

About the same time Shelby was not considering brain cancer Robert was floating back toward consciousness. Stirring and shifting to lift his upper body from the carpet he put both of his left hands to the floor and levered his upper body up. He stopped and stared at his fur covered left hands shocked to full awareness. It was an off-putting moment, but not of a nature that he felt his sanity slipping. While the sight of having a pair of left hands, and as he checked an equal number of right hands with matching arms, was something new but it also felt as though something he should have remembered. A moment after the feeling of shock hit him he continued staring while he wondered what all the internal fuss was about.

Equal parts puzzlement, acceptance and amusement he noted that yes, he also had an extra thumb on each of his hands added to his inventory. As he stood he looked himself over curiously noting the rest of the changes, if only to confirm what his mind was telling him should now be in place. As strange as his reaction was he knew it was was of an 'Oh yeah, almost forgot about that too' nature.

Back on his feet he looked around the room to confirm that he was also seeing in full darkness. Finding no light source he confirmed that he now was able to see in the dark. Everything was mostly grey shading toward blue as if he was seeing the inside of a dark room from the light of a very early dawn, or perhaps bathed in full moonlight. Robert thought he'd had good night vision before but this was amazing.

Taking stock of the changes to his body, or at least the major ones he looked himself over. Two sets of arms sprouting from his upper body, and a somewhat regular pair of legs with a didigrade stance, check. Fur covered body, check. With a bit of focus he brought around the tendrils that sprouted from his face, four from his forehead and two from the side of his muzzle, check. Then bringing around the tentacles that sprouted from his back, one from the inside of each shoulder blade and one from just above each hip, check.

He saw too that not only did each of his paw like hands have two opposable thumbs his feet sported six toes with a similar size and spread as that of his hands. With a sigh he was forced to accept that he was now in a body that seemed to largely be based on a displacer beast. There was more he wished to investigate but first he needed a mirror. Robert started picking up his tools from where he'd left them and packed them in his tool bag. Lifting the bag from the floor Robert headed toward the exit of the space.

The door opened to a light filled hallway. The light level was low but once again seeing his way was not a problem. He quickly made his way to the nearest restroom. The restroom was in complete darkness as he expected, and unoccupied.

Stepping to a mirror he saw that the eyes in his feline face had a slight glow to them. Leaning closer he could see a similar structure to what he'd been used to as a human. He could see the sclera that had been white as well as an iris and pupil only now lit from behind. He realized the glow just seemed unusually bright to him, his eyes were fairly normal in structure. It was the tendrils of his face and the tentacles that was giving him the sensory overlay that seemed like vision.

He could sense the entire room he stood in. Even the area behind him came in clear even to the point of just how far from him everything was. With the mental equivalent of flexing a muscle elsewhere in his body he could increase the accuracy. It had to do with the back tentacles. His back tentacles he mentally corrected. Curiously bringing one to his face he examined the tip. Again it was as simple a matter as bringing a hand up to his face and spreading his fingers. He opened the tip of his tentacle to examine the inner structure.

The ending twelve inches or more of the tentacle spread wider than the fingers of his hands when opened. Looking at his finger pads he saw they appeared very similar. Something informed him that the pads were based on the clinging ability of geckos. His toe pads were the same. He was oddly eager to

put them to the test, but for now he sought to confirm what he was beginning to understand as his new instincts were telling him. Closing the tip of his tentacle again he focused on the area behind him.

Knowing what to expect he felt the muscles within the tip of his tentacle rub the pads together making a subtle noise. The array of tiny sensory organs spread along on the back of his tentacles and even to a lesser extent the tendrils on his face picked up the reflection on that faint sound. His instincts told him he was literally hearing sound echoes through specialized follicles. Stilling the constant movement of his tentacles and focusing he could sense sounds and movement from a much wider range. He had a built in sonar system that could tell him where everything around him was to within a fraction of an inch, and there was more.

The building around him was silent with the exception of the occasional tick and creak of settling and expansion or contractions brought about by temperature changes. He was fairly certain the floor he was on had been evacuated, he could sense no one. The floors above and below were too muffled to give him much information. Relaxing from the stilled moment he watched his tentacles move for a few moments.

Each of them moved independently, he knew they were moving but didn't need to spend any attention on keeping them moving. It was like breathing to him. Even the tendrils of his face moved slightly. They seemed to be dedicated to sensing the air. As amazing as his sight and the sensory additions of his tentacles the tendrils added to his sense of smell.

It was taking him a little time to understand just what he was smelling from them but should he have sensed the individuals before stepping into the restroom Robert could have identified each and every one of them. He wondered how this new sense of smell measured up against the reputation dogs had. The layers of the scents just in the restroom was more than he'd ever imagined.

Stepping back and looking at himself with everything in mind, he smiled. A large feline with tentacles extra arms and a number of added sensory abilities stared back at him. He had ears that looked much longer and narrower than normal for a feline but the tail looked as it should. His new displacer beast body was taller than he had been and clearly more muscular, and he was eager to put it to the test. In the various role-play games he'd participated in years ago displacer beasts were one or two steps above cannon fodder. After examining his body and sensory abilities it looked as though a typical human would have trouble besting something like he was now. Turning he made his way back to the lighted area of the floor.

He soon stepped into a windowed office to complete his self examination. His fur, or rather feathers as his instincts were advising him, had the coloration quite close to that of snow leopards. The biggest difference was in how short and thin the feathers that covered him. In looking closely at them he couldn't tell the difference visually, but the truth was in experiencing their function. It was in the specialization of the various feathers that gave him the expanded sensory capabilities. As far as their feel they may as well have been fur, his body felt smooth and soft under his paw pads. Tilting his head at the desire that was rising within him he watched his reflection in the glass as he complied with the desire.

His tentacles started grooming his body, cleaning himself. It was not only fascinating to watch but imparted a pleasant sensation as his opened tentacle ends stroked over every inch of his body. The tips of his tentacles sported the raised ridges that filled the pads and he watched as each tentacle started in on the grooming process. His reflection in the glass smiled back at him. Considering how much he resembled a feline this was much better than having to spend hours essentially licking every inch of his body and lengthy tentacles.

Bringing a tentacle forward to examine Robert saw the tiny ridges within the spade shaped open tentacle tip were filled with dust and other bits of dirt. Obeying the instincts again he closed and opened the spade to see the dust and dirt fall out of the ridges. After clenching his tentacle spade three times the

pads were clean. After the other tentacle pads cleaned themselves he resumed his self grooming unit his instincts were satisfied.

Robert voiced the only conclusion that came to him. "This is no mistake. Something or someone engineered this body."