

## Spooked – Part 1

By Paul Calhoun

“Hey look!” Marion Loquita said, pulling Benny Fitzpatrick along with her. Her boyfriend allowed himself to be taken away from a painting he was examining, knowing Marion wouldn’t stop until she’d shown him whatever she’d seen.

“What is it?” Don Fennis – almost always called by his last name - asked, following at a more sedate pace, his fingers and Lakshmi’s lightly touching as she joined him.

“It’s the missing exhibit!” Marion told them, leaning over the railing to get a closer look at the empty plinth in its poorly lit side room. It was surrounded with faded notices, a corroded bull’s-eye lantern and a set of rusty handcuffs next to a pile of wooden clubs with carved handles. Shoved even deeper into the corner was a battered credenza that was missing most of its varnish.

“Riveting.” Lakshmi Mungal replied.

“I remember seeing this when I was in school.” Benny said.

“It’s the only permanent exhibit in the whole museum.” Marion replied.

“Yeah, because a cookie cutter town like ours doesn’t have the money to actually *own* art.” Fennis said. “We just borrow it from museums that can afford to be generous. I think this pretty much sums up Brandifish in one sad, roped-off statement. Our only permanent exhibit is a dusty pillar surrounded by antique crime scene equipment and a desk from the Victorian era that looks like it was dragged in by the police and interrogated with a billy club. I’d almost forgotten about this silly corner and was better off for it.”

“My grandfather told me about it.” Benny replied.

“Most of us have grandparents who tell that story,” Fennis said, giving his girlfriend a squeeze. “Those of us who aren’t refreshingly new to the area.”

“So what’s the story?” Lakshmi asked, knowing it was expected.

“It’s the reason most of the museum is empty!” Marion broke in.

"Honey." Benny put his hand on her arm. Marion loved museums, even the almost totally pointless one that Brandifish had never found a better use for. He loved keeping up with her, but Lakshmi preferred to have things set out in order. Marion rested her cheek on his shoulder and poked him.

"Fine, you tell the story."

Benny cleared his throat and Fennis rolled his eyes. "About two hundred years ago – so our grandparents were telling a story that they heard from their own grandparents – Brandifish museum was actually considered a big attraction. The curator had done several tours acquiring artifacts and art for the British Museum among others and so was well liked and known among his peers. A lot of really good stuff spent time in Brandifish while their main museums were being renovated, or when something else was being shown.

"One of the biggest draws Brandifish ever had was when the Tiara of Teotihuacan was displayed – you can guess where this is going. People from all over the country came to see it. The tiara was a gold band with the most enormous jewels you can imagine stuck to it. They were likely set in it over time by the mercantile ruling families as a sort of prosperity icon, but the jewelers knew what they were doing and the arrangement was very well done. Anyway, the tiara was stolen and only some of the thieves were caught. One had the band itself and two of the smaller gems were recovered, but the rest vanished. They were probably set to meet up again years later to reunite the jewels so they could sell the tiara intact, but after the band was sent back I imagine the jewels were sold to collectors. Anyway, no one has ever admitted to owning one so it's all conjecture after that."

"Then there's the rumor." Fennis said. "That the robbers who weren't discovered were local citizens – even the chief constable- who put the jewels in secret places around town so that their descendants could prosper. One of my ancestors was that constable and I know he always got the odd looks afterwards because of the stories."

"I have a granny whose granny was supposed to have been in on it." Marion agreed.  
"Pretty much everyone in town was suspect."

"Mine was the curator." Benny said. "Imagine the questions *he* had to answer."

Marion was leaning over the railing again. "What's in that drawer?" She asked, pointing at the desk. A small door in the side was partway open and yellow paper could be seen inside.

"I dunno. I think it was the curator's, so probably something to do with the museum at

the time."

"Then why's it still there?" Marion looked around. "I'm gonna look!"

"Hon - wait, hon!" Benny sighed as she scrambled over and ran to look. "I'm so glad this exhibit doesn't have an alarm."

Marion took the papers out and ran back with them. "Look!" She spread out the sheets. "What do you think they are?" She asked. Instead of an invoice or diary, it looked like each page had a kind of map with random letters and numbers next to them.

"I don't remember ever hearing about these." Fennis replied. "Nothing in school."

"Guys, look at the drawer." Marion said. She'd closed it on her way out and now the outline was almost invisible.

"No!" Benny said.

"What?" Lakshmi asked as Marion giggled.

"No, no, no!" Benny repeated.

When Fennis caught up, he smirked. "Why not? Maybe my great-something grandpa wasn't very bright."

"A secret drawer nobody ever found that opens—" Benny checked his watch, "a week before Halloween containing map to a centuries lost treasure. I don't buy it."

Lakshmi laughed. "It sounds very contrived, doesn't it?" She picked up one of the pages. "I'll see if I can find out what this says."

Fennis joined his girlfriend in laughter. "All right, I'm in." He took one of the other sheets. "I'm not ending up with my girlfriend finding buried treasure all alone."

"Afraid of becoming a kept man?" Lakshmi asked.

"Yes!"

Benny looked at them, and then bent to scoop up one of the maps at the same time as Marion. "All right, I'm in. But if we don't find anything in a week we tell the authorities."

"Done." Fennis grinned.

"Treasure hunt!" Marion squealed.

"See?" Fennis said. "Isn't it a good thing nobody ever comes here?"

Benny pored over one of the maps, knowing that the area it showed looked familiar but unable to quite place it. He'd found that each page included more than one location, so he'd focused first on the most obvious. It was surprising that any would be even remotely recognizable after two hundred years, but he was sure he'd seen something very like the map in its reddish tracery on yellowing paper. Thinking that if he'd seen it before that it must be readily available, he tried an image search and with some filtering was triumphant when he saw a map of the local cemetery pop up. It was obvious looking from the angular map on the page to the cemetery surrounded by streets that intersected at its corners that he'd found what he was looking for.

The legend on the side was a substitution cipher that was likely clever for its time but now could be solved with an online puzzle solver. "Well damn." He sighed. The lines were a riddle or perhaps just a reminder written to confound police if they figured out the code:

'This is wet and grassy. This is woody and wet. This is willow and alder when you squelch through the mud. What is?'

Rubbing his forehead, Benny stared at the words for a few minutes, then gave up and went to get dressed. He had a night out with Marion planned and didn't want to be late because of a silly treasure hunt.

During dinner Marion kept fidgeting and tapping her chin. Finally after she'd stirred her food for over a minute in silence he said, "Is there anything wrong?"

Marion started guiltily. "No, nothing wrong." She looked down at her now totally mixed up food. "I'm just thinking."

"About the treasure?" Benny joked.

"Sort of." Marion looked around. "I'm wondering about something and I'll need to have a long look to be sure. How about we try again in two days. I'll be fine by then.

Promise!"

She'd almost run away after the goodnight kiss, leaving Benny to wonder if she'd already solved one of the puzzles. He took out his own map and pulled up the words on his computer. Wondering if it was some sort of general information reminder he tried plugging in some of the words. 'Alder', 'willow', and 'mud' brought up an article pretty quickly about geography. "Fens. But there aren't any swamps near town." He mused. "What is? Fennis?" He looked back at the modern map of the cemetery. "Great. So I have to grave rob one of my friends' ancestors. At least it's a mausoleum." He thought about how all of Fennis' family must be in there. "Didn't he have an uncle who died recently? I really hope they do cremation these days. I do *not* want to have to wander around a charnel house so close to Halloween. Yuck!"

So the following night after work Benny found himself entering the predictably creaky cast iron gate of the Brandifish cemetery, a location with the unfortunate sign, 'Brandifish Internment Facility: Duirt me leat go raibh me brooite,' a subtitle that had just beaten out 'Gone Fishing' in the recent renaming after 'Nevermore Rest: Non miserebor, sed terror nimus' was decided by the town council to be too morbid. Benny looked around at the crooked trees, classical low fog, and jutting stones in the dim light of sunset and decided that the town council had evidently never visited the graveyard at night. As he turned on his flashlight, he wished he hadn't either.

The smooth gravel path and recently mowed grass showed that the cemetery was well tended, but it still scared the willies out of Benny to walk past the mixed granite and limestone markers. The newer ones were tolerable, mostly just simple oblongs with names, dates, and a bland epitaph. Those installed in the last couple years could be creepy with their pictures of the deceased in 3D that turned to watch him pass. The oldest – and nearest his goal – were the worst. They were made when it was popular to put pointing fingers and the skeletal angel of death on the slowly melting stones. The letters were mostly gone, but the winged skulls remained. Their gaze was fixed but far more menacing, a truer depiction of what the stones guarded than the kindly regard of the still mostly alive. Some glared, others were impassive, but all seemed to condemn him for his planned disturbance of the rest that those below shared.

Benny stopped well away from the hulking stone construct whose door led down into the catacombs the Fennis family had begun building generations earlier. Fennis himself wasn't really old money, but his ancestors had been wealthy enough to have their own private place built and maintained so that they and theirs would never have to share earth with anyone else. It wasn't the thought of opening that door and descending into the mortuary abyss that terrified him – it did – but something much more immediate. Standing on a plinth on one of the biers between him and the steps of the Fennis burial chambers was a statue. Female, wearing

flowing robes and with a pair of small wings on her back. Unlike many of the statues that dotted the graveyard, she wasn't looking up to heaven in hope or down in compassion to the visitors. She stood with her palms pressed to her face, hiding her features. Benny hoped there was nothing behind them, but in this place with no one but him and the neat rows of the dead as witness it was easy to begin to believe in monsters. Even ones made up for television shows.

Benny watched the statue for a long time but it didn't move. Of course it wouldn't. Even if it was a fictional alien chronovore, it wouldn't just jump down at him. He had to pass first. Feeling like he was passing through the gate of Minas Morgul and with only a weak lamp rather than the reflection of a silmaril to drive the shadows back, Benny rushed past, feeling the gaze of the angel through its hands and into his back. He hurried up the steps and shined the light on the door. 'Fennis' was carved into the stone and there was a large, somewhat ornate iron lock holding it closed. As he was looking at it, he heard grinding and a loud thump. His heart pounding in his ears just as loudly, he turned around.

The angel was off her pedestal and turned towards him, though he'd heard the screech of stone on stone as he turned and her palms were again on her eyes. She was totally still then, not fidgeting, swaying, or even breathing. Just there. Silent and waiting for him to make a mistake.

Benny considered his position. If he waited too long, he'd blink hard enough that she'd make a move. If he turned and ran she'd catch him easily if she was what she looked like. He looked back at the door to check the lock and cursed himself as he turned back and she was a few steps closer. The face was now uncovered, tooth-filled mouth agape and ready to feed. Her hands were claws, a single jump away from rending his flesh or casting him through time. Even if he got into the mausoleum and closed the door she'd be on him before he could get to the bottom of the stairs. Escaping one was impossible, he reasoned, but he'd never seen anyone try to go straight for one. He'd seen them shot at, yes, but they were quantum stone-stuff and impervious. Could a Weeping Angel be tipped over? Benny took a deep breath and grinned desperately. Time to find out!

The moment he launched himself down the stairs he knew he'd made a mistake. The angel flinched! With a sound of grinding stone, she moved her arms despite him looking right at her and tried to step aside. He was on her before she could turn and bore the strangely light stone statue to the ground. He heard her rough rocky body strike the gravel in a satisfying crash and the grind of her extremities against herself. She felt rough to his touch, like sandstone or slate. She was also letting out a low moan. Definitely not a quantum chronovore. The adrenaline cleared Benny's mind and he realized how silly it was that he'd just tackled an animate statue. Her legs kicked ineffectually under him, apparently unable to clear much of her stiff molded robe as she reached behind her back to try to touch him. Her middle appeared solid so her squirming was limited to her extremities.

Benny got up and looked at the prostrate monster who was now rocking back and forth an attempt to get onto her back. Turning her over, he saw a wide crack in her face. The blank stare flickered momentarily to a sharp-toothed snarl so quickly that she was either a Weeping Angel or her face was some kind of projection. She tried to push him away as he pulled at it, seeing white and green wires underneath the smooth screen-like visage as well as the glimpse of a green eye wide in panic. One of the wires sparked and he snatched his hand back.

The angel touched the side of her head and the whole face pulled up – jerkily as the wires sparked – into her scalp. Blonde curls burst out and Benny was confronted with a familiar face. “Uh, hi sweetie. Surprise?” Marion said, smiling weakly out from the stone hair and neck. Her cheeks were red and she had a pleading ‘aren’t I silly’ look of submission, one that he’d only ever seen once before when he’d caught her trying to ride the washing machine. She rocked, but couldn’t seem to sit up. Her body appeared too rigid. As he got up, she held out her hand and he grasped it, feeling how rough it was. Had he taken the time to touch the statue on his way past, he would never have guessed it was his girlfriend in a costume. She was extremely heavy and he was sweating when she finally got her feet – carved to look bare – under her.

When she was standing and had brushed the worst of the dirt off, Benny tilted his head. “So?”

“So, uh … I guess we solved the same map, huh?” She rubbed the back of her head and they both winced at the sound.

“I guess we did.” Benny crossed his arms. “Why the angel act?”

“Well, I didn’t want anyone else to go in!” She smiled weakly. “I didn’t expect you’d be the first to arrive after me.”

“You’re silly. Are you dressed under that?”

“Of course!” She said, booming as she put her hands on her hips.

“Then take it off. I’m taking that home with me so you don’t give anyone else a heart attack.”

“Spoilsport!” She gave him a whack that sent him sprawling. “Sorry! I forgot how strong this makes me.” She pressed on her chest and the costume opened up along her middle. She climbed out of the mechanical innards and grinned as she stretched her lycra bodysuited form. “Time for bed. Good luck dragging that thing home!” She laughed and skipped off,

leaving Benny to try to pick up the powered costume. It was as heavy as it looked and when it almost fell on him, he knew he'd never be able to move it on his own. He thought about closing it up and leaving in the graveyard as the sculpture it appeared to be, but he was curious and afraid of what might happen to it.

He took a break to look inside, feeling the soft black pads in between the many shiny metal contacts that tracked the movement of the person inside. Behind them was a scaffold on which the stone skin had been attached and wires running the length of the costume. Looking around to make sure Marion had left for sure Benny did the only thing he could think of and climbed in, feeling a tiny thrill at dressing up as a female monster. He was slowed by the thick padding and tight confines, though at least it was so heavy that he could jump up, put both legs in and let himself slowly sink into it.

The inside was mostly warm after his girlfriend's recent exit, though some of the metal plates that pressed against him had cooled. It was a tight fit since he wasn't her size and he felt a pang of panic when the chest closed and he felt like he was being squeezed by a giant robot hand. At that thought, he considered how the costume felt and was relieved that the soft, padded inside kept him from being harmed by being a walking piece of sculpture. He felt something in the mechanical gloves, a click when he moved certain fingers. Nothing seemed to happen, so he focused on getting away. Afraid of what would happen if he lowered the mask, he snuck – if that could be applied to a heavy chunk of female shaped stone that *crumpled* against the ground with every step and *scratches* whenever her arm brushed her body. Mercifully he found his way home without being noticed.

At home and safe, he checked himself out in the hall mirror. But for his face, he looked exactly as Marion had when she was in the suit. He looked at his dainty seeming hand and extended a bare, feminine foot. Putting a hand on his hip with a squeal of stone on stone, he thought he made quite the striking female monster. "Why hello there, ghastly." He said in a southern twang, touching his chest. "Care to show a ghoul a good time?" The touch opened the suit and he climbed out.

He closed it up and lowered the mask, still intrigued. It looked so ... stony standing there in the middle of his living room, now in a relaxed posture. He ran out and came back with electrical tape. It wasn't hard to fix the broken wires and fill the crack in with black clay which made it look like the angel had lost a chunk of her face across her left eye. With the wire fixed, the mask moved more smoothly and didn't flicker between expressions. On a hunch he struggled with the fingers of one hand and found that when he bent some the expression changed from blank to monstrous.

Satisfied with his work, he went to bed, wondering first *why* his girlfriend had decided

that scaring people off was a good idea and then *where* she'd gotten the costume. The second question followed him into his dreams and was his first thought when he woke up.

"Have a nice day!" Benny said.

"Um, I don't think you've started, dear." The elderly lady on the other side of the counter said.

"Oh, sorry!" Benny began scanning and bagging her clothes.

"Long day?"

"Sort of." Benny smiled and gave her the receipt. He'd been distracted at work, thinking about the costume store on the other side of the shopping center. It wasn't the sort of thing he'd ever paid attention to before and when he'd glanced at it Benny had assumed that the mannequins in the picture window were just that. Now he was thinking that maybe the attractive and scary figures were merchandise and that it might be where Marion had gotten that incredible angel outfit. He rushed through handing over the register to his replacement, Holly, and felt himself trying to run out. Benny swallowed his anticipation and forced himself into a measured pace towards the wide windowed store front. There was a popular superhero on display that day, next to a Victorian woman and a robot. From far away he might think they were cardboard cutouts, illustrations that the cloth and plastic the shop sold wouldn't live up to. After seeing and feeling the transformation from human being to animated celestial golem he was willing to be more open minded.

Benny's expectations were again defied as he opened the door expecting either a very large and open floor plan made bright by the wide windows and high lights or perhaps a cramped and dusty corridor of shelves going back to a dingy desk with a single mysterious person at the register. Instead it was more like a car rental with one long counter just inside and a pair of young ladies who looked like twins. One had her coppery red hair down her back while the other was in a more fashionable short style. "Hi!" Piped the long haired one.  
"Welcome to - well we haven't really decided on a name yet."

"The sign outside said 'Any2Any'" Ben replied.

"Really?" She turned to her sister. "Sounds like your idea."

"It does." The short haired one replied. "In that case, welcome to Any2Any. Who or what do you want to be?"

Benny's mind worked hard but there was still an awkward silence. "What are my choices?"

"Animal, vegetable, mineral, or thing." Long smiled.

"Or something else!" Short added.

"Done while you wait." Long continued.

The suspension of Benny's disbelief broke and the bridge from reality to fantasy fell into the river of his doubts. "Right. How about this then?" He took out his phone and showed them several pictures of his girlfriend Marion. "I want to be her. Can you do that while I wait?"

"Will you stop waiting in five minutes?" Long grinned.

"Uh..."

"Be right back!" Short assured him. She ducked through a door the same color and texture as the rest of the wall behind her. There was a faint sound of a thump and then an odd machine screeching that went up and down in volume and pitch, interspersed with an odd pinging.

"We get that request a lot." Long said conversationally.

"What?" Benny asked, distracted by the noise.

"Wanting to be a partner. She's your girlfriend, right?"

"Uh, yeah." Benny shook his head. "Was she in here yesterday?"

"I couldn't answer that."

"Confidentiality?"

"Sure, let's go with that."

Short reappeared with a long box. "Here you go." She hefted it onto the counter. "How much were we charging?" She asked her sister.

"Eh, it's Halloween. Fifty bucks." Long told Benny.

That was either a huge amount for a joke or a ridiculously low price for something amazing. He thought of the angel statue. "Twenty," he haggled.

Long rolled her eyes. "Fine, but the next one's a hundred."

Benny put the money down. "How do you know there will be a next time?" Benny said, finding the box heavier than he expected.

"Trust me. I know."

Benny had to admit one thing to himself as he loaded the costume box in his car. He'd expected a strange or mysterious person behind the counter and he'd gotten both. When he got to his house he made dinner, still not really believing what was happening. He placed the box next to the statue that nobody would guess was filled with electronics and pads. The two costumes called to him as he ate, making him want to rush through and put them on. He again had to work to slow down, forcing himself to experience something normal before he again dove into the bizarre. Knowing he wouldn't taste dessert even if he'd had the patience to eat it he dragged the box into his bedroom and opened it.

He knew what he was supposed to see, but his expectations were low and so when he saw what looked like his girlfriend lying in the box he couldn't help jumping back before sheepishly picking up the somewhat empty fleshy costume. If nothing else it would be a fantastic sex aid, he thought, stroking the smooth cheek. He turned it around and the suit fell open at the waist. The inside was less padded and more tightly packed but between the skin layer and the stretchy liner his fingers closed on wires and knobbly electronics. Removing his clothes, he touched himself with the skin's hand, letting the empty girlfriend costume caress his skin. Her lips were full and begged to be kissed. He obliged and then let the empty mouth brush across his chest and belly. His enjoyment was interrupted as he went to finger her and found a mass of machinery surrounded by squishy stuff. He recoiled from disgust and realized that he was fondling a costume, though one that felt amazing as he got the mask to close its lips over him. Again feeling a little ashamed of himself, he fought down the conflicting feelings he had and tried a frank assessment of the costume's appearance.

Starting from the top, he thought, they did the hair perfectly. Loose curls, shiny, almost an unnaturally perfect shade of cornflower blonde. Her face was a little off, looking like it was permanently made up with the heavy foundation she used to cover her freckles when she thought he was likely to take a picture of her. It made sense since what he'd provided had been photos of her. Her wide sea green eyes and nose a little longer than she liked were faithfully replicated, as was the brown mark on the side of her neck where she'd had a mole removed. If

there was anything wrong with her breasts, he couldn't feel it, though her arms felt a little too smooth. She'd fought against having hairy arms, but always ended up with downy fuzz. Her nails were painted pink, as were her toenails. The rest of her body seemed good, if sometimes slightly curvier than he remembered and definitely lacking her pubic hair and the patches she missed while shaving. He put the curves down to the pictures being of her in her most flattering evening dresses - he enjoyed them and she'd made him delete pictures of her in a bathing suit or just sitting around in jeans. He'd secretly kept them but not on his phone. He gave the butt a squeeze and got down to business.

He lay down to put his feet in, the costume feeling tight though not tight enough. He could already see his thighs through hers, turning her slender legs into drum sticks. Feeling silly, he wiggled his feet in and stood to pull it up. There was a pouch for the obvious which he used and then the suit was up over his hips and he was struggling to figure out how to get both hands and his head in at once. He might not look like Marion, he thought in consolation as he felt the weight of the squishy chest sliding over his, but at least when this was over, but he would have a nice pair to play with and a large female body to look at as he did so. He'd be Marion's heavier sister, really. A resemblance worth enjoying.

He had to pull the hair out of his eyes - the lenses had retracted as he pulled the mask on - several times, then it was on and he was pursing his lips to get the mask to stick to them. As he pulled the belly down over his he couldn't help giving his new rack a test squeeze. Though he couldn't feel all the texture through the suit gloves, they felt nice. His body felt constricted and the electronics were hard on his skin and a little cold as they absorbed his body heat.

"So now what?" He said, disappointed when his own voice came out of the soft pink lips. He went into the bathroom to look in the mirror and was confirmed in his belief that he looked like a fat Marion. Though the pads at least made him look female in it, there was too much of him in her to be believable. He saw a crease in the belly, smoothed it out and found a catch in the navel which he took a minute to figure out turned a tiny bolt that held the belly to the hips. It wouldn't come off if he moved around, which was nice because he wasn't quite ready to take it off.

The catch *snicked* and then the electronics *whirred*. Then the squeezing became tight, acute, painful. He staggered to the bed and lay down to let it happen, already giving up on trying to operate the finicky latch with unfeeling fingers and semi-blind eyes. He moaned, hearing his voice change, and then he felt the sheets under his back. The stuff in between his legs climbed up and pressed on the pouch, pushing his penis further into his body cavity. The gel wrapped around him, softening his flesh while the liner tightened across it. The lenses fell over his eyes and when he blinked they went in like contacts. Her eyelashes were thick and

heavy with the pre-applied makeup. Her hair was soft and a little prickly against her back and over her nipples, which were beginning to tingle and make her wet. She sat up, her boobs shooting tiny jolts through her as she grabbed them to keep them from sliding around. She got her feet on the carpet and stumbled, dizzy, disoriented and off balance to the bathroom. Marion looked back at her as she leaned on the sink, her mouth slack. He wanted to reach out, grab her around the waist and ask what was wrong as he tickled her. Instead she touched herself between her legs and flushed at the slight stickiness that came away as she put her fingers inside herself and then took them out. If she thought about it, she could feel Benny inside her, but mostly she just felt Marion. "Holy mackerel bones." She said. She giggled at Marion's voice saying one of Benny's pet exclamations.

She put her hand behind her head, turned to look over her shoulder and pouted at the mirror, pushing her hair up into a loose up-do. "Damn I'm hot!" She said. She ran back into his bedroom and flopped down on the bed, hugging herself and closing her eyes. She rolled back and forth, unable to contain the joy at feeling and embracing her own body. Then she began moving up and down to massage her boobs on the sheets. Opening her eyes wide, she rolled onto her back and spread her legs, finding that she didn't have enough hands to touch, stroke, squeeze, and grope every part of her that she wanted to all at once. "Oh, Benny!" She sighed. "Oh, you're so big. You fill me up all the way! I love you, I want you. Take me, Benny, take me!" Her voice turned to a shout and then she fell back, momentarily feeling Benny inside her pumping and twitching and then seeing his cum leaking out of her vagina. She sat up, grinning and already feeling herself up again. "See, hon? I told you I loved you for you! I love you so much that I even love being you."

She stood and went to clean herself up. Even that was sexual in her fresh, unfamiliar femininity. "This is ridiculous." She laughed. "Everything I do is sexy." She tapped her chin and smiled. "Of course, I always thought that about Marion - myself." She laughed again. "I guess I should start talking like I'm me, huh?" She regarded herself in the mirror, posing and turning to watch her naked body move. "I shouldn't abuse this. I'd hate to get too used to it." She reached for her navel and paused. "Of course, that stone death house is probably haunted." She tapped her chin again, trying to act like Marion. "I - Benny me - don't want to have spooks after me my whole life. And I - Marion - was a naughty girl scaring me - B - I get it!" She shook her head and then had to smooth her hair back over her ear. "It would serve me right to have ghosts come after me after what I did to me. So there!" She stuck her tongue out at herself. "I'm going in looking like me so that when I run out with that diamond the ghosts will haunt me instead of me. I think." She put her hands on her hips. "That and because I look way too good in a sexy adventure outfit not to go out in one."

Marion had bought the adventure costume the previous Halloween, but Benny had seen her regularly in it since then. She'd noticed how much he liked it and left it at his house so she

could occasionally slip into it before he got home and surprise him. It was in the corner of the closet she'd taken for when she stayed over. She opened the plastic chest of drawers she'd bought and took out a pair of pink satin panties and rubbed them against her cheek. Needing to watch every moment, she took everything she needed into the bathroom so she could see herself in the mirror. Marion didn't mind strip teases, but hated it when he watched her get dressed for some reason and Benny felt like a voyeur as Marion stepped into what felt like the most feminine thing she could wear, pulling them up slowly so she could feel the material against her legs before the waistband encircled her and the satin whispered against her labia and butt, clinging and whispering promises she could now keep and enjoy at the same time. She was bright red, feeling supremely transgressive at not only dressing in Marion's clothes but passing for her as she did so. It was the penultimate invasion, surpassed only by somehow inhabiting her real body. Benny wanted to take Marion back to the bed and start the self-pleasure all over again.

She surpassed her desire by focusing on figuring out how to get into the lacy bra, vainly attempting to clasp it behind her back before finally realizing she could clip it in front and turn it around. Again she felt the transgressive thrill at wearing the very items that drove the boyfriend inside crazy and even letting her watch him do it like the real Marion never would. The Marion here had no choice but to titillate her boyfriend because no matter what she did, he was there not just watching but deciding. She was breathing hard as she pulled the black belly shirt over her head, shrugged into the khaki bolo jacket and tugged the matching short shorts up over her rear, letting herself swim in the feeling of the shorts tight on her thighs and clinging to her behind. She slipped on the calf skin ankle boots and accustomed herself to the kitten heel, trying out different gaits and doing all the things Marion did to get Benny in the mood. She swung around, her hair floating in the breeze and smiled at the mirror. "I love you, Marion. And I love you, Benny." She answered herself, playing with her bared belly as if Benny might decide to burst from the suit right there.

She had to take the boots off and put them in a carrier bag when she'd gotten used to them. Since she had Marion's body, she reasoned, there was no reason she shouldn't wear the angel statue just in case someone else was going to the graveyard that night. She looked at Benny's phone as a text came in from Marion. 'Gonna be late.'

She once again felt that naughty glee at using Marion's nails to tap out the message back. 'OK. Let me know when.' She slipped the phone into her back pocket, patting the place where it stood out in start relief from the fabric, proof that the shorts had been filled perfectly.

The angel suit went on more easily now that the constriction was being achieved by the Marion costume. The pads enfolded her, made to fit the body Benny now wore. She reached into the gloves, feeling the feedback from the machines as they made the stone covered lattice move with the curl of her finger. She touched the chest and it closed around her smoothly and

with the time to think about it she was impressed at how every piece moved with a tiny amount of resistance as the costume predicted her motion and the motors helped her swing the stone arms and legs. She lowered the mask and saw that the screen on the outside was replicated inside, projecting the world around her with a tiny bit less fidelity than she herself would have seen it. She checked the hall mirror and found the combination of finger curls that turned the blank face evil. Returning it to impassivity, she put on the shoulder bag and left the house, wincing at how the door slammed at her causal push.

Her body ground against itself and her feet made loud scratching sounds on the cement along with the booms of her footfalls. It was too early to rely on there being no one in the street, so she made a game of checking to make sure there was no one nearby and going from yard to yard, standing perfectly still as groups passed and then making progress again after they'd passed, her bag tucked behind her. Some looked at her strangely, either having seen the tail end of her hurried arrival on the grass or wondering when the angel had been bought and put on a familiar lawn. One child – less willing to disbelieve in walking statuary – tugged her parent's sleeve. "Mommy! That statue moved!"

The costume didn't interpret fidgeting as intentional motion, so it was easy for Benny to stand absolutely still as the mother glanced at her and then pulled her daughter along. "Come on, honey. It's just your imagination."

"But mom!" The girl's mother had turned away and Benny waved. "She just waved at me."

"Gardenia! It's just a piece of rock shaped like a person. It's not a real angel."

"But-but..."

"I know it's creepy, but we're late." She took another look at Benny, who had gone back to her pose of mute supplication, hands clasped in front of her. She stared for a long moment. Benny realized her hands were in a slightly different place than before, nearer her belly than her chest. "Let's go." She said doubtfully. Benny waved again as they left and the girl hesitantly waved back.

The sound of her footfalls drowned out her quiet giggles, but didn't dampen her rising need to have a little fun before she got down to business. She got her opportunity when she had to stop for a pair of young men passing and one came right up to her to look. "Hey, do you remember this being here?"

"Dude, I don't usually pay attention to lawn ornaments."

"I don't think it was here yesterday, man."

"So?"

"Then why's it got that big crack in its face?"

"I dunno, maybe the guy who owns it bought it at a garage sale."

They were both looking closely at her now and she twitched her fingers to change her face from plain to monstrous for a half second. They both jumped back. "Dude! Did you see that?"

"Yeah, spooky." The second one reached out and she grabbed him. He screamed and tried to break away but her augmented grip and weight held him fast. "Help!" He called to his friend, who was already running away and screaming about murderous statues at the top of his voice. Benny stooped over her prey, letting him struggle against her golem grip. She switched to her hungry, fierce face and loomed until he was red with panic and then let go, taking one loud step towards him as he made his escape. He ran after his friend, as likely to clobber him as help spread the word. Benny wasn't far from the cemetery and made a quick dash for it, her stone skin squealing at the sudden burst of speed as she tried to pull up her skirts and then laughed at herself for forgetting they were as static as her chest and belly. A pity. She was actually quite the attractive angel when she wasn't scaring the pants off of someone and she wouldn't mind having a little more action in those places.

The graveyard was as creepy as ever, but this time Benny felt like she belonged. Just another broken monument, a lost soul walking among the markers and contemplating her next life. As the sun set, she pretended to stop at each headstone to kneel – though the best she could do was give a little curtsey since if she knelt she'd fall over – and clasp her hands in a benediction. She made her way in that fashion to the steps of the mausoleum and it was there that she remembered the important fact that the door was locked. The metal screeched as she passed her hand over it and she jumped back at the unexpected noise of her stone fingers on the old iron. She looked around to make sure no one had heard and saw someone coming. Afraid of what might happen if she was caught lurking there, she pressed her winged back against the mausoleum wall and pretended to be a guardian of the door, immediately regretting her pose with one arm out in warding since it meant that she couldn't rely on the mechanism to keep it steady. The person came closer, angling straight towards the death house and Benny went from nervous sweat to relief and evil joy. Lakshmi was coming, flashlight in hand.

Benny stood and waited for her to come near, knowing that Fennis' girlfriend must have figured out the riddle and come looking. When Lakshmi was at the door, Benny turned in place and raised her arms, her fingers bent into claws and her face transfigured into hunger and

death. Lakshmi looked up at feeling that something had happened just out of view and saw the motionless Benny. She opened her mouth but at first nothing would come out. The flashlight fell from nerveless fingers and then she ran, spurred on when her first dash was met by Benny lunging at her, the angel's hand striking the iron door behind her. Time seemed to slow down as her hand struck the metal.

The hand flashes brightly and Benny feels like it's caught on fire. She can see the sparking wires poking out as well as her own hand where the stone layer has cracked and fallen off. She spares a quick look to make sure Lakshmi has gone before she taps her chest and clammers out. A glance convinces her that neither Benny's real skin nor her smooth Marion flesh has been harmed and though the glove has stopped sparking she decides it's best to abandon the angel suit. She seals it up so it looks for the most part like a statue, though one with green and white wires sticking out of a broken hand. Hopping from foot to foot, she put on her soft ankle boots and opened the now broken door.

Had Lakshmi not dropped her flashlight Benny would have had to give up immediately. She'd forgotten hers in the heady rush of becoming Marion and laughed at herself for bringing a shoulder bag exclusively for her sexy boots. The Fennis family had been forced to build several underground vaults for their various generations and the door to each was heavy, stone, and mercifully labeled. It was the leftmost and oldest that Benny wanted; a portal already ajar. She squeezed through and began descending the stairs. The stairs were a colossal helix around the biers and sarcophagi occupying the floor in the center, with columns stretching from that floor to the ceiling she was coming from. Benny could see between them and slowed as she realized that hers was not the only light there. In the midst of the tombs was a lantern.

The rays of the lantern illuminated and pierced the bones of the skeleton standing beside it. The corpse must have been one of those interred nearby since the skeleton was yellow with age and missing some of its teeth. It was bent over something Benny couldn't see, intent. Every so often one of the bones would strike another with a hollow, appropriately dead wooden clack.

Benny stopped entirely and watched in fascinated horror as the skeleton produced a skin costume like the one she was wearing and started to put it on, the fleshy suit covering the naked bones and giving them the semblance of vital life. Even from that distance Benny could tell that the face of the mask hanging on the skeleton's now well endowed chest was Marion's, a face which covered the skull as she – it shrugged Marion's skin over its shoulders and grabbed the hair to duck inside. The costume must have had lenses like Benny's since Marion straightened up and blinked, her face impassive and wide eyed as the skeleton made the final adjustments, looking a little shocked perhaps at going from dead to living so quickly. As it straightened up, her shoulders pressed together and the skin held, leaving a line that Benny

wouldn't have seen if she wasn't looking right at it as it closed. Benny started to back up, ready to run when the door behind her slammed shut with a sound like a cannon firing. She gulped and stumbled down, the only direction she could go. She had some idea of attacking her double, but wasn't paying attention and found herself passing out with something pressed to her mouth.

Benny woke up wondering first why he felt like he was being squeezed all over, then where he was after she remembered putting on the Marion suit to investigate. She felt something rough and cold across her back and down her legs and opened her eyes to see Marion bending over her, dressed in the sexy adventure costume. Benny felt a mixture of desire for the girl who was gently stroking her cheek, disappointment at missing being stripped naked by the Marion imposter while she was unconscious, and horror at the realization of her predicament. She was also becoming aware that she was not just tied up buy lying on something that stuck into her back and between her buttocks, making a very uncomfortable bed for her to be trapped on. The skeleton Marion seemed to be teasing her, almost but not quite mounting her as it saw she was waking up.

The skeleton now dressed as Benny had been straightened and grinned, showing the yellow teeth of the skull beneath. She flicked her hair back and mocked her victim, "Good morning, beautiful. I hope you don't mind that I borrowed your clothes." She laughed cruelly. "I'm sure your boyfriend won't. He probably won't even notice, and he'll definitely appreciate having a *much* better lover." She winked, squeezing her breast and sighing with delight. "I haven't had a good roll in the hay in centuries, so you can imagine that I'm going to be quite appreciative." It saw Marion staring at her face and clapped a pink nailed hand to her cheek. "Oh, I almost forgot! Thanks." She reached into a crevice and took out a set of white tooth caps. "I need to be able to give my Benny a winning smile." She said, flashing the now white teeth. She pushed her breasts up and ran her hand over her tight bum. "Especially since I've decided to put on something like this for him. He's going to have a very special night and an even more amazing rest of his life. I appreciate my new body a lot, thank you."

"You - I -" Benny struggled for words as she fought the rough bindings keeping her wrists behind her back.

"Oh, don't be sad." The skeleton dressed as Marion patted her belly. "I'm sure you'll rot away enough to get out of there in a few years and maybe one day some silly bint will come down here and you can have *her* life." The undead impostor kissed Benny's forehead and minced out, her blonde curls bouncing along with the rest of her body. Throwing a, "Bye!" over its shoulder, it closed the door, plunging Benny into darkness.

"Your brain's rotted out." Benny murmured, pulling her arms out from under her. The skeleton had decided to put her on a sarcophagus rather than in one and chosen a bier already

occupied by a depiction of the occupant who for some reason had decided to be buried holding a sword edge on. She'd sown through the rope while the skeleton was talking. Brushing the dust off, she made her plan. The skeleton wasn't in a hurry, but then again Benny was naked. Looking down, she shrugged. Benny wasn't naked, really. Marion was. With luck at this time of night she wouldn't fall foul of a policeman or someone quick with a camera. If she was ... well, Benny would work extra hard to help Marion with the consequences. Right now she needed to get home fast and she raced up the stairs, shoving her shoulder against the door and wincing at the scrape.

The skeleton was gone by then, though Benny could see it in the distance just leaving the cemetery. Skipping trying to put on the angel suit - which was slow even if it wasn't broken - she jumped the fence and kept to the shadows, sneaking and sprinting to get home before Marion's undead doppelganger. A detached part of Benny's mind thought of all the attractive ways his Marion body was jiggling and jumping with her swift movement unfettered by clothing and wished he was a bystander watching the beautiful young woman streaking home rather than being her. The rest was intent on the plan. It occurred to her that she had forgotten her key which was fine because she'd also neglected to lock the door. She raced in, her finger already deep in her belly button. When she pressed down hard she felt the suit relax its grip and almost tripped over her skin as it became loose. Benny pulled the suit up over his head and shimmied out of the bottom half in time to throw on a quick change of clothes before he heard the knock at his door. He kicked the Marion suit under his bed and went to answer.

"Hey there." Marion said as he opened the door, posed with one leg bent and one arm up on the doorframe. She seemed to chalk down his red face and heavy breathing to her appearing on his doorstep dressed up for the bedroom and gave him a sultry smile.

"Hi, love." Benny said, not wanting to tip the skeleton off. He made a show of looking her up and down and taking in the adventure costume. It wasn't hard and the tenting in his pants was genuine. It was kind of a turn-on to know that the Marion in front of him wasn't real but an undead monster trying to take over his girlfriend's life. "What's the occasion?"

Marion flowed towards him, pushing him back a little in an embrace and kicking the door closed with one heel. "I wanted to apologize for being late." Their lips met. She was soft and warm in the embrace, her lips inviting and as his tongue explored her mouth he found no sign that the teeth were ancient or the tongue a cunning fake. "And I'm not really in the mood for a lot of talking and dinner."

"That's a shame. I made something special."

"I'm sure it can wait." She breathed, climbing up so he could carry her with his hands filled with her full rear. He felt his phone still in the back pocket.

"I thought you left this outfit here last time." He said after a long kiss.

Marion nuzzled his neck. "I grabbed it while you weren't looking so I could surprise you one day. Surprise." She continued to nibble and kiss him as he carried her into his bedroom, but when he fell back onto the bed with her on top of him, she got up. "I know you don't really need to be put in the mood, but..." She hooked her waistband. "I know we'll both enjoy it anyway." She disrobed, starting with her shorts in a long gyration, then bouncing and caressing her boobs as she took off the bolo jacket and belly shirt. She kicked off the boots and lay down next to him in only her underwear. She reached into his pants and he stopped breathing at the first squeeze. "It seems like you were as much in the mood for this as I was." She straddled and kissed him and he put his arms around her. Her coos grew louder as he expertly unhooked her bra and slid her panties down as she worked on his clothing. He couldn't help being curious and horny, so he forwent trying to reveal the monster at first in favor of caressing and squeezing her inviting anatomy. He almost lost himself as he squeezed her breast and she returned the favor further down. Knowing he'd be going too far with a creature of the night if he didn't get on with it, he hugged her tight, his arms around her waist.

She went completely still as he grasped between her shoulder blades and pulled. "Sorry, I don't think it's quite your night." He grinned as he pulled the skin apart. She tried to turn over, only making it easier for him to remove the skeleton by keeping his grip on the skin. The fake Marion's eyes fell away and her sockets were filled with red malevolence. "I don't know how you were warned, but I'll have my fun yet!" The skeleton announced. Benny pressed his advantage and the skeleton was forced to abandon the Marion suit in order to escape his grip, foiling its previous gloat that it would take Benny by force. He leapt at it and knocked it down, but the rough bones scraped his skin as it struggled and he had to let it get away or else risk it tearing him apart. He felt the skull give way a little with his last desperate grab, but then the monster was gone into the night and he was left with a second, mostly unpadded Marion suit. That interested him since the skeleton ought to have needed a lot more. He replayed the fight in his mind and concluded that several times he'd grabbed something the skeleton ought not to have, blank spaces that looked empty but were smooth and squishy. As the adrenalin rush faded and he locked the door, he decided it had to be another monster costume. Marion? Maybe. Or someone else who wanted the jewels.

He picked up the discarded skin and confirmed that it was thick, but mostly lacking in soft bits, though it did have the same color lenses as his. It was also, he realized, wearing real makeup and as he looked down he found it had all of Marion's freckles and marks as well as pubic hair and the down where she'd missed shaving. With a little washing he got the makeup off the face, showing the dusting of freckles on her cheeks. So now he had a much more accurate Marion suit to go with the other one and a mystery as to who had put it on. The skeleton had felt real, but he could just about convince himself that he'd also felt some soft parts

between the bones and that the rib cage was curved in places it shouldn't have been, no doubt to accommodate whatever had filled the suit's chest. Or it was an evil magic creature.

He was putting the suits away when he heard the message come in. Checking his phone he saw it was from Marion. 'Sorry again. Be there ten :)'

The rest of the evening was mercifully normal and Benny decided that he'd hold off on further excursions for a little while. Marion had apologized again for being late and for the angel scare. She'd been pleasantly surprised at his strong, urgent lovemaking and fallen asleep next to him looking very satisfied. He held her as they slept and wondered if she'd enjoy cuddling her body as much as he did.

Lakshmi woke up tired. After thinking she'd done so well at finding one of the hiding spots she'd been attacked by some sort of robot statue guarding the Fennis tomb. She'd have to have a long talk with her boyfriend later about his family's rampant paranoia. Imagine installing a terrifying thing like that where it might give someone a heart attack! Fennis had acted surprised over breakfast and she'd grudgingly had to admit that maybe he hadn't been involved and it had been someone else in that crazy bunch who'd done it. After thinking about it she decided that maybe it was a good thing. She'd probably end up with that machine guarding her one day and at least it would keep people from sticking their noses into her urn.

"I guess your museums aren't the only ones who lose things." She said, skimming the headlines.

"What now?" He asked, putting his arm around her and his head on her shoulder to read what she was.

"Several animals escaped the zoo last night. Keepers are currently searching and caution the public not to approach. Look! They lost a bear. And a wolf, and ... a penguin. Well, at least one of those won't kill us."

"I'm sure they'll catch them soon." Fennis said. "There's also something about an experimental exhibit being stolen but they don't want to say what yet. Great. Hopefully they weren't breeding a liger."

Lakshmi kicked him. "You always think the worst." He pushed her down and kissed her. "And the best when it's a bad time."

"You need to get to work."

"I need to get to work."

Fennis sighed. "So do I."

Lakshmi thought about the *other* map she'd figured out. "I might be late home."

"Oh well. So will I."

"You're out looking for treasure, aren't you?"

"And you aren't?" Fennis asked.

Lakshmi kissed him back. "I'll let you know if I find anything."

"I should hope so!" Fennis laughed. "It's not the sort of thing couples hide from each other."

"Unless they intend to break the news at Disney World." Lakshmi retorted.

The news had not improved Lakshmi's outlook. She stared at her spreadsheets blankly several times during the day, thoughts turning to how unfair it was. First murderous statues and now escaped animals. *Why* did the next gem have to be hidden under the bird house at the zoo? She had to admit it could be worse. The old monkey house had been turned to an aviary when the zoo decided a hundred years earlier to build larger enclosures for the apes and if the robbers had been really nasty they could have put it under the lion house which still housed big cats during cold weather. The monkeys must have been bad enough. She'd checked the old guides against the current ones and thought that taking it from a surly macaw woken from its slumber would be plenty of challenge for her.

Lakshmi doodled her way through the day, planning for the evening. Since she and Don – she tried and often failed to call him by his first name – had as much as admitted that they were both out treasure hunting she didn't feel bad about dashing home and changing so she could get out before he arrived. If he got home before she was ready she'd probably lose her nerve and keep him at home with her. Then neither of them would get anything.

The previous night she'd just worn normal clothes since she didn't expect anyone to be around the graveyard. This time she was going to be trespassing at night. Though she had nothing illegal in mind – she wasn't sure but she thought that recovering artifacts on private

property wasn't illegal - she'd still be at the zoo after hours and the police wouldn't see it her way if she got caught. She'd read that pure black was more obvious at night than a dark gray, so she found a pair of tights and a knee length dress in about the right colors. She'd never done anything like this, but she guessed that the uneven hem and wavy motion of the skirt might better approximate the appearance of shadows than her lithe but slightly angular form would if she wore something too tight. The only problem, she thought wryly, was that her sneakers were purple with rhinestones. She'd bought them years ago when she was still not quite used to Western culture and thought that they looked pretty. Her professional life had her in low heels and her social life in either boots or higher heels so she'd never had a reason to replace them other than for being little girl shoes, which seemed like a silly reason to spend money.

Hoping that she wouldn't be caught just because of her shoes, she set out with a dark sling purse to hold her shovel and keep the gem in if she found it. The parking lot for the zoo was empty but she knew better than to park there. Instead she stopped several blocks away and walked the rest of the distance, jumping the fence halfway along the length of the zoo so she wouldn't be picked up by cameras if there were any in the entrance. Every rustle of the trees above the shadowed walk made her jump, as did the many shadows. Her trepidation aside, she was enjoying herself. Not only was she doing something both illicit and harmless, but she was also getting to wander the zoo without adults crowding the exhibits or kids getting underfoot and screaming. The food carts and brightly colored kids areas seemed forlorn and purposeless without visitors.

Most of the animals were diurnal and so more or less asleep, but it was still a joy to pick her way past unreadable signs and see the silhouettes of the cats as they lay on their tree branch beds or the sloths picked out easily by their hanging shapes. Some of the nocturnal species were much more active than she'd ever seen them and curious at their unexpected visitor, coming right up to the glass to meet her.

It wasn't all fun, though. She bit her tongue to keep from making a noise when she saw the bear shambling towards her. She froze as it came nearer, picking up speed and rearing on its hind legs to tower over her. She was shrinking back from the huge paws when they pressed against the glass, the bear's black nose twitching. She put her hand up to it and it pressed its paw against the clear barrier where hers were. Blushing at how close she'd been to wetting herself, she waved and the bear waved back. When she thought about it, the escapee was supposed to be a Formosan black bear and she'd seen an American one. In her defense, she thought, the first thing a person did when a bear ran at them wasn't check its chest for a white V. The moment of panic left her feeling looser and oddly safer, as if one bear encounter inoculated her against future ones. She felt at home at the zoo and only realized how dumb she'd been a moment after seeing the light coming from one of the indoor aquatic exhibits and opened the door to look.

The lamp in the pool threw dancing lights onto the ceiling, designs which drew Lakshmi's eye long enough for the dark shape inside to skim towards her and surface. Lakshmi's surprise was complete when instead of a dolphin, a man with a fish tail burst from the water at the pool's edge. The man threw back his head, water droplets cascading from his long blonde hair as he brushed his blonde goatee to get rid of the worst of the dampness. He looked at Lakshmi with dancing blue eyes and heaved himself onto a platform that extended from the edge of the pool partway into the water. His skin was darkly bronzed and his tail was cerulean and sparkling with the reflection from the many scales. Lakshmi replayed the previous observation, her appreciation of his chiseled belly and toned abs as well as his handsome features slowing her noting how strange it was that he had frills around his waist and was a fish from there down. "Care to help a guy out?" He said in a low baritone that warmed her insides. She tried to focus on the mental image of Fennis, but then the merman smiled and she started to melt.

"I - uh, I shouldn't..." She stammered, cheeks turning dark at her lack of articulation.

The merman flicked his tail, playfully throwing drops at her from the wide, thickly veined fins. "You're here and I could use the assistance." He smiled that winning smile again. "I was practicing and forgot how hard it is to get my costume off without help once it gets cold and shrinks." He waved his tail again to illustrate and Lakshmi could see where his knees were bending under the rubbery cover.

"Oh, right! Of course." Lakshmi laughed self-deprecatingly. "Duh. If this zoo had a real fish person they'd get a lot more ticket sales."

"And a lot more night visitors." The merman laughed.

"Yeah, about that..."

"Don't worry. You don't match the profile of the klepto or the rabid animal freedom nut." The merman replied. "Just grab the end. Don't yank, but give me a constant pull." He swung around and Lakshmi's color rose further at the sight of how the tail clung to his butt. Feeling silly, she took the fins in both hands and started to pull. The man pushed down and outward on the waist of the tail and it started to slide down, falling off swiftly once it cleared his hips.

"Thanks!" He said, then saw Lakshmi's expression. "Oops." He didn't move to cover himself and Lakshmi to her shame couldn't turn away. It wasn't so much his endowment as how natural he acted and the whole tan, casually muscular package. She might not be able to love someone so carefree, but she could see how he could end up with a harem of cougars looking for excitement and she wasn't thinking about the cats next door. "Liking the view?"

He asked, stepping forward. He smelled of fish, but somehow in a good way.

"I - uh - I have something I need to do." Lakshmi said. "Glad I could help."

"Why the hurry?" He put his hand on her shoulder and leaned in. "You know you want it."

"Really," Lakshmi stepped back. "I have a boyfriend." She was losing herself in his eyes glanced down to keep from being pulled in, though the view there wasn't much less enticing. It took a great effort of will to break with the deep blue eyes and the lips that brushed hers just as she took another step back.

The man sighed and shook his head. "This could have been pleasant for you." He let go and reached into his mouth. He discarded what looked like teeth and the next time he spoke Lakshmi saw rows of sharp fangs. "I guess I'll have to eat you the other way." *Oh no, not again*, she thought, rooted by fear as he grabbed his lips and pulled, stretching his face away and up until a slick, shiny black and white head emerged. It looked at her with pure black eyes and wriggled out of the manly skin, shedding the package she'd just been staring at, replacing it with a smooth white swell of slimy skin, though the flopping as the beast hopped to get it off was just as distracting. A thick black and white tail burst from the suit, bouncing up and down with the pent up energy of being stuck to the man's back, compressed by the suit to be almost invisible. The creature lifted webbed feet from the suit and threw it aside with webbed hands.

The orca-man grinned at her with those big pointy teeth. "Dinner time!"

It lunged at her and she sidestepped. Being attacked by monsters was becoming a habit, she thought. She led it on a chase around the pool area, its tail jumping up and down with each step. It gained ground partway through by diving into the pool and using its strong limbs to swim faster than she could run, though its tail only seemed to be a rudder rather than a flipper. She ran through the door, breathing hard and hearing the monster wheezing as well as it climbed out of the pool behind her. Instead of running further, she jumped to the side and let it run past her, only turning around in time to see her pull the door closed behind her and hitting the glass as she locked it. She'd decided that she was safer locked in the aquarium than running all over the place with it right behind her and possibly making a racket to call the police. Fennis and his friends had made her sit through enough horror movies to know better than to expect the police to see the monster chasing her and arrest it instead.

The monster pounded on the glass door, but she ignored it, too interested in the skin it had shed and the tail she'd removed from what she'd thought was an attractive actor/trainer. She picked it up in one hand, huffing a little at the weight. Since there was no one else around, she did something she'd always wanted to do. "Honk." She said, grabbing

the suit's meaty member and squeezing. She almost dropped it when the penis is jumped to attention and grew hard. Stretching the mouth so she could look, she saw that crotch of the suit was filled with plastic and a rubber item that she'd seen on adult web sites. She hadn't seen a slit on the monster, but then again the teeth had been distracting her from a close anatomical study. She felt warm at the thought of putting on the costume and having that inside her, looking like a man but in fact being a woman walking around with a sex toy inside her all the time. She got even hotter thinking about talking to people and having them think she was a slender and fit man when every step she took would shift the dildo around inside her. Lakshmi looked around again. There wasn't anyone there and she was even more curious about the suit now that she'd seen the inside.

The only one there was the monster and it was a simple matter of dragging everything around to the other side of the pool to escape its glaring black eyes. She took off her simple shadow garb and sat down on a bench. Stretching the mouth of the suit open again, she entered it with both feet, feeling her way into the legs and then reaching down to pull them up until her feet fit inside the costume's. From there it was easy to stand up and just keep pulling until calves and then thighs were smooth. She 'ooh'ed and 'aahh'ed while slowly drawing the hips up, the dildo inside sliding into her until she felt like she'd never be able to close her legs all the way. Standing now with her legs a little apart, she got it to her belly and then had to work her arms into the gaping mouth, feeling awkward and a little pained by her shoulders as the suit went further up with her efforts to get her hands all the way down the sleeves and into the manly gloves. She shrugged her shoulders, finding that the mask's mouth was now around her neck, tickling the skin with the blonde goatee, though she couldn't feel the hair on her back. Her breasts felt like they were being squashed terribly by the broad pecs of the suit. She grasped the mouth, stretched it a little further and pulled the mask over her head. The mouth's taut elastic closed, settling the features over her face without effort.

She checked to make sure the lips were secure and found the tooth caps on the floor. She felt like she needed to go all the way with it. When those were in, she stretched and felt something odd on her lip. She found it was a tiny button embedded in the mask and squeezed it. Something whirred and she felt the cold, rough concrete beneath the soles of her feet. Her legs rippled and she could then feel the air passing over her calves and the flex of her larger thigh muscles. The rubber inside her warmed, grew, and then suddenly she could only dimly feel it, though now she was aware of an intense pleasure almost outside her body. It faded when the suit bulked up her belly and then further compressed her chest, forcing the suit's broad but now believable pecs together so that they matched her wide shoulders. His beard itched and he shook his head to feel his shaggy hair brush his back. "Okay." He said, not really surprised when his voice came out like the merman's had been. He pinched his nipple and all he felt was pressure. "Weird."

He felt his body and then noticed the sudden change between his legs as his new

member grew and swung. It was so very strange to have that much sensation in one place that was almost outside his body. He grabbed the dick and gave it an experimental pump, then closed his eyes and continued jacking off, his whole attention now on the external joy stick in his hand. He felt a tight, hot flow through it and the meat in his hand started to soften. He opened his eyes and saw a sticky stream on the floor and the side of the glass pool. "How—" he shook his head. "Silly question. How does any of this really work?" He did his best to wipe off the cum and picked up the tail. There was no reason not to try it out while he waited for the monster to give up and find someone else to chew on. It forced his legs together and after a few minutes of trying different places for it, Lakshmi resigned himself to the fact that there wasn't a good place to stick his dick with his thighs pressed against each other. He worked the tail over his legs and tucked his package inside. With it all the way up, he found himself very frustrated. If he'd still had boobs he could have at least played with them while enjoying the image of the toned man flopping around and finally slipping beneath the water. Instead his only organ of pleasure was stuck under a thick layer of rubber-like stuff, inaccessible and crying for attention as it tried to grow stiff in the tight confines. The cold water doused some of that, though looking down at the frills around his hips and the smooth aqua lines of his legs in the shimmering tail, he couldn't quite get down all the way.

Clear water rushed past as he grew accustomed to having one big mer-tail instead of legs and his strokes became stronger. In time he forgot about his narcissistic arousal and focused on learning to surface quickly and smoothly, taking a breath and arching himself to go straight back into the water for another few flicks of his tail. He raced laps around the pool and finally burst out of the surface in attempted jumps with mixed success. By the time he noticed the monster was gone, he'd gotten good enough to slide up onto the platform under his own momentum. "I should do shows." He said with satisfaction, grasping the tail and wriggling out, starting to notice himself again as he saw his reflection swinging his tight buns in the air. Doing his best to ignore his growing hard-on, he put on the only clothes he had, laughing at himself at the image of his muscular, trim body in the gray tights and dress which felt like it was bursting at the seams when he finally squeezed into it. Luckily the purple sneakers still fit fine, so he wouldn't soil his tights now that the monster was gone and he could leave.

Lakshmi briefly considered just going home, but now that he was a man in an ill fitting dress he thought he had the perfect disguise. Nobody would ever think he was Lakshmi, so he didn't even have to worry about cameras now. If he thought a policeman was coming, he could dash out, duck into a ladies room and shimmy out of the suit, confident that the police would pass her right by. His swagger was short lived. As the old monkey house came into view, he saw someone else arriving by a different path. His first thought was that it must be a nocturnal zookeeper there to feed one of the night birds, but when the woman stepped into the pool of light shed by the aviary's door, he relaxed. Her shapeless gray dress that barely came to her mid thigh was not the sensible brown uniform of an employee. She seemed to be trying to

sneak around like he was, and had the same destination in mind. Lakshmi saw the girl was carrying a bag like his and bit his lip, thinking that the girl must be after the same prize as well. She had to laugh, though, because the girl was also very obviously as ill suited to the task as he was at the moment. Like Lakshmi's shoes, she had a flash of color that would give her away immediately – the enormous fluffy blue hair that piled on top of her head and fell down her back, which was bad enough without the lighter streaks that shone out.

The girl looked around and when she turned towards Lakshmi, he saw that her dress ought to have been longer on her but that it had not been fitted for a chest as generous as the girl's. Her boobs were round, bouncy, impossibly well supported and a couple sizes too large for her slender shoulders. In fact, her hips and rear were pretty curvy as well, made all the more dramatic next to her healthy but narrow waist. Her skin was tan but not quite as dark as Lakshmi's, and her eyes were a slightly lighter shade than her hair. Lakshmi thought she was cute in a quirky way. She had a snub nose, wide eyes, and lips that looked made for mischievous smiles.

"Hi there." Lakshmi said, stepping forward. She couldn't think of any other way to stop her rival from getting to the treasure. She would make as unconvincing an employee as the girl, who turned to look at her. Lakshmi wasn't interested in women, but tried to smile invitingly. "Looks like we're both out for a private stroll."

"Yeah," the young lady said, biting her lip. She had a pleasantly high pitched voice.

Apparently she was as attracted to Lakshmi as Lakshmi was to himself at the moment, and despite himself Lakshmi felt his tights grow tighter as their lips met and suddenly they were on the ground rolling around, the girl's large chest squished against his. Seduction was easy, Lakshmi thought, when you look as good as he did. He was clumsy at acting male, not sure where to put his hands. The young woman seemed equally confused, though perhaps she was having difficulty with the fact that the man she'd jumped was wearing such girly clothes. Once their writhing landed them in a soft grassy embankment it got easier as their long kiss deepened and they abandoned themselves to instinct. Lakshmi answered the call from his member and ground his hips against the girl, who cried out in pleasure and what sounded almost like surprise as he pushed her against him with one hand on her rear and used the other to dive into her dress and grope her breast. Perhaps she'd never had a man who had such expert knowledge on how to massage a boob. The kisses were urgent, Lakshmi drowning in the sudden role reversal. It was all so different and so new, the sensations and experience of pushing a woman's skirt up and having her push his waistline down so that he could put his throbbing, needy shaft into her waiting, moist opening. It didn't even occur to him until he was a few pumps in that she hadn't been wearing any underwear. She contracted around him and neither could hold in the vocal exhalations of their shared ecstasy, all doubts driven from

Lakshmi's mind. *I guess I'm a great lover*, he thought.

"Right there!" The girl was crying. "No, there! Oh, no! Right there! Oh, yes!"

When the girl was lying in his embrace, Lakshmi felt a pang of guilt. It wasn't really cheating, she thought. She had to. It was a distraction and besides she wasn't Lakshmi. He was someone else. Lakshmi would never have a quickie with a sexy strange girl who he'd met while prowling around a zoo and needed to seduce so he could get an old buried treasure.

"That was wonderful." He said to the girl.

"Mmm." She sighed. She clung to him tighter and he opened his legs to make her more comfortable. He stroked her enormous fluff of hair as she rubbed her cheek against him.

Lakshmi realized he was now stuck with her. She wouldn't be going in, but neither would he. "So, I guess we should get out of here."

The girl looked up, desire plain in her gaze. "I suppose." She stretched and smiled at Lakshmi's immediate and unintentional reaction. "Ready for more already?" She took the shaft in her hand and gently massaged it. Lakshmi gasped and relaxed in the intimate massage. The girl let go and helped him up.

He returned her favor by running his fingers around her nipple in a way he knew would make her knees shake and was not disappointed. "I wish I could, but I think we've made too much noise."

The girl covered his lips with hers, wrapping her arms around him. He reciprocated, but only put one arm around her, using the other hand to pull up his tights.

She sighed and straightened her skirt. With a playful smile, she touched his crotch. "See you tomorrow night. That is, if you want to keep me away from there."

"Likewise," Lakshmi grinned back, slipping her hand under the girl's skirt to tickle her sweet spot. It wasn't the gem she'd been after, but that was safe as long as they were both too busy getting busy with each other to grab it. She'd never had any interest in another girl, much less in stimulating them the way that seemed so casual and natural to her as she played her fingers across the girl's body and then let go. Again she felt guilty about seeing the girl again since that would definitely qualify as an affair. She felt a pull towards that sexy, adorable girl as she walked away, hips swinging and butt flexing. The draw spread in a cold, needy strumming through her nerves along her arms and legs. She didn't just want to see her again,

she needed to. She hoped she'd figure something out before Fennis started to wonder.

It wasn't until she was halfway home - taking it slow in her dreamy haze - that it occurred to her that she hadn't taken the boy suit off. Relieved when she saw Fennis hadn't gotten home first, she dashed into her bedroom, pressed the button in her lip and grabbed the lips to stretch the suit's mouth open so she could take it off. The dildo was difficult to get out and she had to take it slow. She heard the front door open and close and bit her lip to steel herself against what came when she pulled it out the rest of the way. Gasping, she pulled hard and shoved the suit into her closet just as she heard Fennis call, "Lakshmi?"

"Be right there!" She shouted back, trying to fight down the mixed feelings of guilt, lust, tenderness from the suit's quick removal, and the awareness of how strange it was that she was putting on normal clothes so soon after what had just happened.

Earlier that night...

Fennis hoped Lakshmi would be all right. She was a tough woman, but occasionally showed that she still hadn't quite assimilated. She'd probably be all right if something happened, he convinced himself as he walked. She'd taken the car, which might tip off the authorities, but it was better than evading their notice by taking a long trip on foot after dark like he was. He kept his head down as he passed through the neighborhoods between him and the jewel he'd found the location of, relaxing only when he entered an affluent part of town within a mile of where he was going. He was still trying not to look around too much and so ran right into someone. "I'm sorry." He mumbled.

"It's OK, nya!" He looked up, blushed and looked further up to keep the young lady he'd walked into from thinking he was staring at what she was displaying. Her outfit pegged her solidly as an early Halloween reveler on her way to a party, secure in the wealthy part of town and utterly unworried about what might happen. No one who wasn't one hundred percent assured of their safety would walk down the street dressed like she was. He caught himself in the sexist thought and then dismissed the social guilt. Right or wrong, it was still the case that a young woman wearing little more than a few white fur strips and a cat eared headband with light pink velvet insides was a target for lascivious looks if nothing else. She tilted her head, her slow, playful smile revealing a pair of tiny fangs protruding from her upper lip. She brushed him off with thick, white, pink padded paws that reached up to her elbow. "I'm so clumsy!" She exclaimed, her light blue eyes inviting and her thick blue hair falling down in a curl over her nose.

"It's fine." Fennis smiled weakly. "I really have to go."

"Meow?" The girl seemed to be taking her character very seriously, staying in a kitty pose that accentuated her cleavage and lifted her tail up to highlight her round behind. "Are you sure?" She stepped up close and he wondered how her voluptuous breasts weren't sagging but only bounced attractively, despite being covered only by a single stripe of white fur that crossed her mid back and curled upward on either side, just reaching her nipples and only as wide as her aureole so that no pink showed around the white. Her belly was crisscrossed in a diamond pattern with the furry lines, enhancing the shining olive skin and drawing attention to the fact that they really didn't cover much of anything. On closer inspection - as if he could help it - he saw that the breast strip angled down over her sides to join the belly diamond.

"Sorry." Fennis said. He walked past her and she padded after him on white furry thigh high boots which had something in them that boosted her onto her tiptoes. Five red claws clicked on the pavement with each step, spread as if she was permanently ready to jump on top of someone and rake them with the sharp nails. Her long tail bobbed just above the ground. Fluffy white garters adorned her thighs to match the arm rings near her shoulders. She continued to smile and act playful, running ahead of him to crouch in waiting, wiggling her fluff clad rear and arching her back so that when he looked back to see if she was following he could see the outline of her sex in the bikini bottom and how the tail sprouted just above low rise. He admired her dedication, especially in keeping her blue hair so fluffy. The whole ensemble must have taken ages to put on and he guessed that she was going to show off as much as she could before she had to take it off.

As Fennis got further away, she pouted and turned around, still on all fours. She bounded at him and he fought his physical desire down at the sight of her body in such beautiful motion before she jumped and struck him, pushing him down an alley and into a wall. "Are you sure?" She purred, licking his cheek. "Meow, you'd have so much fun." She let her feet fall back to the ground but kept her paws around him, pressing her bounty up and almost into his face. She rubbed up against him, teasing him with alternating handfuls of soft flesh and luxurious fur. He avoided her kiss, so she settled on nibbling his shoulder with her little fangs.

"I'm flattered." He said, suspecting she had taken something before going out. "But I have a girlfriend and we're faithful." He pushed her gently away. "I'm sure you're nice and that I'd have a good time, but like I said, girlfriend, place to go. Good evening."

She stamped and clenched her paws, the cat boots making no noise and the paws too thick to flex far. "This was your choice!" She said, her voice becoming deeper. She grabbed her boobs and at first he thought she was going to try to feel herself up to entice him again as she moved her paws counterclockwise, but instead pulled them apart, a rent in her skin growing. Something black was inside, forcing its way out of her skin. Fennis turned and tried to escape

the alley, but the black blur of whatever had emerged passed him and blocked his way out. "I have more than one hunger to sate tonight, the panther-like androgynous beast growled, long black tail thrashing. It advanced, unsheathing wicked claws. Fennis looked around, tripping over the panther's discarded cosplay skin. It stood over him, short muzzle dripping as sabertooth fangs extended. He bent his legs in front of him and kicked out, forcing the animal person back. It growled again and hissed. Its yellow eyes glowed malevolently in the gloom and despite being in a fighting position it seemed bigger than it had been when bundled in the girl suit. Round black ears swiveled to take in every sound as it unfolded its angular, shaggy black form, ready to pounce when Fennis showed a moment of weakness.

Fennis knew he didn't have long. It would get tired of playing and tear into him with its claws eventually and he had no defense. He had to weapons and was only keeping it at bay by being aggressive, which wouldn't stop it forever. Even as he thought this, it swiped at him and he gasped, though it only made a shallow cut and tore through his shirt. He fended it off with his bag and looked around. Seeing a metal garbage can to one side, he feinted right and when the panther pounced, he broke left and grabbed a pair of lids. *I can't believe I'm about to do this* he thought just as he brought the two lids together with a crash on either side of the panther's head. It yowled and turned to fight, by which point he'd gotten a grip on one of the cans and brought it down on the creature's head. It screeched again and Fennis scooped up the shed skin with its bundle of half-attached costume and ran, hoping that the panther's sense of smell would be blocked by the contents of the trash can. He didn't know why he'd grabbed the skin except perhaps to keep the creature from luring anyone else that night. That and it seemed a good prize for winning - escaping - a fight with a fierce predator in a dark alley.

Fennis took stock of his situation. His shirt had been torn to ribbons, there was some sort of werecat on his tail, and he was carrying what looked like a scantily clad female. Point two was deadly, but points one and three would eventually attract the wrong kind of attention. A man in tattered clothes with an unconscious and mostly naked girl over his shoulder rang a lot of alarm bells. His fear mounted, he had nowhere to escape to. There was a gas station ahead and he ducked in, hurrying and staying low so the bored looking man behind the counter wouldn't see him. He vacillated and finally ran into the ladies room, locking himself in a stall. The affluence was very apparent in how clean the gas station restroom was and he was thankful for it as he stripped out of his clothes. There was only one way out that was sure to keep him from suspicion and that was inside the body of the cosplayer whose identity he'd liberated. He sighed with relief when he spread the costume's chest and found that it was only that. A softly lined costume that though heavy and filled with wires and shiny skin to machine interfaces was only a costume. Hefting the breast, he reflected that the panther monster was either flat chested or male. Either way it worked all the better for him.

The entry slit went as far as the cosplayer's belly, pulling some of the white furry strips off when he opened it all the way. Her boots fell off as he sat on the toilet and put his legs in,

which was fine because they wouldn't have fit his bigger limbs. He'd be a stocky girl, but at least he wouldn't be a scruffy ruffian carrying a prone damsel. It took him four tries to finally slide his penis into the attached sheath but it was worth it since the suit seemed to take care of the rest, bending it back and hiding it behind a soft mound he could feel through the bikini that had stayed on as he dressed. The gloves also had to come off and the bands around thighs and upper arms were tight as he flipped the mask from its place hanging down his back to cover his head, lining up the eyes with his own and flaring his nostrils against the small nose of the mask. The hair had amazingly stayed mostly intact, being held in place by the headband and what must have been an amazing amount of product. The sharp toothed cat dentures almost fell to the floor, but he caught them in clumsy, numb fingers before they did. He might have to stick them back in and even the cleanest bathroom floor was no place for teeth.

He pressed the two halves together, sucking in his gut so it would go. Mashing his boobs to do so, he got the chest closed and gave his belly a little brush to make sure it was smooth. It was, and he wondered how the panther had looked so good when he knew he looked blocky and nowhere near the slender waisted young cosplayer who had waylaid him and threatened to take the way off later. He was still big chested and hipped, but the rest wasn't coming together until he gave both breasts another squeeze and felt a click. Experimenting, he squeezed, pulled and finally pushed them in a circle, feeling the clicks more than hearing them. When the circle was complete, she gasped and almost lost consciousness as the costume very quickly contracted everywhere, forcing the air out of his lungs. He wheezed and held on to the bowl.

"Are you OK in there?" A lady called.

"Yeah..." Fennis breathed. Then she straightened up. "Yeah, sorry. Uh, cramp."

"You should see someone if they're that bad, honey." The lady advised her. Then the door opened and closed, leaving Fennis alone. She flexed her leg and experimentally stuck it in the boot. It slid down and the boot stretched a little to let her foot through, fitting perfectly when her foot reached the paw at the end. She put the other on and fixed the rest of her costume, swiftly figuring out that it used some sort of self adhesion that didn't leave a stick on her fingers. She put the gloves on, strode out of the stall and checked the mirror. "Wow - I mean, meow." She said, crossing her eyes to look at the lock of hair between them. She giggled at the bouncy catgirl reflected. Reaching back, she checked to make sure her tail was removable and stuck it back on, pulling it around to nibble the end. That reminded her and she fumbled the dentures back in, the fangs making her cute tail chew a hundred times more adorable. "I'm gorgeous!" She bounced happily and purred as she watched her chest flow. "I'm going to have so much fun with this."

She frowned at herself and put up a paw. "Remember. You're going to go get that

jewel."

She grinned back at herself. "And now I'm a sexy catburglar! No problem!"

"Noticeable." She countered.

"Fine." She blew her lock up again and stuck out her tongue. "I'll change to something a little less eye catching." Sauntering out and enjoying the pop-eyed stare from the cashier, she exited the station and looked around. Tapping her chin - and loving how soft her paw was - she decided her best chance was to go a few blocks west to where there wasn't quite as much money floating around. It was a risk, but she wouldn't be out too much before she found what she needed.

Fennis was at heart a show-off and a little bit of an anti-feminist. So it not just didn't bother her that she was walking with an exaggerated rolling gait and boots that made her walk like she was in very high heels, but made her feel good. So did the gazes of the men she walked past, putting on a show of being even more alluring in her indecent, extremely sexy costume. Their regard and her awareness of how attractive she was with her boobs bouncing on display, her long legs, her curves and her olive skin made her nipples hard and her vagina wet. The unfamiliar sexual feelings which she couldn't address in public drove her wild, making her smile and shake her booty even more, which drove the cycle of lust until she felt like she was going to cum just from putting one pawed foot in front of the other.

On the outskirts of the wealthy district was a thrift store that catered mostly to the youth who felt like it was fashionable to buy secondhand. Since 'secondhand' in this case usually meant what their best friend had donated the day before, most of the clothes were of a very different quality - and price - than most. Nevertheless the shop tried to keep to its charitable roots with only one person on desk and long racks of items arranged by size rather than brand.

Fennis laughed quietly at what she was about to do, and then stalked catlike into the store. She kept below the level of the desk, her tail brushing the ground and her front paws occasionally doing the same as she crouched, darted and slunk her way to her goal. Feeling even more like a predator on the hunt, she pushed through the clothing to the inside of the rack, stalking the thick jungle of fabric for something that would fit her. She snatched the first dress that looked her size and wasn't a loud color off its hanger and removed all of her costume but her boots, using the clothes as cover and putting everything into her bag. The boots came off soon after when she found a pair of sneakers that fit. Now she was merely a stunningly sexy young lady with unusual hair and ill fitting clothes instead of a pornographic cosplay star. She looked around, shrugged, and brazenly walked out, daring the cashier to notice her. He didn't. He had never even looked up from his book.

She was close to her goal and sped up, climbing over the fence with the grace as she felt her disguise deserved and making a beeline for her target. She ignored the strange sounds, the shadowy carts to either side, the dark trees. She knew where she was going and slunk from shadow to shadow to get there, uninterested in anything but her prize. There it was, a stone edifice with a small lamp outside, producing a pool of light just around the door. She had her foot on the step when something rustled behind her. She turned, ready to flee, and saw it was a handsome blonde man who for some reason was dressed in grey tights and a matching dress that fit him about as well as Fennis's did. He had a bag over his shoulder and was staring at her like she was at him.

"Hi there." He said, showing white teeth. He stepped forward. "Looks like we're both out for a private stroll."

Fennis's mind was racing. He must be after the same thing she was. It was fight, run or ... He bit his lip at the thought. He was a sexy girl and the man coming towards her looked interested. "Yeah," she said, making her decision. She arched her back.

She didn't know who made the first move, only that he was as into her as she'd hoped and now they were on the ground, lips together and hands roaming. *Yum!* The cat part of her thought, smelling the faint fishy aroma around him. She'd never had sex as a woman, never kissed a man as a woman. Where was she supposed to put her hands? Now they were on soft grass and he was touching her in places that made her body ache and the doubts melt from her mind. He was clumsy but so was she. *Poor man. He must never have had a girl as perfect as me before.* She thought. Fennis had never thought he'd ever want to feel a dick pressing against him, but she had one now and loved it. She knew where it was going and wanted it inside her. The decision to take off her furry panties was mostly to titillate Fennis, but now she was even more glad of the choice since all she had to do was pull his odd tights down and then it was in!

His hands moved over her body and his dick inside her. She couldn't keep up with the myriad ways he pleased her in the space of a few seconds. His grunting turned her on and her delighted squeals of guidance seemed to be having the same effect on him. Then his warm juices were inside her, blending with those released by Fennis and making it seem like he'd shot the most monumental load ever.

"That was wonderful." Her lover said.

"Mmm." She sighed. She thought of Lakshmi and pulled him close, trying to take comfort in his solidity and masculinity to keep from thinking of the gross infidelity that he'd just committed with the man. He stroked her hair and she channeled her inner cat, brushing her cheek against him, trying to think only of comfort.

"So, I guess we should get out of here." The man continued.

Fennis couldn't help the love in her eyes as she looked up at him. "I suppose." She got up and felt the mischief rise in her. She stretched, knowing full well what effect it would have on the man she'd just made love to. "Ready for more already?" She asked, egging him on as he reacted predictably. *Takes one to know one. We really are that easy to excite.* She took it one step further and grabbed the rising erection, daring her maleness to revolt as she caressed the shaft and brought it to life. She only wanted to tease, though, and let go long before he could climax, using the same hand to help him to his feet, though she continued to regard his swinging dick with affection.

Not to be outdone, her lover stroked her boobs and she could barely stay upright. Fennis had always loved breasts and now she adored them utterly for what they could do to her by being touched and caressed by a skillful hand. "I wish I could, but I think we've made too much noise." He murmured and she heard the lie in his voice.

Fennis kissed him and felt him getting ready to leave. The kiss convinced her that it wasn't her, but something else pushing him away. She sighed to herself and fixed her skirt, knowing it would have to be mostly decent for the long walk home. "See you tomorrow night. That is, if you want to keep me away from there." She reminded him, drawing him back into the play.

"Likewise," the man smiled and she melted a little again, wanting to hold him. Lakshmi rose in her mind again and for a moment she thought she had the strength to stay away now, but then her hand was on his crotch and his was inside her and she was falling for him all over again. Forcing his girlfriend firmly into his mind and telling himself it was only a necessary diversionary pretense, she pulled away. *Well if I'm supposed to be distracting him...* She thought, giggling to herself. She walked away, making sure to flex her butt with each step and swing her hips as much as she could, feeling his gaze and his hard-on on her back. By the time she looked back he was gone and she was alone.

Fennis shivered. He wasn't sure he ought to come back. An accidental fling was one thing, but an affair was another. Better the mystery man get the rock and he get the real jewel. He hurried home, hunching himself against the now unwelcome eyes that followed him. The sooner he could get to his room and take off this disguise which had led him into betrayal of their relationship the better. Then again, she thought as she entered her own neighborhood, she'd seduced a man. She'd done better than the monster who'd worn her body last and gotten someone to stop and ignore their goal for *her*. They'd caressed her skin, succumbed her lips, entered her – then it occurred to her that she'd been seduced as well. Absently feeling the curve of her bottom she had to believe she'd been the real victor, the true seductress, but something nagged at her. She'd enjoyed it, it had felt right.

She shook her head. Just get out of the costume, stop thinking these strange thoughts and having these emotions. He saw Lakshmi's light was on and went to look, hoping that the sight of his girlfriend in the familiar setting would steady him. Peeking through the window,

she was both shocked and aroused to see the blonde man in Lakshmi's room. He was naked and pinching his lip. Fennis was about to run in and demand to know how he'd found out Fennis' address – and secret – when the man's skin slackened and he spat out his teeth. By the time Lakshmi had poked her head out of the suit's mouth and shook out her hair, Fennis was laughing so hard that she had to retreat from the window. No wonder it had felt so right to fuck him!

Her playful lust restored, Fennis slipped into the house silently and skipped to her room. Throwing the frumpy stolen clothes into a corner, she triumphantly held up her cat ears and started taking the cosplay out of her bag and putting it on. It relieved her how easy it was to smooth the white fur over her body, her hands shaking as she lined up the breast bands to perfectly cover her nipples. She buried her face in the bikini bottom, inhaling her own scent and feeling the softness she was about to share. The boots slid over her legs, clinging and comforting her with the reassertion of her nature, claws out and ready for fun. The sharp toothed dentures pricked her lower lip as she put them in and bit down. She stood and stuck her tail just above the fur covered derriere, following it with a caress of her paws as she put the gloves on. She rubbed her cheek against the back of her paw and her arm, submerging herself in catlike luxury.

Dancing out of her room, she opened and closed the door loudly and then grabbed her neck. She could just about stretch the skin away and when she hummed she confirmed that it was mostly Fennis' voice. She knocked on Lakshmi's door, imagining her girlfriend suddenly galvanized into swift action at her boyfriend's return. "Lakshmi?" She called in Fennis' voice.

"Be right there!" Lakshmi called back. Fennis smiled at how rushed she sounded.

"It looks like something followed you home!" He shouted back, then let go of his throat.

"What?" Lakshmi opened the door and was bowled over by the soft, luscious cat cosplayer.

"Surprise!" She licked Lakshmi's face, grazing her gently with the sharp canine teeth.

Lakshmi instinctively put her arms around the bundle of fur and warmth. "How did you-"

"I guess we both had the same idea!" Fennis laughed. She pretended to sniff at Lakshmi, nosing under her skirt and then looking up with mock disappointment. "Aww. Where'd it go?"

Everything fell into place for Lakshmi a moment later and she scrambled to her feet, yanking the man skin out from under her bed. "You! Did you know?"

"Not until I got home." Fennis admitted, crouching in a kitty pose on the bed.

Lakshmi looked stormy and then shook her head, laughing at herself and Fennis. "So much for a fling. Be right back!" She ran into her bathroom and Fennis made herself comfortable, curling up on Lakshmi's quilt. The man emerged a few minutes later, severely encumbered by a big mer-tail. "This is what *my* assailant was wearing." He explained, flopping down on the bed and flexing the tail.

Fennis sniffed its length and then straddled her boyfriend, gnawing on the fins. "Fish! Meow!"

Lakshmi now had a face full of Fennis' ripe womanhood and tail. He stroked the tail for a few seconds, then took the fur clad rear in both hands, enjoying the feel of her soft butt and how he could grab it in both hands and still have plenty to spare. The soft, fur covered part squished in his grip and suddenly he couldn't wait to show Fennis what real loving felt like. He pulled the bikini down and put the tip of his tongue inside her. She immediately let go of his fin. "No fair! I can't do the same for you."

A lot of wriggling, jiggling and touching followed, then they were in each other's mouths, doing their best to show the other what oral sex was like when it was someone intimately familiar with what was good doing it for someone who had never experienced it before. It didn't take either of them long for their first innocent orgasm and then their cum was mixing both above and below as Fennis turned around and kissed Lakshmi, their hands on each other to guide him into her. The frenzy, the relief, and the comfort send the merman and catgirl into sleep together, mutually in love and lustful of each other and themselves. Occasionally one would wake up a little, Lakshmi smiling gently at how Fennis purred and meowed quietly at his caress, and Fennis amused at how strong and virile Lakshmi felt, his arms around her and his body curled to accept her cuddling.