

Transitions

By TeraDyne Ezeri

Story and characters © TeraDyne Ezeri

Time and time again, we...

Gallows turned off her television and tossed the remote aside as she relaxed on her sofa. It'd been a few hours since she returned from a rather sobering job of helping a young person with transitioning to deal with their species and gender dysphoria—a job she would've given to one of her other team members had they been available—and her need to relax had become a bit of a necessity.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK!

"Kaikka... Enter!"

The front door of her Echo Glade home swung open just across the room from her, and a fairly young female anthro bluejay entered. Her yellow sundress flowed in the breeze from outside until the door closed once again, but she looked rather embarrassed just being there.

"Mrs. Furi!" Gallows said, rather shocked at her client from earlier showing up. "Is something wrong?"

"Oh! No, Miss Gallows. Thank you so much for helping Ken find himself." She replied, her wing-like hand running along the back of her head. "No, I came to ask for a bit of advice. My sister Servina said you'd be able to help."

The gryphon looked completely dumbfounded. She knew the android-like receptionist at Shirohoshi Enterprises used to be organic, but she never knew Servina had family.

"See...I'm also looking to transition, to being a synth like my little sis. Just... Well..."

Jenny handed Gallows a folder, and the gryphon began reading through it. Medical records, some dated a few years ago, all detailing some rather worrying diagnoses. Several exotic symptoms caught the phoenix's attention, but it was the most recent set of notes that really made her heart drop.

Estimated remaining lifespan: 4 months at best.

"Does Kendra know?"

“No. I haven’t had the heart to tell her. Not while she was dealing with her own issues.”

“What were you thinking of transitioning to? Latex being? Mechanoid?”

“Mechanoid, like my sister.”

Gallows grabbed her phone from the coffee table and began tapping at the holographic icons, before pressing the translucent earpiece hanging from her ear to turn it on.

“Hey Fira... Listen... I need you to meet me at Breakwater Echo. Bring a set of H-R-X-one-two-two systems with you. ... Tell Vega I’m making it a priority, and I’ll deal with that issue personally after we’re done. Yeah. Thanks.”

The gryphon looked up a Jenny as she got to her feet, standing biped for the first time in a while. “Come on. Let’s get you set up with something.”

About an hour passed before Gallows and Jenny arrived at the massive base north of the city. Most of it was underground, and the cavern-like walls and ceiling of the room they sat in was a reminder of that. Brown rock walls with embedded crystal lights, many high above in the forty meter ceiling, gave the entire space a bit of an eerie ambience.

The gryphon was back on all fours as she sat down on the ground, while her client rested on top of a metal crate. Thankfully, they didn’t need to wait long.

A white-armored canine mecha strolled through the door on all fours, pulling a trailer full of gemstone cases behind them. Some were as big as a shipping crate, others as small as a briefcase. But they all held the same *SS6L* markings on their faces.

Fira stopped and disconnected the trailer from their body, their thick body giving a thud as they sat in front of the two. They didn’t have eyes behind their wide black sensor visor, and their snout had nothing more than a flapping jaw filled with fangs, but the digitized voice showed quite a bit of emotion in its place.

“What’s with the sudden need for *HRX-122s*, Tera?” They asked, sounding quite annoyed. “You’ve got your own set.”

“They’re not for me, Fira.” Gallows replied with a rather somber tone. “Mrs. Furi here is wanting to transition to being a mechanoid, but her current situation puts any of my trans-suits off the table.”

“I...Understood.” Fira began unpacking some of the crates onto the floor, feeling a bit foolish for losing their temper. They knew she wouldn’t have made such a comment without reason.

Jenny looked toward Gallows with a bit of confusion, but when the crates started getting opened, the avian knew she had one hell of a choice in front of her. The mechas began to assemble into standing models, standing by for inspection and trial use. A few dragons, a couple of canines, some avians, a gryphon, a couple of equines, and even a saurian, all lined up and ready to go.

The bluejay began looking over each one in turn, with Fira at the end of them, silently watching her. But of all of the choices, one of the dragons had caught her eye.

A rather large anthroid dragon covered in silver-colored armor, standing about three meters tall, it was very similar to what her daughter had transitioned into. Thick arms with three massive fingers and a thumb each, and each foot had three toes that it stood on. Unlike Fira, it had glowing glass eyes with covers that allowed them to be expressive, but its mouth was still rather static. However, none of its underchassis was visible, covered by either the armor, or a thick rubber underskin, obviously to keep dust and particles out of sensitive mechanical systems.

Admiring the golden curved horns on its head, she looked over at Fira with a smile. “I think I found the one.”

“Then put your hand on the black panel on its chest,” they told her, walking up to her side, “and take a deep breath. You can give it a shot before you take the plunge completely.”

“Trials take time, and I have precious little of that left.”

The robotic canine sighed verbally. “Understood. Press your hand into the plate, and steel yourself. That’s all you’ll have to do on your end.”

Nodding, the bluejay pressed her wing against the dark steel on its chest, and within moments, all went dark.

Some time passed before Jenny regained consciousness, and the view awaiting her was surreal. She looked at what she could only describe as herself, laying on one of the crates as Gallows and Fira looked on at the new her.

Numbers and various symbols filled her vision as well, and when she reached up to rub her head, she saw the metal claws of the dragon she’d chosen. Then she noticed the snout filling the lower part of her vision, and as she stood, heard the clattering of steel against concrete as her feet planted on the ground.

She wasn’t blinking.

She wasn't breathing.

She just...was.

"Welcome back, Mrs. Furi." Fira said, getting to her feet once again. "How are you feeling?"

It took a few moments for her to process everything that was going on, but she did respond eventually.

"I'm...okay?" She replied, hearing herself with a slightly deeper voice than she was used to, a digitized undertone just barely detectable with it. "I don't have a clue what's going on, but...I'm okay?"

"That's good enough for me to call it a win."

Gallows stepped forward, taking a cable from Fira's back and connecting it to a small port on Jenny's leg. "Let's get a full diagnostic going real quick before I release you into Fira's capable paws. You're gonna have a few days of training and therapy ahead of you, but it's better than the alternative."

"W...What happened to me?"

The gryphon made a bit of a wince as she spoke. "You...Well, let's just say that four month prognosis wasn't...*accurate*. As your consciousness was getting digitized, your organic body's heart stopped. If I had to guess, your stress meant it wasn't going to last more than a couple days at best. But, Fira kept your wing planted against the transfer plate to make sure you made it through."

"And you did make a full transfer." The cable snapped free from the port as Fira reeled it back to herself. "Diagnostics show you're perfectly fine, and all systems are at full power."

There was a bit of an awkward silence as the newly-minted dragoness looked at her own hands. Thoughts crossed through her mind at lightning speed. Questions kept rising up with them.

"Is...this how Servina transitioned?"

Again, Gallows made a pained look as she sat down on all fours. "Not...quite."

Jenny looked at the gryphon with confusion.

"I was there for that procedure...delivering her new chassis. She'd been ill for a few days, but no one knew why. Before we could get her to touch the transfer pad, she collapsed. I had to plant her wing on it and keep it there."

Pausing for a moment, Gallows shifted uncomfortably in place, trying to keep her own emotions in check.

"It...wasn't an entirely clean transfer. Lost some of her memories, among other complications. She made a mostly full recovery from the rest of

the problems, but there was no getting those memories back. Her heart stopped when she fell, and brain death happened soon after. There just wasn't anything left to pull from."

The silence this time was practically deafening. It hurt Jenny to hear what her sister went through, having never known about the ordeal, and it hurt Gallows to recant the tale, even with what little she said.

"Hey... Fira?"

"Yeah, Tera?"

"Get Mrs. Furi to Seastride Six Labs and help her out." The gryphon got to her feet and began walking out.

"And what are you gonna do?"

She stopped, smirking softly. "I'm gonna do what I do best. Help out my clients as best I can. Someone's gonna need to give her daughter and husband a good excuse as to why she's away, and I figure I could get them into Kioshi Falls Resort for a week to keep them busy. *Plenty* to do in that city."

Jenny suddenly looked down at her hands again. "Thank you. For everything."

Continuing on toward the door, Gallows waved a talon in the air. "Consider it part of the care package, Mrs. Furi."

The phoenix didn't want to admit it, but she had her own reasons for going the extra mile. Reasons she didn't want to explain. But Fira watched her as she closed the door behind her, knowing exactly what her adoptive sister was going through.

The canine wasted no time in hooking up the trailer onto her back harness again. "Hop on, ma'am. I'll help get you back on your feet proper as quickly as possible."

Jenny nodded, climbing onto the flatbed and lying back with a clatter. She knew it wasn't going to be easy, but at least she could be closer to her daughter, both in species, and as a fellow synthetic. It just meant things were going to be a bit more complicated.