

# The Seminar

A speaker attempts to provide some useful information for a world where TFs are common. A TF story by Lus Rangifer (aka Eaglehooves)

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Liz looked through the door into the conference room, quickly scanning the crowd. Waiting for her on the other side looked to be about fifty guests, mostly humans, but based on the ears and horns poking above the crowd, certainly a number of anthros had shown up as well. She looked down at her prepared speech, raising an eyebrow at one of her earlier notes, before grumbling under her breath to herself. No time to fix it now.

“No pressure, Liz. This can’t go worse than the last one.” She said to herself with a sort of sigh, following it up with several slow, deep breaths to try and calm herself.

Feeling sufficiently composed she opened the door and walked with a purpose to the podium the hotel staff had carted in for her. She set down her notes, adjusted the microphone height, and looked up at the crowd.

“On behalf of The Genre-blindness in Transformation Foundation, I’d like to welcome you all to this afternoon’s educational seminar. We’ve invited you all to join us here today because someone close to you; a friend, a family member, a co-worker, someone is concerned that you seem to be unaware of the transformation triggers we all encounter on a regular basis.”

Liz glanced down at her notecards as she cycled to the next one, before looking back up at the crowd. Most of them seemed bored already, although less than she expected were on their phones. In the back a man slipped in late, knocking over a woman who looked out of place in a black vintage dress. She paused for a moment as they glared at each other, about to ask if there was a problem, before the man slipped into a seat and the woman made some sort of presumably rude gesture at him.

“Now as you may be aware, transformation has been utilized in art and literature throughout history as a way to explore a variety of concepts, such as humanity, otherness, and identity, among many others. With the Large Hadron Collider ‘Dimensional Incident’ of 2028 however, and the ensuing damage to the fabric of reality, transformation became a concern in our daily lives. When these changes occur is a bit unpredictable, as is the outcome of the transformation. There are triggers, however, that can be identified and avoided. The most obvious, and I know this sounds silly, is magic. Our-”

She paused as the man who had slipped in late fell out of his chair into the aisle, wrapping an arm that now ended in a pink foreleg and a cloven hoof around his swelling belly. The people seated near him looked down in concern as he rolled to his side, then back up at the podium,

unsure if this was part of the presentation. Liz shook her head and mentally reordered the next section to make the best of it, before continuing on.

“Our new reality has a sense of humor, and while science can’t explain the mechanisms by which they accomplish it, you should never insult a witch, warlock, sorcerer, or anyone claiming to be any type of magic user, as a belief in magic can locally cause it to become real.”

Liz froze awkwardly as the sound of the pig-man’s human clothing ripping to make way for his larger frame distracted the crowd, calling attention to him as he attempted to embarrassingly crawl to the back doors, unable to balance on his new trotters yet.

“Apologies for the unplanned demonstration. Putting time and physical distance between the caster and victim may or may not revert the change. Now, another type of magic change is the cursed object. Some of these are seemingly normal, but most are strangely and enticingly out of place, and-”

“Like this cowbell I found in the bushes next to the lobby?” A man in the second row cut her off to ask, standing up to hold a square, brass colored bell with an open leather strap in front of him.

“Yes!” Liz exclaimed, pointing at it. “Get as far away from that as possible! Whatever you do, do not-”

As she nearly yelled the instruction at him the bell seemed to magnetize to his neck, the strap snapping closed as it made contact.

“-put it on.” She continued, her frantic tone suddenly turning to one of quiet defeat. The man screamed in surprise as he fell backwards into his chair, knocking it over. She put her hand over her eyes and shook her head as he knocked the chair backwards, falling back into the next row as a pair of black hooves at the end of white-furred legs with black spots kicked up comically.

“The object is usually related to the transformation it causes, like the cowbell for a cow transformation we just saw. Again, putting physical distance and time between the victim and the cause of the transformation is the best bet for reverting the change. This can be complicated by objects being difficult to remove, and some victims not wanting to part with them. Avoidance is safest way-”

A scream rang out from the middle of the room, and Liz looked up from the new cow in front to a young man on the middle left who’s phone was melting into a silvery, metallic sludge in his hand. She watched as he desperately tried to brush the sludge off with his left hand, which only caused it to spread to his other arm.

“There’s also nanobots! They’re a useful part of modern life, but you should avoid touching or activating unidentified metallic goo! They could contain a pre-programmed transformation, or be malfunctioning!”

As the man’s screams were cut off by the goo reaching his head, forming a blue glass surface where his face used to be, she looked over at the rest of the increasingly unnerved attendees. In the back the woman in the vintage dress was flirting with another one of her attendees, who based on the lack of holes in his hat and the excessive tightness of his shirt, probably hadn’t been literally a stallion when he came in. Off to the right she saw a sheepgirl looking down at her arms through the lenses of a muzzled gas mask, as black goo rolled down her arms and formed into rubber gloves.

“And chemical and radioactive mutagens! More common in industrial settings, but if you do run into something toxic looking, don’t get close to check!” Liz blurted out, rushing to try and keep ahead of all the different changes overtaking her audience.

“Anyone want some cream for their coffee?” The former-man, now clearly a female dairy cow in the front asked.

“Yeah! That would be great!” the man next to her replied, placing a cup with the hotel logo underneath her udder and helping himself.

“No! That’s like textbook-” Liz blurted out at them, as the man put the mug to his lips.

“*Moooooooo*”. As the man pulled the mug away from his lips Liz could see they were already moving out from his face, taking on the shape of a muzzle. Down lower a tail had quickly found it’s way over the waist of his pants, while a bulge in the front of them made it apparent he would soon have his own supply of cream.

“We didn’t provide coffee. Where...?” Liz said to herself, tilting her head in confusion. “Anyway, transformation can be contagious! Avoid victims until you’re sure they’re stable! Don’t become another victim in the process of...”

Liz trailed off as she scanned the audience. The rubber sheep was accompanied now by a rubber lion, who she appeared to have ensnared with a crook she’d seemingly produced from thin air. Next to the robot it looked like a woman had attempted to help at some point, based on the pink nanobot sludge that seemed to be melting her and leaving a woman-shaped pink googirl behind. In the back four pigs were on their hands and knees, eating snacks spilled from a dropped purse, while the cow up front served another pair of attendees who had produced coffees from nowhere, and were apparently oblivious to the transforming cowgirl one seat over. A good seventy percent of the audience was either transformed, transforming, or seemingly in the gravity well of one, and none of them were listening to her anymore.

With a defeated sigh Liz tossed her notecards and stepped away from the podium, making her way dejectedly back to the back door of the conference room. She pulled out her phone along the way, and tapped the first listing in her speed-dial.

“It went just like the last one. Cancel the mutagen release, and pull the canisters. They all got themselves transformed before I could get to the part where I’m testing something new that combines elements of multiple triggers on them.”

As she closed the door on the chaos behind her, there was a murmur on the other end of the line.

“Yeah, I’ll try and cut down the talking next time, but I’m not just opening with the mutagen. You’ve *got* to do a speech before something like that.”