

Horrifying Transformation

Part one of four

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I made a face, not quite sure what I was looking at. It had been a normal day and, well, I'd only headed down to the quirky little bookstore as someone had said that they might have a rare tome available that I could use to supplement my upcoming studies. I liked to get ahead in things, which people didn't suspect of me all that often, even though I'd said for years that I was going to really get stuck back into my historical studies as soon as I'd finished with my gap year.

People, quite often, tended to underestimate me. But that was okay, I would make my own way. With my height, easily six feet tall, I was often mistaken (and joked about) as somebody who would be good at basketball, though things like that and other sports had never really been my thing. A curvy figure complemented my strong frame well, or at least I liked to think so, though I did often go for feminine, flowing clothing that accentuated my figure without revealing too much skin. I was often told that I could show off a little more, but I didn't humour them and went back to the book I was reading.

"Gale, she's a funny one."

At least, that was what they would say. But who wasn't funny in this strange old world of ours?

I liked being social, don't get me wrong, when I wanted to be, losing myself in conversation while twirling a strand of my curly, brown hair around my finger, at my most animated when I was speaking passionately about something I was especially interested in. I didn't get as many chances to do that as I liked.

However, sometimes the fates and my interest in little curiosities and twists of the world worked in mysterious ways, which was one of my biggest interests in the first place, quite honestly. The little bookshop was interesting enough, where I would have liked to hang out usually, but not the kind of place where one would expect to find course materials.

I, however, knew that my studies would blend into the world of magic and myth – those little things that not many people had been able to prove and yet were more or less accepted to happen. Some thought that it was a way that people had of trying to make sense of the world around them, the things in nature and science that they still did not understand, but I thought, even then, there was more to it than that.

And that was shown in what I could only describe as a succubus, pacing back and forth – only a step or two – in a circle of runes and power. The bookshelves around her had been tilted askew and the cashier's desk was at a wonky angle too, paperwork on the floor, though it looked like I had been the first one to enter since...whatever it was that had happened actually happened.

“Bloody humans...” The creature hissed, slicing at the air with sharp, claw-like nails, her teeth bared. “Revealing my true form... And then leaving! Scared! Lousy humans... Can’t even finish a Satan-damned job correctly!”

I paused inside the doorway, the bell not ringing above it. It must have been knocked off, perhaps in the aforementioned rush that the person who had had a hand in the escapade had been in to get away. But that served me well as she took in the strange creature, so different to me and yet...familiar from her books too.

A succubus. With pale, blue skin, a dress pulled tight across her incredibly ample bosom, her body seemed out of proportion with human norms, though I didn’t think anyone from a world that her world brushed only sometimes – but enough for people to notice – would have to follow their norms. Two chunky horns dominated her head, curving out and back slightly, ridged evenly down the length to a blunt, rounded point on each. Her face could have been somewhere between reptilian and draconian with raised nostrils, though she didn’t appear to have scales of any kind but smooth, flawless skin and high cheekbones. Everything about her radiated an air of seduction, from the sensual curves of her body to the swing of a thick, reptilian tail.

Everything except the scowl on her face, that was. She didn’t look very pretty or very seductive at all with such a look on her face, snarling and showing her teeth, along with a wickedly forked tongue.

I shifted my weight, clearing my throat. It was most likely about time I let the creature, whoever she was, know that I was there, despite how my heart pounded. I’d never heard it race like that before!

“Um... Hello.”

I clutched my bag to my chest and still could not resist tipping forward in a strange kind of morbid fascination as the succubus rounded on me with a grumpy snarl. How strange!

“Oh, what now?” The succubus snapped, though there was no bite to it, more a frustrated sort of whine. “What, another human here to gawk at me?”

“Um... No.”

I tried to survey her, shaking my head, but I couldn’t take my eyes away, even though I relaxed my grip on my bag a little. The succubus didn’t seem bothered by my stare, though I doubted that she’d had all that many humans stare at her before.

“What is it then?” She grunted, rocking back on her heels, bare footed with clawed feet, crossing her arms, though I swore that I caught her expression softening, just a little. “Spit it out then, girl. I’m not here to just look pretty, you know.”

Ah, so she wasn’t all bark and bite then. I grinned, nodding, my bag settled comfortably on my shoulder once more as if I had found a purpose. But it was difficult to know how to go forward, to be frank, when everything was so strange, my view of the world spiralling out of control even then.

“So...” I said slowly, her lips parted a little too breathily, though I was sure that a curious kind of glee danced in my eyes. “I have a few questions about what’s happened here...”

The succubus sighed.

“What’s there to say, darling,” the succubus said, still not giving me a name, but I supposed she didn’t have to. “I’ve been *hiding* here, disguised as a human. Normal succubus stuff, doing what I’m supposed to do, luring in humans for a good time so I can feed. We don’t need to kill our prey after we feed, not anymore, so I’m really not doing anything wrong at all here. Then this squirrel of a man takes a book off the shelf, mutters an *incantation*, of all things, off the exact right page. Then – whoosh!”

The succubus flung her arms up with dramatic flair, though it still seemed that she could not step out of the circle, turning around with her tail whipping around, following the line of her motion.

“Just like that, I’m stuck in my demon form again, the ratty human running mad, screaming – like I’m not rather fetching in this form too! But I did like my human form, I think I might have even stepped on my glasses in that whole debacle, such a shame...”

The succubus sighed and clicked her tongue against the roof of her mouth, cupping her cheek with her fingers so that the heel of her hand rested under her jaw. I couldn’t help but feel sorry for her and, well, it was not as if I hadn’t always hoped to encounter something, someone, anything, from the other world, the world that I was so sure was tangled up irrevocably in our history.

I shivered, but the succubus was not even looking at me, so I didn’t have to worry about her catching something that she wasn’t supposed to see. Oh, that prickle and that tingle... It told me that a deeper desire was there, something that I had tried to push down for so long already, tucking it away where I didn’t have to worry about it, except when I could indulge in bed alone.

Maybe, just maybe...there was something I could do for her and something she could do for me. It wasn’t as if the succubus was doing anything without my help, anyway, even though the option of leaving her there or at least documenting everything that had happened did cross my mind too. Hey, I never claimed to be flawless!

“So... How do I transform you back?” I made a face, nodding at her. “You don’t seem comfortable like that.”

The succubus blinked. I could see how she tugged at the dress, though I could not quite tell whether she was trying to hide her body further or expose it. It was simply as if it was not something that “fit” her very well anymore, perhaps after a time living in the human world and in a skin that she had chosen for herself too. I didn’t know, it was just speculation from me at that point.

“You’d do that for me? Why? What’s the catch?”

I grinned. Well, nothing came for free, but I did genuinely want to help her. If she wanted to do something for me though and to exchange something, that wasn't something at all that I was going to say no to! An assumption, in my books, was as good as a deal.

"I'm sure you're used to making trades!"

The succubus surveyed me and sighed, snapping her fingers as she tapped one foot on the ground.

"Welllllll, it would be a drag if I got stuck in this circle for much longer," she said. "There'll be police or something and that's just so messy. I've just been trying to live a normal life here, I assure you, no trouble from me. I'm sure you would have heard about it if you'd been around here for any length of time anyway! Take the third book behind my cashier's desk, yes... Third from the left, top shelf, darling."

The succubus directed me, but, honestly, I didn't really know what I was doing. I was just reading something, a spell of some kind, tracing my finger over the runes on the page, things that were beyond my human comprehension. I could see how someone could have taken a similar book and just recited what was on it without even thinking, considering it mythical and something purely of the occult that had no real bearing on reality. It must have been real bad luck for her, however, that someone had managed to find the exact book and spell that had been able to trap a succubus though.

That was okay though. That was just another twist of fate, bringing me closer and closer to something that only later would I see as my destiny.

The spell fizzled away beautiful in a spark of purple and blue magic and I could not help but hold my breath. Oh, how beautiful it was... I wished that I could have been the one to truly cast it, but all I was doing then was orchestrating it, playing off the existing magic. Maybe the guy who had trapped her in the first place had some magic in him. I wished that I had gotten there just a little bit earlier, so I might have been able to ask him, or see if I could tell in some way. But he probably wouldn't have said anything anyway.

"Ahhhh..." The succubus stretched her arms over her head, her dress riding up her thigh, scandalously short. "That's better. Oh, to move again! Though I wasn't trapped for all that long. Right!"

She clapped her hands, demonic magic crackling darkly through the air. It snapped and popped, turning the bookshop dark, sliding down the shutters with a sharp rap, the door swinging closed and the bell going still and silent. I stepped back, gulping hard, but there was little I could do to stop the fizz of exhilaration shooting through me at such a display. And the succubus! Magic poured over her, as if she had been doused from head to toe in water, transforming back to a human form, the form of a woman with long, perfectly straight black hair that fell to her waist.

"Wow..." I said. "You really look different!"

The succubus smiled, a smile that was friendlier on a human face than a reptilian-demonic one, to be fair.

“Thank you,” she said more warmly, clearly needing a little more time to get to know a person – but, then again, I had caught her in a rather compromising, difficult position. “It’s good to see a human with some good taste about them still!”

I didn’t think she intended that to come off quite as it did, but I wasn’t going to fuss about words, not then. She was curious to look at, shorter than me but still holding a kind of presence about her that surpassed me – but could I expect anything less from a succubus? My fingers itched for something that I could not name, shifting my weight back and forth. Oh, I didn’t know, even then, if I dared ask her for what I truly wanted, but there was a part of me that knew I had to try, that I had to do something, anything, to get a step closer to my dream, my fantasy.

But maybe it was too far.

The succubus flipped her black hair back over her shoulder, her skin, oddly, rich with a tan, a couple of freckles dotting her skin, though her lips were naturally red, as if she had painted them. It was her eyes, however, that caught me the most, that same light blue of her skin as a succubus in her true form, something otherworldly and eerie about her despite her human disguise.

“Now! Come with me!”

The sign on the door flipped to “Closed”, even though it was already locked, just to make sure, the succubus smiling as she led me into the back. I wondered if she could hear my heart pounding.

“Sit, sit, sit! Sit yourself down, girl! Was it a book you came for? No matter – we shall come to that later.”

The room behind the main bookshop surprised me: a little tearoom. Maybe it was where she took her breaks, though I nervously sat down on the little red sofa, a two-person sofa, setting my bag beside me. A coffee table with a wonky leg greeted me and the succubus floated over two, already steaming and brewed, cups of tea, though I did not recognise the aroma of the herbs inside. My eyes were too interested in the small room, the little sink, the window that looked out over the back of the shop, where other businesses met and the alleyway stretched down. Someone was growing trailing plants over a trellis out there, giving the narrow scene a splash of colour.

“Thank you,” I said, not knowing what else to say, though it was oddly comfortable back there. “How... How did you come to be here? It’s weird... I mean, everyone talks about people like you, creatures like you, but I don’t know anyone that’s actually met a demon or a mythical creature...or anything else.”

“Anyone else, darling, I’m not a thing,” the succubus reprimanded her, though was gentle in her admonishment. “Call me Sylvia, all my friends do. And I think we can consider ourselves friends of a sort after what you have done for me, don’t you think?”

The succubus sipped her tea with tight lips, a little of the tension easing from her face. She must have needed that.

“Otherwise... Well, what does any succubus do when she needs a fresh start? Start a little bookshop, get away from it all, find something more in tune with one’s being... Of course, feeding still has to be done, but there’s always a ready supply of fine young men happy enough for a lusty romp. Some even come back for more!”

I smiled. I could imagine that. A creature, Sylvia, living among people, no one at all knowing who she truly was, slipping by everyone’s attention because, well, she was simply that good at it. I didn’t mean to stare, but I still sat back and stared at her. What other chance would I ever get to see someone like that, to be close to someone like that? I didn’t even know what she would do to or with me when we were done there, but perhaps she wouldn’t mind if I retained my memories of the encounter. I had always thought that demons would wipe the memories of their victims, if they were not killed, but she didn’t seem to have much of a reason to either when I was the one that had helped her out, after all.

“Cat got your tongue, little one?” Sylvia said, tilting her head. “Drink your tea, it’ll loosen your tongue. I’m not that scary, you know. But you’re not scared of me, are you?”

I gulped and shook my head.

“No, not at all... But I just wish I could get out the words for all the things I want to ask you!”

Sylvia smiled, growing a little more comfortable and warmer with every passing moment. It was strange... I’d never expected a succubus to smile so much, but I supposed that that was merely my prejudice at work. She’d never had any reason not to smile, just finding her own way to be who she was.

“Well, the best place to start is at the beginning,” she said. “Why don’t you ask me what it is that you want from me, in that case? A trade is a trade, you got me out of the rune circle that that *imbecile* had trapped me in. I owe you.”

I gulped.

“What do I want from you?”

I swallowed again, even though it didn’t help anymore the second time, heart hammering. Oh, this was the moment that I was scared of and hopeful for, not knowing before just how those two emotions and feelings could go together.

“Of course,” Sylvia said, setting her tea on a placemat on the coffee table. “Magical abilities, power, wealth – oh, that’s always a good one, though not always as satisfying as people expect it to be. As long as it’s within my power, it shall be yours.”

That was the moment. That was the moment where I could have just asked for money and shaken my head and thanked her and just found out more about her world, forgetting my twisted inclinations. And yet they lingered there, in the back of my mind, reminding me of so many kinky, lustful nights moaning into my pillow, toys stuffed between my legs, the only way in which I could play out my fantasies.

She looked at me, so expectant. She could never have been expecting what was to come out of my mouth.

I squirmed.

“Um...” I couldn’t get the words out. “It’s kind of...embarrassing.”

“Oh?” Sylvia raised an eyebrow. “I’m sure it’s nothing I haven’t heard before, darling. Do tell, come now. I can make your wildest dreams come true, do anything you wish for. I’m sure it will not be all that bad as you’re imagining.”

Bad... No. Or maybe that depended on whose mind it was in. I took a breath to steady myself. It didn’t help.

“I... I want to be cursed.”

Continued in part two...