

Living in a big house for a week, keeping an eye on it? I could do that. It was a nice arrangement: I could finish off anything left in the cupboards and fridges, they'd left money for food, and I'd get paid when they returned. Might be the easiest money I'd ever make.

There were some conditions. No parties, no guests, keep things tidy. Definitely be there overnight. They apologised that the indoor pool wasn't working, which I thought was a shame, but between my laptop and the library and the giant TV, I'd be happy.

The house was pretty much a mansion, over three floors, walled garden, grass and trees, automatic gates, all of that. I looked around on that first afternoon, between the bedrooms and the bathrooms and the sitting rooms, and the locked rooms which I opened from a set of keys on a huge keyring, out of curiosity. Many of those were empty, and a couple were used as storage. I was curious, but I didn't pry.

It would be a quiet week, but I was sure I could handle it.

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A few days passed easily enough. I chose a guest bed, and I tried to resist the urge to spread out just because there was space. I read books, watched box sets, and chatted with friends; I made food, and ordered pizza one evening. I checked out the grounds, the garages, and even the poolhouse, late one evening.

The door was locked, and the lights turned off, but the inside air was warm and chlorinated. The owner had said the pool wasn't working, and yet it appeared to be just fine? A couple of floats drifted in the water. Perhaps whatever issue there was had resolved itself. I had brought swimming gear with me, and it was hard to pass up the chance for a swim in a private pool.

It was a couple of hours before I was feeling ready for bed, and I had to stop, though I didn't really want to. Something about a warm pool all to myself, it was wonderful. Chilling out in the house was fine, but this really was relaxing in style. I'd want to spend a few more evenings in here.

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The next morning, I woke up before my alarm, feeling itchy all over. I'd had a good shower after the pool, but maybe I just needed even more. Bleary-eyed, rinsing my face, looking in the mirror–

at soft trails of shiny grey and black and purple which ran along my face, my arms, my body–

Okay, I panicked, just a little. It was a shock. Those weren't colours that skin tended to go. Yet, the closer I got, the more I pressed and pushed, the more my brain kept suggesting something that couldn't be true; it was rubber. Squeaky, slippery soft rubber. And it wasn't *on* me. It *was* me.

The grey and black were just rubber, while the purple was rubbery and textured like paint. It didn't make any sense, but after the initial worry, I felt fine. I had my shower, I got on with my day, I couldn't work out quite what to do. I'd make it a problem for future me, after breakfast and caffeine and a bit of time to think.

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Later in the day, I noticed the rubber had made it to my hands. There was more on my face. It seemed to be spreading, if very slowly. The smooth material felt cool to the touch, and soft against my clothes. I didn't want to bug anyone about it, I just felt like relaxing and waiting for it to sort itself out. My thoughts kept drifting back to my time in the pool last night, at just how nice it had been to float on the water, without any cares...

Squeak. The sound of my hands pressing together, if you could call them hands. It felt like I'd only zoned out for a moment, but now they were all smooth, and rounded, grey and black, with lines that suggested fingers, or digits, and painted-on pads that made them seem like kitty paws. They wobbled, and felt so sensitive the more I squeezed, squishing down like they were hollow, nothing but rubber and air–

Uhh. This was getting serious. I couldn't easily use my phone, my squeaky paws found it hard to grip things like doors and keys. Still, I didn't seem to mind nearly as much as I thought I should. TV was probably the easiest thing to keep me occupied, skipping through options, pausing on shows that reminded me about water, a clear ocean or a calm lake or pool sports; lulling me into daydreams, splashing and swimming, gentle and relaxing, eyes closing...

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Oh. I'd fallen asleep, and it was the middle of the night. I turned off the TV and stood up, with a trip by the mirror to see how I was looking. Rubber had taken over much of my arms, with patches over my face and smooth spots in my hair. I had a painted-on kitty nose. I thought about giving it a squeak with one of my paws, and couldn't stop giggling at the sound. Squeak! Squirk. Squeak!

It felt like something new was stuck to me, down by my hips. I couldn't get a good hold of it, but I could see what it was: a smooth, rubbery handle, which squeaked as I rubbed it, and just felt like a part of me. Smooth rubber, puffy paws, and now a handle—

Was I becoming a pooltoy?

Perhaps that's why I couldn't get the pool out of my head. Why I'd dreamed about it. Why I couldn't easily stop myself heading on out to the poolhouse, clumsily opening the door to enjoy the warm air, using a sleeve to pull the door closed behind me. The smooth surface of the water beckoned me closer, making me blush at just how much I wanted it. Struggling out of my clothes, and sliding my way into the warm water.

Oh. Oh, goodness. My paws floated, and my body sank. I felt a second handle pop up, on the other side of my body. I could see, really see, as each of my feet began to plump up, swelling, soft and round like my hands, smooth and with painted pads. I could feel the rubber spreading, flowing, tightening its grip on me. Being back in the water was only speeding up my change.

And I loved it. I needed it. I'd stay in this pool, getting steadily lighter, and shinier, and bigger. Growing, stretching, swelling. Kitty body and kitty tail, to match my paws. Ears popping up together. Light grey and black rubber, shining in the light. Purple rosettes, giving me the look of a snow leopard. Stiffness pushing up through my body, poking out of my belly as a big air valve. Face flattening, simplifying, features painted on, wide eyes and a big grin to match how I felt.

A toy. I was a pooltoy! Just a big, floaty pooltoy...

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"I guess I forgot to take the pool key with me," said the owner, looking at me. "That's unfortunate. Although I bet a pooltoy is doing okay. Snow leopard? Looking good."

A lot was revealed by what they said and how they said it, but I was too dazed and happy to pay too much attention. Pooltoy. That was me. Days must have passed already, if the owner was back. They were slowly dragging me out of the pool, I must have been ten feet long; big, smooth, wet paws squeaking on the smooth tiles. Any touch was sheer bliss.

"I'll pump you back up in a few days, with the others."

My valve was less sensitive than most of my rubber, until it opened, and then the sensations of rushing air were electric; I'd shiver, and blush and squirm, if I wasn't just a toy. Squeezed by the owner's body, hands pressed into me, forcing my air out more quickly. I was deflating! Flattening. Compressed, and feeling heavy, my smooth hide started to rub and fold up against itself. Big cat toy. Silly cat toy. It was too easy to think of the owner as *my* owner, working the air out of my tail, paws and legs, crumpling up my muzzle, making my vision blurry. Folded and compacted, as I could feel my rubbery layers held on all sides, and I soon was looking up at my owner, holding the lid of a box which I assumed I was now in. That'd be my deflated pooltoy kitty head, grinning up at them. A cat in a box, that was funny.

"Few days, yeah? You'll barely notice. Dream well, kitty toy."

On came the lid, and in the absence of light and sound, I very quickly drifted into slow background thoughts. I'm a toy, a big kitty pooltoy, I'm a pooltoy...

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