my lovely lioness uses when she's about to surprise me with something she knows that she's going to enjoy way more than I am. "What do you say? You get in a suit, and I get you into tonight's game. Totally free! Premium seats in the Glitter Purple Fortress Zone too!"

"What's the catch?" I ask. There's always a catch. Always. Even if it is just the very real chance that I might actually get comfortable running around looking like a shiny half-rowa. But the way my luck usually goes, it's not going to be so simple. In fact, I'm almost sure it's going to be a real doozy.

The leopardess responds with a playful laugh. “Catch? Well, yeah. There’s a bit of a catch. You know. The usual sort of Biogel Games thing.”

“And that is?” I ask with a sigh. Yep. It’s going to be a real doozy. It always is, isn’t it?

“Well, for starters, if you want a suit, you have to agree to wear it until the match is over,” the leopardess notes with a smile. “And, you have to stay within the confines of the overall Gelitech property. That’s the arena, it’s gardens, and the Gelarium. If you agree to actively model for me... well, you can visit University Station too. That latter bit also includes quite a discount, along with those free tickets.”

“What kind of a discount?” I ask.

“Half off,” the leopardess replies. “And if you do a really good job swinging those shiny rowa hips around, I might be convinced to give you the suits for free.”

“Okay,” I respond with increasing skepticism. “Now... what’s the *real* catch?”

“Well, there’s a chance that you’ll be... er... shall we say... ‘asked’ to join Team Glitter Purple before the match starts,” the leopardess replies. with a mischievous wink. “You know. The usual sort of pumping up the entertainment value with audience participation and all that.”

“Why do I feel like ‘asked’ to join actually means ‘required’ to join?” I question. “Are we going to put these things on and suddenly have our asses biogel-bugged without any warning?”

“Maybe,” the leopardess giggles. “But that’s all part of the fun, isn’t it?”

“Come on, ‘Tira,” Shawi bubbles. “You’re always watching those peril vids where girls do stuff or wear stuff, and they never know when something’s going to happen until it actually does. Don’t you actually want to try

something like that yourself? You always talk about it. Let's do it!"

"Oh! Well now," the leopardess purrs, leaning into me and booping my nose with one of her long, glistening black biogel fingers. "I guess that settles it, doesn't it?"

"Uh..." I reply as the leopardess takes one of the suits off the rack and hands it to me in all its shiny, crinkly sounding glory.

"There," the leopardess giggles as she turns to take another suit of the rack to hand to my giddy lioness. "You go and put those on. Then you can let me know if you want to model for me. No... forget that. I'll just assume you do and give you the discount. Send another couple of girls my way, and they're free, no strings attached."

"Aw, yes!" Shawi bubbles, holding her new cosplay suit against her chest with irrepressible glee. "This is gonna be so much fun! You just wait and see!"

“How do we even get into these damned things?” I ask as my beautiful lioness and I sit next to one another on the glossy black bench in the temporary shop’s rather makeshift looking dressing room. “Is there a zipper or something? They don’t really expect us to squeeze in through the tiny neck holes, do they?”

To call it a squeeze would have been a gross understatement. The hole was only about 11cm wide, barely enough for my neck, let alone my hips. And, despite being made of a material that mostly one of the softest, most supple forms of natural rubber known, the grub-segment rolls were far too thick and gelatin-like in consistency to stretch more than a few centimeters more.

There are no clues to be found in the dressing room. The shimmering black rubber curtains that make up the walls are devoid of instructions, or illustrations, or anything at all. Nor was there anything left for us on the bench, with its glistening cushions of perfectly clear gel. In fact, the only notable feature of the dressing room is the unmarked bin in which we'd placed our clothing.

My puzzled lioness is examining her own biogel bug suit with just as much skepticism as I am my own. I watch her run her hands around the puffy neck segments, pressing, squeezing and rubbing the glossy biogel with her fingers. I can't help myself but become slightly aroused as she teases out a strangely sensuous serenade of rubbery crinkles, squips, squeaks, and snaps. I bite my lip and abandon my own examinations to gaze in utter infatuation upon hers.

My wonderful lioness stops, looks up into my completely entranced eyes, and shrugs.

“Well... I guess we’ve just got to stick our feet in and see what happens, huh?”

I nod.

“I’ll go first,” Shawi offers with a sexy little smile as she shifts her hips in preparation for her attempt to squeeze her lovely lioness hips into that tight little hole.

Again, I nod. If she wants to go first, I’m definitely not going to argue. I’d much rather watch than do, and the longer I can put the doing off, the better.

Shawi wastes no time in pulling her legs up onto the bench. She leans forward and lowers the suit, eliciting yet another symphony of arousingly sensuous rubbery noises. She gives me another sexy little smile.

My lovely lioness certainly knows I’ve got a thing for shiny rubber. Shiny black rubber, in particular. The smells. The sounds. The look of girls prancing around in thin coatings of

virtual black glass.

Shawi giggles as she begins to rub her toes against her rubber bug suit's neck, again making just the sorts of little rubbery sounds that she knows are going to get me going. "This is gonna be so much fun," she purrs as she holds her feet and tail together and begins to slide them into the glistening black opening. "We're gonna be such sexy rubber bug-butt. I can't wait to see that ass of yours. It's gonna look sooooo flaming hot!"

I sigh as she begins to pull her glossy bug suit up over her ankles with much rubbery squitching and snapping. Despite her enthusiasm for the bug suit, and my own enthusiasm for having my soft, fuzzy feline butt being the center of her undivided attention, I'm far from enthused about the now inevitable mixing of the two. Flaming hot, my ass definitely isn't going to be. But... well... if *she* thinks it's going to be...

It's no use, is it? I'm just going to wind up doing whatever she thinks is going to look sexy, consequences be damned. Just so she can get her fetish on. If that's what makes her happy... well...

"Mmm," my giddy lioness humms as she pulls her suit upward. Now it's reached the point on her calves where she just can't seem to pull it up any further. The opening is just too small. The biogel is just too thick. "Now what?"

I shrug. "It doesn't stretch at all?"

"I don't think so," Shawi responds. She wiggles her legs and manages to get a few centimeters further. "It's... giving? I can't really tell. But it's so soft inside and... and... it really feels nice."

My sexy lioness pulls and wiggles some more. After a few very rubbery sounding moments, she manages to get it past the widest part of her calves and it comes right up

over her knees.

“Ooh!” Shawi exclaims with a silly smile as she sits there, knee deep in her rubber bug suit. “Wow! Like... oh! It’s starting to feel... like... oh, that’s so weird!”

“What? What does it feel like?” I question as she seems to take considerable delight with whatever the suit is doing to her legs. “What’s going on? It’s not doing something... it’s not changing you, is it?”

“No!” Shawi replies. “It’s starting to feel so... gooey. And soft! I think I can...”

My lovely lioness gives her rubber bug suit another tug. The rubbery melody is joined by a subtle harmony of wet, gooey noises as the neck finally begins to stretch. She wastes no time in pulling it right up to the top of her thighs, a motion that she accompanies with just the sort of sexy bedtime giggles that I find so irresistible.

Despite the ease with which she can now slip into her glistening bug suit, Shawi is left in a bit of a conundrum. It's not like a latex catsuit, where she could have scrunched up the limbs to make them easier to get into. It might have gotten soft and stretchy, but the shape was still too rigid to roll, scrunch, or even fold.

How my beautiful lioness was going to get the rest of her body into her bug suit was a bit of a puzzle. It was going to be awkward at best. At worst she was going to throw out her back in the process. Or we were both going to wind up throwing out our backs in the process. Not that it'd be the first time that we'd managed to do that.

"I don't know," Shawi murmurs as she let her legs down and pondered the conundrum. "I guess I could lay on the bench and wiggle it up? Or..."

"Uh... what... the," I stammer as I notice that both of Shawi's hands and the upper part

of suit are sinking into the thick, clear biogel bench cushion.

“Oh!” Shawi responds with a brief cringe. That quickly turned into a giggle and a broad smile as she began to pull the suit up over her magnificent feline rump, through the gel cushion. “That’s... that’s neat, isn’t it? Have you ever seen anything like it before? Where can we buy one? I want one for the house!”

“I guess we can see later,” I reply with a shrug. It’s never just one thing, is it? There’s always some accessory that you have to buy to make it work the way to expect. Or the most convenient way. Or whatever.

“This is so gooey feeling,” Shawi says as she pulls the neck of her bug suit up over her hips. “Gooey and... like it wants to stick. Like that polymer slime goo stuff. It feels so... like... neat. Come on! Get that cute ass of yours into your suit so you can feel it too!”

Yet again, I sigh. I'd much rather watch her finish than distract myself from the show by squeezing myself into my own bug suit. Whatever. The sooner I get this over with, the sooner I'll be able to get on with my day. Our day, as much as it's going to be with everyone staring at our shiny rubber bug butts.

I take a deep breath and contort myself sufficiently to push my feet into my bug suit's dark, tight neck hole. I can't help but wonder if there are any surprises in there waiting for me. I'm not allowed to take it off all day, so how am I supposed to pee? I'm going to have to at some point, aren't I? They don't really expect me to just pee in the suit and let the biogel absorb it, do they?

I bite my lip as I force my feet into the cool, somewhat slick feeling neck opening. The words 'I'm getting to old for this' pass through my mind unbidden as my middle aged back sees fit to remind me that sitting all scrunched up and straining to push my lower legs into far

too small an opening are definitely not covered by my extended warranty. As much as I might want to delay matters, and as much as my beloved lioness might want me to linger on the sensations of impending rubber buggidom, it's plainly obvious that I'm going to have to move matters along as quickly as I can to avoid the worst of consequences.

Shawi giggles as she tugs and pulls her suit up over the base of her ribcage. She's going to have to stick her arms in now. At least then, getting it the rest of the way on should be fairly easy. Getting it off again, however... well... I don't imagine its something she's going to be able to manage alone. Though to be perfectly honest, the thought of helping peel that shiny suit off her beautiful body is more than enough to make me look forward to the struggle.

I wiggle my legs and push hard down into the neck of my rubber bug suit. The faster I get my legs straightened out, the better for my

strenuously protesting back. Just as my lioness described, the neck opening seems to soften in response to my efforts. In my legs go. Into the black interior of the suit. And into that...

“Oh! It’s... really, really gooey!” I exclaim as I find myself quite confused by the sticky, slime-like sensation. I’d always been told that Geligirl costumes were slick and oily feeling inside. This, however, feels more like the sort of form fitting rubber monster costume you’d find on the rack at a discount theater supply store, only stickier. At least I have smooth, silky fur to lubricate my entry. I can’t even begin to imagine a fur-less type trying to put it on. “Wow. This doesn’t feel like what they say about Geligirl stuff at all, does it?”

“No, it doesn’t,” Shawi replies with a thoughtful expression. It’s not one that I see often when we’re hips-deep in crazy stuff like this. Sometimes I wonder if it’s her way of expressing that she’s having second thoughts. “Weird, huh?”

“Very,” I reply as I go straight to pulling my rubber bug suit up over my hips. Though my back seems inclined to suspend its protest, I have no doubt whatsoever that it’s just waiting until tomorrow morning to remind me of its real opinion on the matter.

My lovely lioness is now pressing her hands down beside her and trying to get them into her own bug suit’s arms. I quickly yank my suit up to the same point as hers, just up over the base of my ribcage. I do my best to ignore the sensation of being so tightly wrapped in sticky rubber. I can only hope that once it’s completely on, I’ll be able to get used to it quick. If not, well, I don’t think the rest of our day is going to be a very pleasant one.

I stick my hands down through the neck hole at my sides. I force my hands outwards, into the bug suit’s shoulders and wiggle it upwards until I can finally get my lower arms all the way inside. I keep wiggling and doing my best to keep my modest little tits from

getting squeezed to hard as they vanish down into the suit. My arms are almost all the way into the suit's arms now. A few more wiggles and it should just roll right up over my shoulders...

Pop!

“Ow!” I groan as the neck snaps closed around my own. It's not really painful, but the sudden tightness is very disconcerting. It take a few moments for the rubber neck segments to find their equilibrium. They begin to relax a bit. In fact, the whole suit seems to relax a bit as it shifts and adjusts to the shape of my body.

Shawi is still wiggling her own suit up over her shoulders. “You look so cute!” she cooes as she finally gets her suit into place with its own loud pop around her neck. “Ooh! That was hard, wasn't it? And... oh! Wow! It feels so soft and comfy now!”

Soft and comfy? More like sticky and tight. And every time I move, the segments rub,

squitch and squeak. It's very unsettling.

“Well, are we ready now?” Shawi asks as she stands up into her tri-toed rubber bug feet. The ease with which she can walk on those things, with their two toes forward and one in place of a heel is, I'm not going to lie, just a bit disturbing. Then again, we've both had experience with those kinds of feet before. But those were real bug feet, not rubber bug feet wrapped around our own.

I slowly stand, fully expecting to fall right over. There's just no way those passive, immobile toes are going to be easy to balance on. But...

“Oh! They... they move!” I exclaim as I watch the rubber bug toes move to make every step as solid and stable as it would have been if I'd been walking on my own two feet.

“Neat!” Shawi giggles. “I didn't know Geligirl stuff could do that!”

The dressing room curtain swept aside. “Ah! You’re both ready!” the leopardess chuckles with visible delight as she looks the two of us over. “Now all we have to do is get you both some glitter pink team bands and send you out to shake those shiny bug butts for all to enjoy!”

“Awesome!” Shawi giggles as she follows the leopardess back into the part of the shop where all the bug suits were hanging.

I follow, wondering just how I’m supposed to make use of my awkward rubber bug hands. The thumb works just fine, but having two of my fingers jammed into each bug finger is proving to be a bit of a frustration. I can hardly move them. But... to my surprise, just like the toes, the fingers seem to know where they need to go. Though I don’t feel like they’re moving naturally from the inside, on the outside, they look as natural as natural can be.

I take one of my bug hands and poke at my chest. The soft, shiny black lumps poke

through the off-white segments, though thanks to my modest proportions, they don't really rise that far above the rest of the suit. That's just as well. I'm not keen on having tourists pawing at the 'sexy cheetah rowa' like I'm already an inanimate biogel doll.

I look my lioness over as we wait for the leopardess to hand us our pink neck, wrist and ankle bands. She's a bit bustier, but her bug suit hides it well. It's also hiding those soft folds she keeps down there between her legs. That's nice to see. Being a sexy rowa is one thing, disturbing as even that may be. Being a sexy rowa prancing around with an open invitation is another entirely.

It's really funny, isn't it? We fey'li run around in public naked all the time and no one thinks that's an open invitation for anything. And those that do get swiftly corrected, thanks to the fact that five of our six ends have been carefully crafted by mother nature to swiftly remove faces from their biological mountings.

But the moment you slap a coating of the shiny blackness down there, everyone knows that if you're showing, then your horny, and everyone thinks that condition is demanding of some immediate attention.

Of course, there's a good chance that these rubber bug suits are going to start showing the moment we step back out into that pheromone steeped hall. They're pretty active, what with the toes and fingers and all. There's no reason to think they'd be any different down between the legs. And what would the point of having a sexy rubber bug suit if you couldn't spend time exploring the sexy part?

And speaking of the sexy part, I can't help but feel like there's sticky goo pressing up into my womanly folds. And into my butt crack. It's not like it's just the shape of the solid suit inside. Nor is it the way the suit responds to my movements. It straight up feels like goo is trying to find its way inside me.

Real biogel enters its hosts, both to enhance them and deal with body wastes. But real biogel is slick and smooth. If it wanted to subtly get inside of me without me noticing, it probably could. But this. This was different.

Granted, Geligirl is supposed to just be a programmable biogel object, like a piece of décor, or furniture, or something like that. It could do all sorts of things, but it was always biologically inert, unless specifically altered to turn it into some specific type of active biogel. Was it possible to program it to remove body wastes like normal biogel? And if it was, was there still as risk that it could be overloaded and turn us into rubber buggy gummies?

“Here you girls go,” the leopardess says, handing us our glittery pink team loyalty bands. “Don’t forget you’ve still got tails to adorn. Or would you like to join Glitter Purple right now? That can be arranged, you know. Very quickly. What do you think?”

“No thank you!” I respond before my kinky lioness can get us into any further trouble. “The suits are more than enough fun for us today.”

“Suit yourselves,” the leopardess replied, turning to head back out to the hall. “You two have fun now. Just remember not to wander outside of the Arena, the Gelarium, and University Station. You can go as far in the pedestrian tunnel as the far end of the MMU Library. If you see any rowa, say hi!”

“Okay,” I reply as the leopardess passes through the curtain. “We’ll do that.”

“This is going to be so much fun, isn’t it?” Shawi asks with a silly giggle.

“Maybe,” I reply with a squitchy, rubber buggy shrug. “We’ll see.”

Everyone is staring at us. Like... everyone. From the moment we stepped out of the shop. Everywhere we walk, the eyes follow. Every time we stop to look at some display or demonstration, the curious gather around us. You'd think we were proper aliens or something. Perhaps, to them, we are.

It takes almost an hour before the first Arena visitor asks if she can touch one of us. It's a cute little violet elf-ear with dark spots on her shoulders, back and thighs. I think they're called miyonna. From what I recall, they come from some world just beyond the Marian Drift Prefecture's outer frontier. This one, wearing nothing but a translucent blue skirt and sandals, is almost certainly a tourist. Or perhaps a diplomat, working at the consulate out in the diplomatic district, adjacent to Ey'lon University.

Whatever this cute little miyonni is doing here in Mashiva, let alone here at Anwae Arena, I doubt she's particularly well versed in the Empire's social acceptance of extreme kinks. It would be pretty questionable for someone to take advantage of that. Then again, she did come to Anwae Arena of her own free will...

"Sure," Shawi responds to the pretty miyonni with that mischievous smile of hers. "It's just a costume."

The miyonni runs her fingers over my beautiful bug-butt's shoulders and arms. "It's just a costume?"

"Yeah," Shawi replies with a friendly giggle. "And it feels really cool, too. You ought to try one on for yourself."

"Does it really feel good?" another elf-ear, a pale lavender ashiri asks.

“It does,” Shawi answers with what I would consider a questionable level of honesty. “Like, it really, really does.”

I hold back. If Shawi is keen on getting our bug suits for free, than the last thing I want to do is stop her. I just hope that if any of these girls actually do go and get their own rubber bug suits, that they aren’t going to come back to let us know just how they feel once they’re inside them.

I really can’t lie. This bug suit just feels... icky. I really can’t find the words for it. It’s warm. It’s soft. It’s tight. But... the way it moves. I can feel the segments shifting and rubbing against one another almost constantly. And down yonder... how do I even begin to describe it?

It didn’t take long for the goo down there to fill every crevice and then some. I can actually feel it in my ass. It’s not some massive protrusion stretching me wide open and

making it impossible to walk. It's actually barely noticeable for the most part. Barely noticeable until I move, that is. Then it starts to pull on my tailhole every time I shift my hips or try to walk. Barely, yes. But just enough that I can't help but feel it.

My womanhood isn't really faring much better. It's stuck to everything down there. I can't really feel it delving all that deep, but it's delved deep enough to make it hard to keep from getting aroused as I walk. I really have to struggle to keep that from happening. The last thing I want to do right now is start showing and inviting more than just requests to lightly caress my costume.

Shawi's willingness to let a few girls run their fingers over her buggy body quickly spills over into half a dozen hands touching mine. She's made us into just another display among the arena's many. I don't really have any choice but to just smile and go along with it.

How many hours do we have left until the game? Five? I can do this for five hours. As long as no one gets too frisky.

“Where did you get these?” a tall, slender tigress asks as she paws at the off-white rubber rolls of my rubber buggy back.

“Over on the other side of the arena,” I reply. “There’s a stall there. Leopardess with a nice shiny bug butt will get you into one, if you ask nicely.”

“I don’t know,” an olive green kiyan says with her deep, guttural voice as she gently prods at my left shoulder. “I don’t think the look would suit me.”

“It’s kinda kinky though,” the lavender ashiri remarks as she begins to run her fingers down my lovely lioness’ back. “Nasty sexy like.”

“Does it take the edge off this smell in the air?” the tigress questions. “Because I’d

honestly pay to feel a bit more level while I'm here waiting for tonight's game. Really."

"It's very distracting," the miyonni notes.

"Extremely distracting," the kiyani agrees.

"Well, I can definitely say that I haven't felt half as horny as I did before I put this on," I reply. What I don't say is that I'm only judging how the pheromones in the air are affecting me. The suit itself, well, the less I say about that, the better. At least if I want this thing to be free at the end of the day. And given how icky it feels, I definitely don't want to be paying for it. To be quite frank, I'm starting to think that leopardess should be paying me to wear it. And for something like this, I definitely don't come cheap.

"Maybe I'll give it a try," the tigress responds.

"I... I don't know," the miyonni says with an uncertain look on her face. "I'd like to feel

less... aroused. But..."

"Come on! We can do it together," the ashiri says, patting the miyonni on the shoulder.

"I... well..." the miyonni replies.

"Is it really worth looking that... nasty?" the kiyan questions.

"You won't know unless you try it," Shawi responds with a smile. "And what have you got to lose? It's just a costume, right?"

"Are you all seriously going to get into those things?" another tigress asks, overhearing the conversation.

"Yeah," the ashiri bubbles. "Want to join us?"

"Why not?" the tigress replies.

Before I know it, there are at least twenty women heading toward the rubber bug butt shop. Whether or not they're actually going to

follow through, I have no idea. But the leopardess only wanted two, and I'm quite positive that she's at least getting four out of the deal. That means our suits are going to be free, which is the least she can do for this goo poking into my ass.

“Wow,” Shawi comments as we are, for the moment, left alone. “That was easy! We should soooo sign up to be Gelitech models next! We'd be awesome!”

“No!” I reply. “No, no, no, no, no!”

“Aw, come on! Why not?” Shawi responds. “It'd be so much fun! Way more fun than writing stories and world building! Really. Wouldn't it be way more fun to just live in it for a few years? Enjoy the sights? The sensations?”

“Shawi!” I reply with a deep sigh. “Every time we try that, we wind up living life as something so different from ourselves that it's...”

“Crazy kinky fun!” Shawi responds with a giggle.

“Whatever,” I reply. “Come on. We haven’t seen the Hall of Shame yet, have we? The door’s right over...”

“Ooh! Rowa!” Shawi interrupts me, pointing at the approaching workers who’s bodies our costumes are modeled after. “We’re supposed to say hi!”

“I don’t think she was being literal about that,” I respond with a roll of my eyes.

“Hi!” Shawi says as the little swarm of eight workers surround us and begin pawing at us without so much as a polite gurgle or burble. “Aren’t you all so cute!”

“Ugh!” I mutter with disgust as the hard, chitinous hands poke and prod at us. My nose wrinkles at the musty smell of the mucous that constantly dribbles from their pussy-mouths. “Must you?”

“Brbl brb,” one of the ones pawing at my thighs noises. At least, that was the actual sound that came out of its mouth. What I hear in my head is something else entirely. “This one.”

“Did you... did you hear that?” I ask, looking at my equally surprised lioness.

“I did!” Shawi replies. “It said ‘this one.’”

“Brlbr brblbr,” one of the workers pawing at Shawi says. “Both ones.”

“Both ones?” Shawi asks. “What do they mean, both ones?”

“Shoo!” I say, gently swatting at the increasingly frisky rowa fingers. “Come on. It’s not Hive Week. Go find someone else to poke at.”

“Brlrblrl,” my most affectionate rowa says. “Must have.”

“No,” I reply. “Not today. Really. We’re just here to see the game tonight.”

“They’re so cute, aren’t they?” Shawi giggles. “So cute and single-minded. All they want is for us to be just like them!”

“Rblbrb brblrb!” one of Shawi’s rowa says. “Hive keeps!”

“Aw,” Shawi chuckles. “You want my cute little kitty butt, don’t you?”

“Shawi!” I sigh. “Don’t give them an excuse to keep trying. You know how they are.”

“I know,” Shawi replies. “But they’re just so cute!”

“They really are, aren’t they?” a silky voice inquires.

I turn to look over my shoulder at a lovely azure skinned ashiri who’s shiny bug body is definitely not one of these Geligirl costumes.

“So, you’re the ones responsible for the sudden line at the Glitter fan-wear shop, hmm?” the Team Glitter Purple captain asks. “Not a bad start. How about I up your game a bit, hmm? Get you in on the real Glitter team fun. What do you say?”

“Uh...” I begin.

“Oh, don’t be so silly, will you?” the team captain interrupts me. “It’s not your choice to make, is it? No. It’s mine. And I’m not going to let a pair of good little bug butts like you two get away from a good time, am I?”

I knew it. I just knew this was going to happen. I’ll bet it was planned out right from the start. Hell, I’ll be everyone who puts on one of these bug suits is going to wind up getting their asses bugged up for real. Dammit!

“I’m not sure we’re the best...” is all I can get out in an attempt to dissuade her that I certainly won’t come to regret in the very near future.

“We’re going to have to deal with that yapper of yours, aren’t we?” the team captain laughs as she points to a nearby door marked as access to the Team Glitter Purple locker room. “Let’s go.”

“Oh! Awesome!” Shawi sputters with her usual delight at such unexpected turns of events. “This is going to be so cool!”

“Good,” the team captain responds. “That’s the spirit! You’re going to make a great Glitter girl. And the quicker we make you one, the better. It’s less than five hours to game time, and you’ve got a lot to learn...”

EIGHTEEN

SHETIRA & SHAWI

RUBBER BUGBUTTS

There would be no denying the will of Team Glitter Purple's domineering Captain, that was for sure. She practically pushed me through the locker room doorway while allowing my bemused Asian lioness to trail behind and giggle at my various expressions of displeasure. I'd object, of course, but I can't quite bring myself to put a damper on my beloved tufty-tail's fun.

As usual, my lovely lioness doesn't seem to be even the least bit concerned about our impending fate, whatever that may be. No. She's only interested in watching me transform

into a mostly biogel bug-butt. Watching me get reduced into what is almost sure to be as much a walnut-brained creature as any actual lesser rowaform. That's where all the fun is. But when it comes time for her turn...

"You really do need a good lesson in obedience, don't you?" the Captain quips as she pushes me toward an open door to one side of the otherwise unoccupied locker room. "Well, you don't worry about a thing. We'll get that feisty individualism out of you and turn you into a good little gelifighting bug-butt. Doesn't that sound like fun?"

"Not really," I reply as I'm herded through the open doorway.

The Captain laughs. "Well then! I guess we can't say that you didn't ask for what you're about to get, can we?"

"What's she going to get?" Shawi asks with just the sort of giddy enthusiasm that I inevitably regret in various intensely physical,

and sometimes deeply intimate, ways.

“You’ll see,” the Captain replies as she leads me into a smallish circular room with a high, domed concrete ceiling. “And once you’ve seen, then we can see about you, hmm?”

My beloved lioness grins and giggles as I look around the chamber. There’s little to suggest exactly what’s about to happen to my soon-to-be-very-sorry feline ass. Except where the single door opens into the room, there’s a concrete shelf of sorts, a bench upon which a glistening black biogel layer has been added to act as padding. The very center of the chamber floor is recessed by half a step. There, the floor itself is glistening blackness, a layer of biogel which, no doubt, is used to strip the inertness from supposedly inert biogel costumes such as the one I’m wearing.

“Sit down,” the Captain instructs my beautiful, rowa costumed lioness. Then she gives me a push toward the middle of the

chamber. “And you can step down there so we can take care of that attitude of yours.”

“Whatever,” I reply with a deep sigh and a casual shrug. I may not be able to free myself from the predicament my wonderful lioness has gotten us into, but I can at least annoy my captor. I’m *sure* I won’t come to regret that in the least.

I step down and find my costumed feet pressing into a strangely cold and soft feeling layer of shimmering black biogel. The fact that I can feel it so distinctly through the two-toed bug feet catches me a bit off guard. Real biogel suits are supposed to feel as if their outer surface is your skin. Body mods are supposed to feel like a natural part of your body. Has it already subsumed my body without me noticing?

No. No, it hasn’t. But it feels almost like it has. Is that just an effect of wearing a costume like this? Have I been able to feel things as if

the suit were my body all this time? I honestly don't know. And that, in and of itself, is just as odd as the cold, gooey sensation on the soles of my feet.

I turn around to face the Captain and my seated lioness. A barely visible, almost perfectly clear force field rises up from a barely noticeable slot that runs around the periphery of the sunken, biogel filled floor. Or is it a force field? It seems to be... flexible. Wavering. Almost... jiggly?

“Really?” I inquire with a raised eyebrow and crossed arms. “Are you that afraid of me trying to run away that you...”

I can barely stifle an involuntary shriek as I'm suddenly pulled upward into the air by some unknown force. In an instant, I'm floating almost a meter off the floor. In another instant, the apparent force field collapses around me.

My suspicion about the nature of my prison proves quite well founded as I feel the cold, wet goo press in around me from all sides. Before I can even think about reacting in any meaningful way, it's hugging every centimeter of my costumed body. For a brief moment I panic as it pushes into my nose and mouth. I don't really need to worry, of course. It's just crystal biogel. It will give me all the air I need to breathe. I hope.

It takes me a few long moments to regain my composure and assess my situation. By the time I dare to open my eyes within the thick wet goo, a dozen or so new figures have entered the room. They're all just like the team's Captain. Shiny biogel rowaform bodies. Heads unaltered. One mitanni. A few elf ears. A feathery rika. And the rest are fey'li.

The Captain turns to my lovely lioness. "What do *you* think?"

“What do you mean?” Shawi asks as she stares up at me with those bright green eyes of hers, filled with giddy anticipation of what’s so soon to come.

The Captain offers my beautiful lioness a sly, up-to-no-good sort of grin. “It’s quite rare for us to acquire someone so willing and enthusiastic about dressing in our shape and being compelled to join the team. I’m quite inclined to give you an equally rare privilege in return. But... it’s up to you.”

Shawi smiled at the complement. Then she bit her lip as her nervous anticipation shifted from what was about to happen to me, to what was about to happen to her.

“I’ll give you a choice,” the Captain declared. “You and your friend can join Team Glitter Purple as powerful mid-level forms. Or... you can join the Team as a high-level ‘shaman’ like us, leading a squad of lesser gelfighters into battle. But... the consequence of becoming a

shaman is that your friend here will become a low-level form, totally subservient to your will.”

“Okay,” Shawi replied with an encouraging level of hesitance. Surely she wants to share in every aspect of my experience. Doesn’t she?

“Loyalty to your friend,” the Captain adds. “Or loyalty to Team Glitter Purple. Which shall it be?”

Shawi looks around the room at the other ‘shamans’. Then she looks up at me. For a moment, her expression is fairly blank. Then she starts to get *that* look on her face.

“Well, if I’m going to be a Glitter Girl, I might as well go all the way, right?” my occasionally quite frustrating lioness finally replies to the Captain.

“I knew you’d make the right choice,” the Captain replies with a broad grin. “Good. Now, let’s see what the other shamans think of your

friend's new role on the team, shall we? What do you propose?"

"Well... um... what are the choices?" Shawi inquires with a giddy smile that made it clear that she wasn't going to be having any second thoughts about her decision to place her own fun over... well... I have no idea, really.

"Well," the Captain responds with an approving grin, "given that I've promised that she'll be yours to command, there are three possibilities. If getting up close and personal is your idea of fun, perhaps we'll give you charge of a phalanx, your friend included. Or perhaps you're looking for a more typical sort of cannon fodder, with just enough range to ensure that she'll be right in the middle of all the action, even if you aren't. Or perhaps she's offended your sensibilities with her attitude, and would be best sent off get into the opposing team's face and try to splatter them before she gets glistened."

“Hmm,” Shawi responds with a half-thoughtful, half-mischievous look at me. “Well... I guess... the middle option?”

If I could sigh, I would, but there’s too much of that crystal biogel in my mouth for me to do much more than make a low, bubbly gurgle. I can wiggle and squirm too, but to be honest, that seems like far too much effort for something that’s so far beyond my control that giving in is the only sensible option. Well, the only sensible option if I want to see what possible enjoyment I can get out of it. Or at least stimulation. Or something. Anything, really.

“Does anyone here object?” the Captain asks.

There’s no reply.

“Alright!” the Captain declares. “It’s decided! Transform her!”

My whole body twitches as everything from my neck down to my feet starts to feel tingly. The wetness of the biogel starts to feel more wet. Oily. Greasy. And it's spreading up my jaw. Up my chin. Around my mouth and nose.

The biogel bug-butt costume feels cold, even though I've been warming it with my body for quite some time. The cold starts to flow into my body, taking with it all my normal senses and replacing them with a stiff, almost unbearable uniformity. I'm all rubbery grub-segments now. From my neck down to my knees. And my legs and arms. They're hard and bony feeling. Just like those of a real rowaform. And my face...

I can feel my nose shrink to a little rubber nub. My jaw vanishing as stubby round 'mandibles' form around the gummy orifice that's replaced my mouth. The gummy, gooey

tunnel pushing back. Back. Back into my head. I wiggle. I squirm. There's nothing I can do to stop it.

It's only taken a few short seconds. A few short seconds to transform me into a biogel bug. A... a... a...

I feel... good. I feel... natural. I feel... I feel like this is how I should always have been. Haven't I always been this way? I can't remember. It doesn't matter. I am what I was meant to be.

My feet are touching the soft, rubbery ground now. The shiny black ground feels nice. But the Mistress wants me to stand somewhere else. So I do.

"Now it's your turn," my Mistress says, gesturing for a familiar looking lioness faced female to rise and stand on the nice, soft blackness.

The lioness seems happy to stand on the blackness. She seems even happier when the glistening clear goo rises up all around her. She giggles as she hovers above the blackness. She holds her breath. The glistening clear goo collapses around her, and holds her inside of it, just like it was holding me when... when...

Was I just like her? I have... I have a furry face. Furry ears. Was I? No. It doesn't seem right. I doesn't seem natural. But... I... I don't know. I don't understand.

“Now... tell me, ladies,” the Mistress said, looking around at all the other Mistresses of our hive. “What do you think of her, hmm? Enthusiastic. Willing. Ready. But... is she really suitable to join your ranks? Perhaps she would better suit some other role on the team. What do you propose?”

The one with the azure skin and long, pointy horns scowls. “She's just another stupid fetishist. Make her just like her stupid friend

here and be done with it.”

“She did put the Team before her friend, though,” a tigress replies. “Might as well make her a masked shaman, at least.”

A lavender skinned elf-ear shakes her head. “A promise is a promise, and you know how badly karma got us the last time we broke one.”

“Tell me about it,” a leopardess sighs. “Half of us are newbies this match already, aren’t we? Might as well take on one more. Better than going one short, right?”

“There’s others we can take,” the horned one grunts. “I’m sure at least one of them will be way better than this one.”

“We need to be careful,” a green skinned, not-quite-elf-ear observs. “It’s hard enough to get girls to try the suits on. If we grab more than a few more, everyone’s going to think they’re a trap.”

“Yeah,” a jaguaress says. “Let’s just take this one and get on with it. The longer she has to get oriented, the better.”

“Agreed,” the tigress responds as several others nodded in assent.

“Very well,” the Mistress nods. “She joins your ranks as a shaman unless there are any serious objections.”

No one responds.

“Transform her!” the Mistress orders.

The familiar looking lioness starts to squirm and wiggle as her limbs shrink into more natural proportions. A long stick with a shiny black bulb at its tip forms in her right hands. An oval shaped mass of segments forms on her left forearm. Then the clear goo releases her, and she drops back down onto the shiny blackness.

“Congratulations,” the Mistress says, smiling at the familiar lioness. “You’re now Team Glitter Purple’s newest shaman. There’s still a few hours left for you to get used to your new form, and your new... talents. I’ll show you and your friend to the training room now.”

“Awesome,” the familiar lioness replies with a warm smile to the Mistress, and much less warm glance over her shoulder at the scowling horned one.

“Follow me,” the Mistress directs, leading us out of the round room.

I don’t really know why I’m following the Mistress, but it’s what I’m supposed to do right now. It’s all that I’m supposed to be doing. If it wasn’t then I would know, wouldn’t I?

“Um... so... now that I’m a shaman,” the familiar lioness says as we wander through the strange room with all its little doors and benches and things. “Shouldn’t I, you know, get to know everyone else? You know,

introductions and all that?”

The Mistress smiled. “Introductions? No. There’s no need for introductions. We have no names here. We have no individual existence outside our biogel hive. We are just parts. Pieces. Slaves to the one mind.”

“We are?” the familiar lioness questioned.

The Mistress turned to look at the familiar lioness and grinned.

The familiar lioness’ expression went from curious to astonished. “Yes, Hive Princess,” she said in a strange, flat tone.

The Mistress laughed. “Don’t think I intend to treat you as my mindless servant like you will soon be treating your friend here. At least not all the time. It’s your job as a shaman to think independently of me, after all. To act without needing my constant attention.”

“I understand,” the familiar lioness replied as we approached another door into another room.

“There,” the Mistress said, pointing to the door. “Go on inside. Unlike the real arena, there are no dangers to you. Take the time to become comfortable with what you are. And with what she is. Enjoy yourself... while you can.”

“Yes, Hive Princess,” the familiar lioness replies.

The Mistress looks at me and smiles. Now the familiar lioness is my mistress. I don't know why. I follow my new Mistress through the door, and into the strange new room.

The familiar lioness smirks at me as we stand next to a badly broken lump of rock. Or something like rock. It's gray and cracked and has a bunch of reddish-brown rods sticking out of it.

“You really *are* just a walnut-brained bug-butt now, aren't you?” she asks with a giggle. “And like... I can... I can actually feel it. I can feel your little buggy mind like... it's so freaking weird and I absolutely love it!”

The familiar lioness laughs. “You really don't know who I am, do you? Here. Let me help you.”

My mind suddenly seems... more free. Or is it more free? I don't know. I can't know. Are the memories mine? Or are do they belong to someone else? Is this just a game my new Mistress wants me to play? Does it even matter?

There is clarity now. Well... fuzzy clarity. And with clarity comes feelings. And those

feelings...

You... you bitch! I say. Or I try to say. All that comes out of my rubbery, vulvic maw is a sputter of sticky gurgles accompanied by a spray of obsidian goo.

“Are you upset?” Shawi asks with a silly grin. “Don’t make me send you back to walnut-brain world!”

You wouldn’t dare! I say. Well, I gurgle and spray liquid biogel. It’s all the same thing among biogel bug-butts, right?

“Isn’t this sooooo awesome?” my lovely lioness exclaims as she grins and prances around with her buggy staff and even buggier shield. “I had no idea the glitter teams got shields! Did you? Is it something new? Maybe they’re trying to compensate for the lack of good ranged weapons or something?”

"Mmphblp!" I reply with another spray of black goo. I can actually feel the ‘glands’ that

take up most of my skull volume now, as they exude liquid biogel into my oral tube. And I can feel that oral tube all the way from my oral labia, right straight back to the back of my skull. It feels so... so... strange.

On the positive side, at least I can still think despite the now walnut-sized brain that's been tucked away in the forward part of my skull. Well, I can think at least as much as my Mistress will allow me to. At any moment, she could switch me back to bug mode and I wouldn't even be bothered by it. Because I really am just a rubber bug.

On the positive side, getting put back into bug mode will get rid of all the useless intellectual baggage that would get in the way of me being a halfway decent gelfighter. No amount of thinking every did a gelfighter any good in the arena. Not once. Ever.

"I'm so excited! I can't wait for the match to begin!" Shawi sputters with giddy delight.

"How about you? Isn't this so exciting?"

"Rblrph!" I reply with some frustration at her insistence that I keep trying to answer questions. F So much frustration that I manage to get the liquid biogel pumping out of places I'd rather it not.

plip* *plup* *plip* *ploot

"Don't do that!" Shawi laughs at my inability to control my 'weapons'. "That biogel's coming from your weenie little boobs! I don't know if you can get a refill during the match so don't waste it!"

"Lrblbp!" I respond. Of course I know that. Is it really my fault that I've got a small chest? Couldn't they have added some extra bounce with the body mod?

"Ah, whatever," Shawi replies with a shake of her head. All of a sudden her ears perk up and she starts to stare off into space. "Ah... I... yes. Target practice."

I have no idea what's gotten into my lovely lioness. She turns and begins to walk like a zombie, toward the sound of girly giggles that's been wafting through the air ever since we arrived. I don't know why, but I follow her without question. I just... need to. It's the strangest thing.

We step around the battered concrete wall and into a small, open area with similar walls on all sides. Although I can see more Team Glitter Purple gelfighters wandering about the room through the gaps in the walls, we're otherwise alone in this particular area. Alone, that is, besides the giggly quartet of Team Pink girls who've been tied up to the far wall.

“Oh!” Shawi sputters as she snaps out of her trance-like state and stares in confused amazement at the four: a tigress, a violet elf-ear, a leopardess, and a deep tan ayarri. “Um... hi?”

“It’s about time someone decided to come get us,” the tall, raven-haired tigress giggles.

“Yeah,” the well endowed leopardess quips with a silly grin. “We’ve been here for like... I dunno. A half hour?”

“More like forty minutes,” the slender elf-ear remarks with a deep sigh and a laugh.

“So, are you going to do something with us, or what?” the tough looking ayarri demands with a smirk.

I’m honestly not sure which is more surprising. Is it the fact that there’s four Team Pink girls being held captive here in the Glitter Team practice area? Or is it the fact that they actually seem to be enjoying their captivity?

“Uh... I guess,” Shawi replies to the four captives with a shallow shrug. “I mean... uh... how did you wind up in here, anyway?”

“Well, to be honest, we got a little carried away with a game we were playing with some rowa drones who couldn’t keep their hands off our asses,” the tigress replies. “And... well... uh...”

“We got snatched,” the elf-ear continues the explanation. “Like, grabbed and dragged in here and properly tied up against our will, snatched.”

“Yeah,” the ayarri said, shaking her head. “And there’s nothing we can do about it but stand here and wait for one of you rubber bugs to do something to us.”

“Something buggy,” the leopardess adds.

“Ah... well...” Shawi replies, looking at each of the girls, then at me, then back to them. “I... I don’t...”

“So are you gonna just stand there and sputter?” the tigress giggles. “Or are you gonna turn us into more rubber bugs?”

“Yeah,” the elf-ear laughs. “I mean, come on! We’ve been waiting forever! Do it already!”

“Do it!” the leopardess chuckles. “You know you want to!”

“Come on!” the ayarri cooes. “Make us your kissy-kissy bug-butt slaves!”

“We want to be kissy-kissy bug-butt slaves!” the tigress purrs.

“Sexy hot kissy-kissy bug-butt slaves!” the elf-ear chirps.

“You’re... uh... a bit...” Shawi sputters in response. “I mean... if they tied you up against your will, then why do you want us to turn you into rubber bugs?”

The tigress shruggs. “Eh. I guess, well... we’re here, right? Might as well try it out while we have the chance.”

“Yeah,” the ayarri says with a silly smile. “The only other way to get the kissy-kissy is to

get it in the arena, and they never survive the match. So it's now or never."

"Mmm," the leopardess purrs. "So don't keep us waiting, will you? Get us all some hot-ass bug-bods, or find someone who will."

"Well, I... uh.... okay," Shawi responded with a shrug before turning to me. "Go ahead. Give one of them a rubber bug-bod."

I can't help but hesitate. The whole situation is so confusing. They were playing a game. They got carried away. Then they got carried away and tied up in the Glitter Purple dungeon. And now they want us to turn them into more rubber bugs... just because they're already here and they might as well try it?

It doesn't make sense. It doesn't make any sense at all. Am I really just supposed to shoot one of these girls and turn them into a rubber bug like me, just because?

Of course I am. That's my whole purpose in life now. I exist to transform girls clad in the blackness into the more rubber bugs like me. And that's literally all I exist for.

My eyes lock with those of the smiling ayarri. I can't help but think how lovely she'd look with a glistening black biogel pussy-face just like mine. I raise my right arm and aim as best as I can.

pock* *plip* *pap* *pip* *plop* *splat

It takes five pellets unleashed in rapid succession for one to find its mark. The ayarri gasps as her skin tight coat of shiny black biogel rapidly morphs into a body just like mine, but without the pellet projecting protrusions. It only takes a few seconds, far too little time for me to enjoy watching the transformation.

“That was quick!” Shawi observes with a slight tone of annoyance in her voice. She's all about the visuals, after all. She loves to watch

things as they take hold, and especially how the subject reacts. This doesn't give them much of a chance. "Ah. It's the Biogel Games, right? No beating around the bush or letting a long transformation get in the way of turning your opponents against their own team. Oh well."

"Do me!" the tigress exclaims with a smile. "Do me next!"

I have no idea what kind of insanity has gotten into these Team Pink girls. Probably the same sort that gets into Shawi every time she encounters one of her kinks in person. At least they don't have anyone dragging them into it like she did to me. Or maybe they do. Who knows? Who cares?

pip* *plap* *plit* *fwip* *blap

The tigress transforms into another rubber bug-butt, giggling, gurgling, and spitting liquid biogel all the way to blissfully ignorant walnut-brained-ness.

You know, I'm not going to lie. This really is a bit of fun. I aim at the leopardess.

pap* *plip* *splort

The leopardess laughs as she too becomes a rubber bug-butt.

“You're aim is getting pretty good already,” Shawi giggles. “Now it's my turn.”

I watch as my lovely rubber bug-butt lioness walks up to the violet elf ear. For a moment she seems to hesitate. Then she leans in, nuzzles her bemused victim's nose, and touches her on the arm with the glossy black tip of her spear.

The elf-ear rapidly transforms into another rubber bug-butt, my sexy lioness' nose nuzzling her all the way to biogel burbling, pussy-faced buggydome.

Shawi giggles as she turns back toward me, her muzzle covered with dripping black biogel.

Much to our mutual amazement, it slowly fades away, almost as if it were being absorbed into her skin.

“That was awesome!” my lovely lioness giggles as she starts to awkwardly untie the four new rubber bugs with her unwieldy bug fingers. “Like... just... wow! And the match... it’s going to be lots and lots more of that!”

Lots and lots more indeed. And knowing my luck, I’m going to get pocked-off the moment I stick my nose out of the fortress zone.

“Wow,” Shawi murmurs as the four new bug-butts hover around her, and follow her as she returns to me. “I can control them just like I can control you!”

I shrug. Of course she gets to have all the fun. And of course I’m going to have to find some way to keep these weaponless, pussy-mouthed, walnut-brained bug-bods safe long enough for them to get close enough to grab some of our opponents during the match,

aren't I?

A chime sounds. Again, Shawi becomes entranced. She begins to move toward the far side of the chamber, along with all the other Glitter Purple gelfighters. Again, I follow her without knowing why, or having any part in the decision, or even any real control over my body. The four new bug-butts form a line behind me.

A voice comes over the loudspeaker. "Game time in one hour, thirty minutes. All team members proceed to the mustering points and remain in position until the arena configuration lockdown period has ended. Thank you, and have a great match!"

NINETEEN

SHETIRA & SHAWI

THE BIG GAME

It's dark. The only illumination comes from the eerie green force fields that separate the spectator seating units from the playing field. It's barely enough to let me get a sense of the sheer size of the cavernous space within Anwae Arena's walls, let alone to see the obstacles that stand between me and the opposing team's own fortress zone.

My eyes are drawn to the few late arrivals who are rushing to get settled into their seats. I watch one particularly giddy looking elf-ear as she plants her cute little rump onto one of the big, very comfy looking seat. No sooner

than she's settled in than the seat's glistening black biogel begins to liquefy and spread over her lithe, naked body in a thin, neck to toe coating.

I can't help but envy that pretty little ashiri. Her coating of biogel is just temporary. Just like my bug suit was supposed to be. Well, unless she purchased the biogel suit upgrade, that is. Or she gets picked to join a team during the mid-game events. Or gets hit with a pellet during the periods when the force fields momentarily drop to up the sense of personal peril. But, chances are she'll be fine. Unlike me. I don't have a chance in hell of getting out of this on my own two feet.

Our sorry excuse for a squad is, to say the least, absolutely hopeless. There's me, with my two woefully short ranged pellet projectors. There's a silver-skinned girl just like me, who seems even less enthused with the current state of her body than I am with mine. Then there's a tigress with some sort of biogel

sprayer on each arm. To make matters particularly discouraging, we have the four formerly Team Pink 'kissers', who's only offensive capability is their gooey clear biogel spit and kiss. And then, of course, is my hopelessly naive lioness, who is about as woefully suited to lead us into battle as can be.

Our opponents for this particular match are Team Rust. Their highly diverse membership hails from the distant Zova Drift Prefecture. I can hear them in the distance. Talking. Shouting. Laughing, even. I wish I could share their enthusiasm for the coming battle, but the sheer hopelessness of our position makes that quite impossible.

I gaze up at the smoothly curved columns that run down the center of the arena floor. Each pair together has a vaguely vulvic form to the space between them, narrower at the bottom and bulging open toward the top. Together, all these columns support the network of raised, interconnected platforms

that form a bridge across the sunken center of the playing field, the so-called 'pit'. Covering these platforms, and the pit floor itself, are a myriad of obstacles.

The vertical green panels that separate the regular seating areas light up, revealing the configuration of the arena floor. I take stock of the obstacle maze that we're expected to navigate on our way to Team Rust's home base. It doesn't take long for me to see that my pessimism is fully justified.

The biggest obstacles are the selection of shipping containers that have been spotted around the floor in various orientations. Among these are countless chunks of battered, reinforced concrete. There are lots of barrels too. Some of the latter are empty. Others might have hidden biogel weapons or biogel ammunition cartridges. Still others might be filled with biogel, and rigged to splatter it all over the place if they get hit with enough biogel pellets. And then there are the traps...

Though I can't see them, the rules state that there are to be between between twelve and thirty-six well concealed biogel traps spread out among the obstacles. From experience watching matches, the number seems to run toward the higher end of the scale in most arenas. Many of the traps will convert their victims into liquid biogel for later, and no doubt very creative, re-use, captive soul and all. Others will simply glisten their victims. A few might even turn their victims into biogel monsters to roam the floor, hunting former friend and foe alike. Just the idea of being turned into more of a biogel monster than I already am sends a shudder down my spine. I try to find something else to focus on, lest I get myself all worked up over it.

I look over my shoulder at our team's fortress zone. There are numerous terraces. These are all connected together with bridges and open, moving platforms that run up and down the terrace faces in a regular pattern. Atop all these is the central tower, at the peak

of which stands the 'portal'. It's through this that one of our opponents must pass in order to claim the most prestigious, and monetarily rewarding type of victory. Few matches ever get that far, however.

Typically, when a Biogel Games team is clearly losing, they'll 'surrender' in order to preserve membership for the next match. It's not that anyone has trouble filling the newly empty slots, of course. It's to preserve experience. Not that that's an issue when it comes to our particular 'squad'. We're just cannon fodder.

A chime echoes through the arena. The big white spot lights slowly come on, joining the green lighting to cast the whole space in a bright, only slightly yellow-greenish glow. For the first time, I can see everything clearly enough to get a sense of what it would take to cross the arena floor and assault the opposing fortress. It's one thing to see it on video. It's entirely another thing in person. Paths that are

so clear when viewed from above are invisible at eye-level. To me, it's all just a jumble of obstacles. I wouldn't even know where to begin, let alone which way might be the best.

Of course, that's why our Team Captain is all the way up the fortress tower, isn't it? She can see things more clearly. Even then, the massive columns block her line of sight down the middle of the arena, hiding many of the crucial platform connections that cross from one side of the elevated maze to the other. Maybe she'd be better off leading from the front, but what do I know? I'm just a walnut-brained bug-butt.

beep* *beep* *beep* *beep* *beep

The match is about to start. I still don't know what I'm supposed to do. I don't think anyone does.

beep* *beep* *beep* *beep* *beep

I'd bite my lip with anxiety if I had a lip to bite. Instead, gooey crystal clear biogel sputters from my rubber pussy-mouth.

DING

Shawi jumps over the concrete barrier and heads straight for the nearest bridge that leads up onto the elevated platforms. I mindlessly follow, along with the rest of our pathetic little squad. Charging into battle is the last thing I want to do, but I have no choice. I lack the means to make those decisions for myself. I can only follow, and obey.

For some unfathomable reason, I can still think clearly, though. Perhaps that's an oversight on Shawi's part. Or perhaps she wants me to somehow be able to have fun

doing what my walnut-brained body is doing, despite my lack of control.

At any rate, it's just as well that Shawi made us move, even if my opinion on the direction taken isn't particularly positive. No sooner than we had all made our way to the bridge than the first huge gob of biogel 'cannon fire' came splattering down right where we'd been standing. If we hadn't run toward the maze of potentially protective obstacles on the bridges, we'd have almost surely all been glistened before the match had even really begun.

My misgivings about our direction of travel quickly begin to seem justified. I haven't the slightest idea what Shawi thinks she's doing as she sends us all charging down the clearest, most obvious path through the collection of barrels, boxes, and chunks of reinforced concrete that are densely scattered all over the bridge. She's trailing behind the rest of us now. No doubt she wants to be able to watch what sort of sexy biogel fate befalls each of us

before she gets to experience her own. I don't blame her, really. Watching girls get done up is where all the fun of these matches is, isn't it?

The raven haired tigress is the first to fall, though not to Team Rust. That's no real surprise, of course. The obvious path is the most likely to be trapped, after all. Her rubber-buggy feet suddenly stick to the glossy black floor and she tumbles forward onto her hands and knees. No sooner than she's down than she begins to slowly descend into the shiny surface, bubbling and gurgling sweet rubbery buggie somethings all the way.

I'd gasp if I could. I really don't know what to think as her body is absorbed into the invisible sheen of black biogel on the floor. Staring at her shiny rubber-buggy ass as she wiggles and squirms her way down. As her body is converted into liquid black biogel, and dribbled down onto the floor of the arena 'pit' below.

It's only going to take a half a minute for her to vanish, but that's far too much time for us to all stand here in the open and watch. There's no safe way across the trapped section of floor, though, so we all head off in different directions through the nearby obstacles. That's just as well, as our rivals have been just as quick to advance onto the bridges. The first tiny globules of black biogel begin to hit the blocks of concrete around us, making little *pock* sounds as they strike the hard surfaces.

It would be pointless for me to try to cover my comrades' advance with my depressingly short ranged biogel pellet projectors. The Team Rust girls are all much too far away at the moment. And honestly, I'm really not keen on trying to get much closer to them. We're in the obstacles, and fairly well concealed. Better to let them come to us.

Then again, our team's advance across the other bridge is making considerable headway. The much larger force of rubber bug-butts is

almost at the first crossover between the two bridges, just about midfield. If we can't get just as far, the Team Rust girls can get behind them and cause all sorts of trouble.

Shawi presses us forward, to no good end. The first to get sniped is the rough avarri, falling to the floor as she suddenly and rapidly transforms into a generic looking sexified rubber butt-butts doll. It's always so much fun to watch on a video screen, but it's so very different in person, and so close. One moment, they're there, the next moment, they're just objects on the floor. Living objects, yes, but still. I can only imagine what sort of person is going to buy a sexified rubber rowa doll during the post-game auctions. And what they're going to do with them. And what they're going to do with my rubber rowa ass if Shawi doesn't get some common sense in that kinky little head of hers, and quickly.

Common sense doesn't come easily to my beloved lioness. At least not when there's

anything kinky involved. The tigress with the biogel spray projectors is the next to fall. She's no so much snipes as she is splattered with a flurry of biogel pellets at close range.

Now there's no more time to think. No more time to contemplate how to best approach the problem that's rapidly developing in front of us. Our little group was the only one to charge out onto this bridge. Our rivals, however, have decided to put far more effort into securing it, and the clear path it might offer into our home fortress zone.

All of a sudden, there's a flurry of yelps, shouts and little biogel pellets flying through the air. At least a dozen Team Rust girls are coming up to support their 'scout' that took down the tigress. Only one of the longer range pellet machine guns from our home fortress is trying to stop them, with little effect and such bad aim that we're at almost as much risk of being hit as our rivals.

The Team Rust girls seem to take the ineffective fire as a direct challenge. Perhaps even as encouragement. They move past the obstacles with ease and determination until they're practically on top of us. Down goes the slender ashiri. Down goes the busty leopardess. It's just Shwai and I now. Shawi, I, and Team Rust.

I'm barely aware of what I'm doing now. I see shiny black shapes. I shoot at shiny black shapes. Somehow, miraculously, I actually manage to hit three of them before they notice me. But they don't fall to the floor and transform into faceless biogel dolls like gelfighters usually do. No. Instead, they transform into new rubber bug-butts and immediately fall under Shawi's mental control.

Their rubber bug hands can't hold and fire their former weapons, and just like the former Team Pink girls, their transformation doesn't provide them with substitutes. Now, however, that's far less of a liability. Their sudden

transformation and switch of sides proves them with the advantage of targets close at hand. Familiar targets whose skills and inclinations are known, and exploitable.

I don't have time to watch what happens as the three new bug-butts chase after their former comrades. One of the Team Rust girls has jumped over the block of concrete that I've been hiding behind, apparently without knowing I was there. She lands right on top of me, and we tumble together, in a complete tangle, onto the floor.

In the first moments of the struggle, the deep violet ashiri manages to lose her weapon. It goes clattering well out of reach. One would think she'd do the typical thing and just give in to the inevitable. No. She wants to wrestle. To try and delay me until her friends can save her. And given how dismal things have been for us poor bug-butts so far, chances are she's going to succeed.

The ashiri grabs me by the wrists and try to keep me from being able to plant a pellet in her shiny black biogel suit at point-blank range. I struggle as hard as I can, but I just can't seem to get free of her iron grasp. Where's Shawi when you need her, with her pokey-transformy staff?

I have no idea where my lovely rubber bug-butt of a lioness is. I'd give her a yell for help, but I can't anymore, can I? Out of sheer frustration I begin to burble and sputter. Clear biogel sprays out of my rubber pussy-mouth and all over the Team Rust girl's face.

The ashiri gasps as her glistening black coating begins to change into the same rowaform shape as my own rubber bug body. It only takes a few fleeting moments for her to transform. For her to come under Shawi's thrall. To spit her own gobs of clear biogel into the face of the one who'd transformed her. And then... she was gone. She had jumped up and ran off after her former companions, just like

the rest had done.

Shawi *finally* makes an appearance now, slowly following after her new acquisitions. I get up and begin to follow her, forward again, toward the Team Rust fortress zone.

I honestly can't believe we've made it this far. It's all been such a blur of running and ducking and spraying streams of little black gobs of biogel at Team Rust girls. I don't have any idea how many I've hit, simply out of desire to not become a bug-butt sexy-time doll. Half a dozen? Maybe a few more?

It doesn't really matter, of course. All that matters is that we've made it to the end of the bridge without mishap. At least without mishap to myself or Shawi. A few of those

Team Rust girls we turned into rubber bug-butts managed to find traps or get plinked by their former teammates, but who cares about them? They're not *really* Glitter Purple girls, are they?

Speaking of their former teammates, the only thing now separating us from their fortress zone are the last few obstacles on the bridge. They're also the only things separating us from the periodic flurry of biogel pellets that Team Rust is using to try and keep us in our hiding spots. The longer they can do that, the more likely it is that their more successful gelfighters down in the pit can find a way to get behind us, or into our own fortress zone. As far as I can tell, that's the only way they have any chance to win. Otherwise...

Despite my former misgivings, I'm starting to feel just a bit excited at the prospect of turning all those Team Rust girls in their fortress into new rubber bug-butts. There *will* be an opening to charge right in eventually.

They don't have unlimited ammo for all those weapons. They'll start to run out and then...

I look around at our 'new' squad. There are fourteen former Team Rust girls in addition to Shawi and I. Without weapons, they're little more than cannon fodder, of course. *We're* little more than cannon fodder. I'm nearly as weaponless as them. My chest is practically flat. I've pumped out all that biogel in my efforts to survive, and there's no refill in sight.

It's obvious that we're going to be the distraction for the better endowed bug-butts on the other bridge. Painfully obvious. If our Captain insists on us just charging in before they've run out of ammo, of course. And the mental vibe I'm starting to get makes me feel like she will be insisting. And soon.

I'm really not too keen on finding out what someone wants to do to by sexy-bug-butt-doll body once its auctioned off at the end of the match. But it *is* going to be auctioned off. That

much I can foresee. There's no other possible end result of all this.

The sounds of battle coming from down in the pit are getting louder. At first I'm worried that it means Team Rust is getting the upper hand. It takes a few moments for me to realize that it actually means they're being pushed back toward us. They're losing on all fronts. Soon there won't be a single one left outside their fortress that hasn't been given a shiny new bug-butt.

I can feel the urge to advance. To head into the hail of rubber pellets and draw all the fire so the 'real' gelfighters can take the Team Rust fortress. Shawi can clearly feel it as well. So she...

A loud chime rings. A time-out has been called.

Of course. It figures. Team Rust calls a time-out just as the climax is about to begin. They're just trying to put us off our game, aren't they?

The seconds tick past as we all wait to find out what the deal is. The Team Rust Captain is consulting with the referees. Has our team done something in the pit to warrant a sanction?

No. They haven't. A bell sounds. Team Rust has conceded the match rather than face a devastating total loss.

“We won?” Shawi murmurs as the urge to assault the Team Rust fortress fades. “Oh, wow. We won! We made it! How awesome is that?”

Awesome indeed. Well, awesome for a few moments, until reality sinks in. Yes, we survived this total blur of a Biogel Games match. But that doesn't mean we're free. We're permanent parts of Team Glitter Purple now. They own us. And if they want us on their active team, playing matches until the hand of shiny biogel fate catches up with us, then that's what we're going to do. For weeks. For

months. For years, if it comes to that. And there's no way out of it.

If I can find any consolation in all that, it's the fact that all these Team Rust girls are now Team Glitter Purple girls just like me. And like Shawi. We're all in the same rubber-buggy-boat.

"See! I told you this was going to be fun," Shawi giggles as the Captain of Team Rust starts her way down from the highest level of their fortress to capitulate to, and congratulate her opponent.

Whatever you say, Shawi. Whatever you say.

If I recall correctly, it's customary to offer 'compensation' to rowa teams in the event of a capitulation. The Team Rust Captain has picked two of her gelfighters to accompany her to the official capitulation. A pair of new bug-butts doesn't seem like much of a compensation to me, but what do I know? My brain is the size of a walnut.

Must to my surprise, and a bit to my consternation, our own Team Captain focuses on Shawi and I, rather than the descending Team Rust girls.

“Well, well, well,” she says, smirking at me. “See what fixing that mouth of yours can do for your focus? It seems that you’ve managed to acquire more new Glitter girls for us than anyone else this match. It’s hard to believe, isn’t it?”

I wouldn’t really know what to say, even if I could say anything. It’s definitely hard to believe, though. Surely the better endowed gelfighters would have caught far more.

“I wasn’t expecting nearly as much out of you,” she continues. “And I’m honestly not expecting all that much in the future. But... a win is a win, and for almost highhandedly wiping out Team Rust’s main bridge assault, I think perhaps you should be rewarded for your trouble, hmm?”

“Rewarded?” Shawi asks on my behalf.

“Yes,” the Team Captain chuckles. “You see those two girls Team Rust is bringing to us as an offering?”

I nod.

“I’m going to let you be the one to kiss them,” she says with a broad grin. “You just make sure to put on a show of it, hmm? And after the post game is finished, assuming you can keep your ass from getting voted into the Hall of Fame, I’m going to let you and your friend take them home with you.”

“Take them home?” Shawi asks with a raised eyebrow.

“Yes,” our Team Captain replies. “Your new job is to take over the ‘cosplay’ shop and recruit for the team. At least until we return for our next match here. Then we’ll see how

many bods you've managed to get in suits. And how many you've gotten to stay in them until they're fully transformed into new gelfighters."

"Awesome!" Shawi chirps.

Awesome indeed. I think. But again, what do I know? I'm just a walnut brained rubber bug-butt.

"Now, you," our Team Captain says, turning back to me. "Come with me and we'll see how good of a kisser you are..."