

Naomi had to pull herself away from the screen and stretch her legs, feeling a deep blush across her cheeks. Why did their words have to hit so many wonderful buttons? She was a lift, stopping at every floor. She was a keyboard full of 'any' keys. She was breaking the glass, steaming helplessly under the sprinklers that couldn't manage to cool her down. It was ridiculous, and it was wondrous, and she wondered if her silly mewls were escaping the cosy confines of her room. It was early morning by now, and if she had managed to wake any of her roommates up, she might have some clumsy explaining to do later.

Not that she didn't have some practice, given Naomi had already turned into a lynx girl that week for very similar reasons. So what was she meant to say? "I got so caught up in the thought of being a lynx that it came true?" No, of course she hadn't admitted to it like that, she'd had to say she didn't really know. Spontaneous transformation. Could have happened to anyone. Luckily nobody could see her little tail buzzing about behind her, under her jacket, giving away her embarrassed white lies. Assuming they couldn't tell from her ears, her eyes, her tone of voice—

Huff. She was meant to be relaxing. Breathing deep, regaining her composure, feeling clear and decent. Stretching her arms, flexing her paws, rubbing water into the fuzz of her cheeks and neck. Calm. Content. Looking up at her reflection, dripping from her whiskers, distracted by the bright ethereal glow that was escaping her eyes...

Oh.

Oh no.

Oh goodness.

She knew what was happening, and what she'd become. As much as she had to stop it, Naomi knew she couldn't, she absolutely wouldn't; the deep warmth of her blush would rise up and surround her from head to toe, bathing all her movements in treacle and setting her thoughts alight. Down on all fours, green eyes barely containing the calm fury of her intense magic, with her new tapered wings unfurling. Tan brown, gold and purple, bigger than a human, with a lynx's fluffy face, short brown hair, and a stubby tail eclipsed by feathers.

Naomi was a lynx sphinx, and she was thoroughly overwhelmed.

It took a long time to stagger out of the bathroom, fight with her balance on the chair, and pick at the keyboard with huge helpless paws to awkwardly let everyone know what had just happened. Did they playfully tease her for it?

Absolutely they did. How she blushed, visible from space, her purring surely shaking the very foundations of the house...

Oh. Photos? Maybe. Eventually. Feral lynx paws were not made for typing, or using phones, and there wasn't any trick to it that she could find. Perhaps she needed to put some of her magic to use...?

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Naomi stood outside in the cool breeze, facing the sunrise, her eyes bright like emeralds and wide like dinner plates. Despite being awake all night so far, she was far too bouncy to rest, and as ill-advised as it might have been, she was going to try and fly. Not much, she'd promised; but there was no way she was going to be able to fall asleep otherwise.

So what now? The sphinx's wings seemed to know how they should work, but it felt like there was a huge leap between that and actually flying. As tired and awestruck and excitable as she was, Naomi had rejected the idea of jumping off the house, and the lynx sphinx would instead try to launch herself from the ground.

Would she wear herself out and get some sleep? Very possibly. Getting from her room to the front door had been a small ordeal, with big paws slowly guiding her downstairs, wings toppling chairs and coats, and – thankfully – nobody coming out to see what the noises were. Naomi was pleased not to need to have that conversation just yet, about yet another change she wouldn't be able to properly explain.

Out here, paws crossed the soft earthy ground, and the outdoors was a distraction to all of her senses. Being a lynx had lifted her level of perception already, but being more feral had added another level beyond that. The wind rustled leaves and grass, brought wild scents and sounds, teased her tufty ears, and caused her legs and feathers to grow tense in anticipation. Everything was innate, focused and precise; no room for error. It felt like she was wound up to pounce on some unknown target, and yet, no target presented itself.

As best Naomi could work out, it was as though the world had its volume turned up, and she was reacting to every speck of noise. The kitty would tune herself in time, but for now, it was certainly not helping her feel the need for sleep. She was a *sphinx*, and she could do *anything*. Up she leapt, wings tasting the air.

Down she came. *Whumpf*. Of course she meant to do that.

Whine.

It would have been fair to say that Naomi's actions weren't entirely rational. Kitty thoughts were quick, impulsive, full of life; they moved, they failed fast, they tried again. Up she went, down she came; straight back up she went, uselessly flapping her forelegs, giggling at herself. *Gosh, this was silly.* The otherwise proper and industrious Naomi was having a mild episode of panic, and overstimulation, and she buried her ears under her paws and closed her eyes and waited for everything to slow down.

Lynx paws turned out to be quite acceptable earmuffs. Eyes opened to a calmer world, focusing on individual things: the grass, her own pawbeans, fallen apples, the sparkles of her own luminescent eye glow that hovered only at the very edge of her peripheral vision. Tangible and real. She was a sphinx, and with her paws and wings in unison, she threw herself at the sky.

And this time, she did not miss.

Paws wanted to double-jump, and they could not; wings, however, could flap much faster, doing maybe more work than they ought to bring Naomi away from the ground. Thermals needed to start taking some of the strain, and the warning sun was helpful in that respect, but it could certainly have been warmer. Nonetheless, as she worked, she lifted herself quickly above the house, and that of their neighbours. The view became better, and better still. A warmth through her body might have been magic, or maybe just satisfaction. Naomi stopped focusing on mechanics, and began to properly realise that she was *flying*. In the *air*. With *wings*. As a *lynx sphinx*.

Once the kitty noises started pouring out, they wouldn't be so easily stopped...

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