

Lucky Cats and Jackpots

Commission for MrTheRandomGuy42

Elegance, looks, fast and good hands, an eye for cues and being a people person. All of these things are important for someone to be able to work in a high class restaurant, serving a multitude of hungry, judgmental people. Unlike some place like a fast food joint or regular bar/deli, people just a bit more competent and hardworking than the average part-time teenager were needed to fulfill the restaurant's needs to its customers.

With that in mind it's a little hard to believe that I'm actually working here. Perhaps I was over-romanticizing how classy this place was, but still, it was at least a bit more inviting than working behind a register at the nearest fast food place.

My name is Chris. I live in California, and I work at a Casino. More specifically, I'm a caterer at the restaurant within the Casino. It's my job to take and deliver orders to the patrons who come to eat after wasting or winning money at the games. Let's see... oh, I like to consider myself a people person, one of the main reasons I took the job, and currently I am trying to build up my savings.

I only started working here a little while ago. It's harder than it looks. I do my best to put my all in my work, even if people might find that weird for someone who's just a waiter working for tips. I'd like to think my work ethic is one of my best qualities.

But this is starting to feel more like a resume, so let's reel it back a little.

I sat in a break room at the back of the restaurant, sipping water from a plastic cup. My feet hurt, and the constant ringing from the slots and other games in the other part of the building were getting to my head.

"Ugh... another mess..." I couldn't help but vent my frustrations back here. Just before this, I had dropped yet another set of plates. Something that I skillfully attempted to hide in my interview and resume was that I was maybe just a bit of a clutz. I did my best not make a fool of myself too much, but even I had to admit at this point that it was happening perhaps far too often. The supervisor seemed to think so too, judging by the way she instantly recognized me, and the look that she was giving me.

I shuddered as I thought of her. I wasn't an old or favorite employee or anything. They could drop me any time, especially once they realized that my set of hands wasn't worth having to replace things, even if they took the expenses out of my check. She never seemed to scold me or mouth me off, but I could feel the disappointment whenever I met her gaze. For some reason

that hurt more than any risk of being fired; letting down the boss after they had such hopes for me. If I did that, I'd be letting myself down.

Actually, back to my check... speaking of money, my eyes wandered to my tip box. There was no real point in looking. I don't even remember if I actually got anything today. That was another problem. Although it's not like I could blame anyone but myself for a lack of good tips.

"Ugh!" I tossed my empty cup into the trash and rubbed my forehead. This had to stop. I'm sure my effort wasn't the problem, so what was? My mindset? My looks?

Yeah. It was obvious. I wasn't elegant or good on my feet or hands. I wasn't any good at really reading people. As much as I like talking to people, I was admittedly pretty reclusive otherwise. It'd help if I looked like a real caterer. Pale skinned, a hunch from too much slouching while growing up. Could probably work out and eat better in my spare time too, and do something with my hair besides cutting most of it off!

I shake my head. There's nothing I could do about that now. I could figure out a way to be more useful and appreciated at my job after I actually finish doing my job for the day. Slapping my cheeks a few times I head back out.

Thankfully I managed to avoid making any more messes by the time the last customers left, but I think the damage was done. Most of the other workers ignored me, and I didn't even see the supervisor, she was probably somewhere else in the building doing last minute stuff.

"Another day..." a wistful sigh escapes me. How? How to obtain everything I needed to be the best caterer in the world! Or, well, at least this restaurant.

Regardless of my concerns and desires, it was time for me to go. I walked through the Casino to the front doors. I liked going through that way to see all the people and lights, and of course avoid the crowd of other employees going through the back entrance. The restaurant closes a couple of hours before the whole Casino did, if I remember right. I never really bothered spending time gambling but... I look at my wallet, and consider the amount of my check going into expenses to replace everything I've broken. I can't help but shudder.

With that in mind I head to one of the slot machines. It was larger and separate from the rest of the rows, no doubt a special, bigger reward for bigger risks.

Maybe things will go my way now. Yes! Believe in my luck!

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Things aren't going my way. My luck failed me. The Casino is getting emptier and it sounds like it's nearing closing time.

Two hours. My eyes were starting to strain from looking at the slots for so long. I stood up straight, pressing on my back. I could hear some of the joints popping. "Dangit..." I won a few times, but really I only managed to make back a little less than what I had started with. I guess that meant my luck evened out. How boring.

"One more." I promise to myself. When you work in a Casino, of course you realize that 'one more time' usually meant the exact opposite, but I could control myself. I put in the final coins and pulled the lever, the 3 slots spinning rapidly.

The machine whirred and whistled as it always did before the slots began to stop.

7.

7!!

7!!!?

The machine started sounding off, louder than any other time I ever got any sort of match from it. The jingles and bells played as the entire box lit up like a christmas tree. I could hardly believe it.

A jackpot... A jackpot!! I might not even ever have to work again! Was luck on my side all along!? To think that tonight would be the night where everything would change! I couldn't help but laugh. If there was anyone around, they're probably staring at me like some kind of weirdo, but I don't care!

I was lost in my own head celebrating for a while before I looked to the slot machine and noted something wrong.

Specifically, that despite the clear results on the slots, no money had come out. Not a single chip. No even a bit of dust. My mouth hung open in shock and despair as I gripped the sides of the machine. "No no no... b-but... I won...! Wh-where's my..."

I couldn't believe it. This was some sort of... irony, right? I could only hang my head. A rollercoaster of emotions, from down to up to right off a cliff. I felt too tired to really go find someone to talk to about this. I finally left, feeling particularly hopeless now. This must be how

the average person going into the Casino feels after they leave. I can't for the life of me see why they would go gambling if it meant dealing with this kind of despair. Masochism, maybe.

I usually walk home. It's a relatively long one, I guess, although it was short enough that I didn't particularly feel the need to take a bus or something to go to and from work. Kept me in shape, at least.

The moon glistened above me that night. I couldn't help but pause to look up at it. I didn't know it'd be a full moon tonight, although I wasn't really one to keep track of that. I look out to the horizon, and to the bright, shining white orb in the sky, interrupting my walk across the sand to take it all in.

A benefit to my job, at the very least, was its location. Every night once my shift was over I got to walk by the beach, long after everyone else had left. Sometimes I would take a small detour and walk along the sand, if I was feeling thoughtful or bummed out. Tonight was one of those nights.

The waves bobbed along the sand in their steady rhythm. The dark waters ebbed and flowed with a mystic shine to them. I couldn't help but allow a sigh to escape me. The moon was really beautiful tonight. I wasn't much for these kinds of scenes, but the way it seemed to glow, reflecting off the sea, captured me. I scratched an itch on my chest absentmindedly as I watched the serene moment. Honestly, looking out here, I couldn't help but admit that it perked me up a little, a warm fuzzy feeling in my chest as everything around me besides the bright moon and its reflection seemed to fade.

...

Then I realized it. Things really were starting to fade. I only just realized the numb, strange feeling in my body once my vision began to waver and blur. I soon realized that that "warm fuzzy" feeling was growing. The corners of my vision were a shaking darkness, a sting in my head worse than any migraine I've ever felt. I felt a sudden unforgiving heaviness in my legs, as if someone had snuck weights onto them when I wasn't looking as a prank.

I practically tripped over myself as I tried to keep upright. My vision... it was like looking at a low quality camera recording of what I was seeing instead of the real thing. What was happening? Am I sick? I'm not so sure. I couldn't even hear the waves anymore. Just a thump in my head. My hand, suddenly sweaty, clutched at my chest. I felt hot, tired, weak.

"Ngg... wha..." I gasped. I just couldn't support myself any longer as I fell to a knee, the sand below rushing closer as I dropped to the ground. I held my poor, dizzy head, shifting my legs under me into a sitting position.

That warm feeling in my chest felt hot. Overbearing, even. Enough that it seemed to spread outside of my body too. There was an odd fuzzy tickle across my skin, as if I were wearing a

sweater underneath my shirt. I felt my lips curl into a grimace, shaking hands fumbling to unbutton the collared shirt. It was a slow, arduous process, my suddenly very clumsy fingers struggling to carefully remove each button one at a time.

Finally the last button was off. I pulled my shirt apart and looked down.

I had to blink my eyes to make sure they weren't tearing or that I wasn't hallucinating. It was surely not a trick of the moonlight, either, as I looked at my chest.

White. A clean streak of pristine white hairs growing across my body. From the center of my torso the fluff of snow seemed to spread. More specifically, was I growing them? I shook my head to try and get things to start working properly again, a hand going to my skin to feel it, just to confirm if this was truly real.

And yet I could feel it. The soft, fluffy hair. No, more specifically, it was more like fur, a thin, even coat moving across my torso. "...What..." I whispered, clutching a bit of fur within my hand. As if I was pulling at my own hair atop my scalp, I could feel the action, as if I were trying to pull off my skin. "Wh-what is this!?" I couldn't help but yell out soberly despite my nausea-like state.

This was wrong, my mind told me, yelled at me. Oh so very wrong. I stare down in fear and curiosity as the shining coat of fur moved over my belly and concealed my nipples after swallowing the entirety of my chest. It wrapped under my arms and down into my pants, leaving no bit of skin on my front torso exposed for me to be able to see.

I couldn't help it, I hugged myself with a shiver, curling up on the sandy shore. My body was hot, my stomach churned. The fur was just the start, I soon came to realize. I gasped and muttered obscenities I wasn't even sure about myself, a sudden pulling feeling in my stomach. I looked down, and again I had to convince myself mentally that this wasn't a trick of my messed up eyes as I saw my body changing even more. My torso was shrinking, thinning. There was a petiteness to it, a delicate air visible even when it was completely covered in fur.

I grit my teeth and clutch my gut. A pricking feeling in my shoulders made me roll the two joints to try and relieve this sudden stress upon them. It was as if my back was in several knots, a soreness I could only properly describe as alien. My shirt, which I realized seemed to be too *large* for me now, fell off of my shoulders. Not only had they also been covered in the same white fur, but they seemed to be altering in their very shape. Softer and rounder, less broad, almost, dare I say it, *feminine*.

I shut my eyes and gasped, bucking my hips involuntarily. The bones within were reshaping, and with them the meat and mass shifting, I could feel it. My pants felt tight, tight enough that the discomfort pushed itself to the top of my mind. I couldn't think of anything else but to free my

lower body from this sudden prison. I reach down to undo the button and then found myself wiggling and kicking out of the offending clothes. Already I could feel the effect as my now white-furred and notably rounder hips were free, the cold night air brushing against my exposed, sensitive skin strangely.

The fur continued to grow from my hyper-sensitive skin until it stopped mid thigh, I tucked my legs underneath me as the fur grew over my crotch. I could feel the coat covering my bottom, and I did my best to ignore that it seemed rounder as well when I looked behind me. The fur spread down from my shoulders to the arms, where it continued to go until a white coat covered everything up to my elbows.

My body looked so different. That's what came to mind when I looked down at myself. It was like I was wearing some kind of weird suit, and the suit in question had a body different from mine. I tried to stand but my legs refused. It was as if my body were asleep, yet I was still conscious. Honestly, I might have preferred to have been unconscious at this point.

I was aware of an itching tingle across my neck, even after trying to ignore it; the signs that the fur was beginning to creep upward. I reached up with a hand to feel my cheek as the soft fuzz consumed it. The growing fur had no mercy, leaving no bit of my head uncovered aside from the hair that was already atop it. Even my ears soon found themselves covered in fluffy white, as I realized once I felt around long enough.

I felt my cheeks in awe, running my hands over my face. I was aware that the change wasn't finished. I could feel my face shifting much like the rest of my body that had been consumed in the fur. My chin and cheeks felt rounder, softer, less boney and square, my nose shrinking down and my mouth thinning. I already didn't exactly have a very chiseled, manly jaw before this happened, but now... well, if I had a mirror, I imagined I would look pretty girly even with all this fur on me.

I shook my head, before looking down at myself. It wasn't exactly at the top of my list of worries and concerns before, but now I realized that I was naked. If it weren't for the fur, all of my unmentionables would be exposed to the world. Even with my sick, dizzy self I covered up my crotch, a heat in my cheeks. When my hand brushed my groin I felt an odd tingle.

It wasn't a pleasant one either. In fact, it was decidedly the opposite. I lurched, a cracking groan escaping my lips. Something was happening to my privates. It was like they were being pushed inside. Both my hands went down to clutch my aching groin. I could feel it then, my manhood seemed to be shrinking, receding, pulling back into my body entirely. I felt sick, disgusting, my mind absolutely lost as to what was happening to me. All I knew was that after a few moments my one sign of maleness was gone, replaced with... something that I couldn't dare touch, as if doing so would doom me to some kind of divine punishment.

I was holding it together pretty well all things considered, although maybe that was because my nausea was making me too tired and woozy to have a proper panic attack. Yeah, that was probably it. I could really lie down at the moment, although with all this sand, I don't want to even think about getting it out of my new fur coat.

My hand went to the ground below as I steadied myself. "Okay... okay... my... I'm changing. I'm some kind of... furry, weird lady now..." I whispered to myself. Even my voice sounded off, different. I ignored that. One of the least drastic things about this, honestly. I could shave all this fur off, maybe? I don't look that different. I could just pretend nothing happened. Say that I did something with my hair, or that I had a weird genetic condition. Maybe that I was always a girl to begin with and then pretend to get upset when people act surprised or something.

Alright then.

A hand goes to my chest. Despite it feeling a little sensitive, it was pretty flat. I wasn't sure whether to be disappointed about that or not. My woozy mind figured that if I was going to be a girl now, I could at least get the full package for my troubles.

That segue quickly left once I took a good look at my arm. Now, my arms might have been... hairier than average before this, but now the hairs seemed more... voluminous. Not to mention, were they changing color? It's hard to tell in this light, but I could swear that they were. Surprisingly, though, it wasn't the same white as the rest of my body. Instead they seemed to be turning a deep blue. I held my arms out to watch as a shiny, clean blue coat grew in, swallowing all of my arms, crawling up my wrists and to my hands, consuming each finger. At the same time my arms shrank, daintier and skinnier than they already were. There was a heat spreading over the skin on my legs and I could only imagine that they were gaining a similar coat.

"Right, of course, why wouldn't my whole body get all furry..." I reasoned to myself, before feeling at my neck. My eyes darted downward to watch more blue fur growing around my neck. This one, however, didn't stop at just covering. No, the individual hairs grew far longer, an oddly pristine curl to my apparently new 'collar'. I poked at the soft fur experimentally only to be distracted from my findings by an itch atop my head.

I felt at my simple crewcut. The itch on my scalp was practically burning as I scratched at it with my fluffy, small fingers. Soon I realized that as I scratched my hair seemed to be growing. I had always kept it really short, but now it seemed to be making up for all that as it practically poofed up and outward atop my head. Looking up I could just barely see a faint bob of blue. My hair was brown normally, so it was clear that it had also become a victim of this change.

Now there was no doubt that my entire body had been covered in fur. If I were to walk around like this, people would probably think I was one of those types of guys that went around in freaky animal suits or something. I couldn't help but laugh weakly at the thought, woozy as I

was. For a moment I figured that my change was done, finished, but why did I still feel so weird and warm?

I guess I'm pretty foolish, because of course fate wasn't finished with me tonight. There was another twitch, another numb, thumping pain through my head. Something else was happening. I tried to pinpoint where exactly until my hands finally patted my ears. They were changing, transforming. I could only carefully poke them in disbelief as I could feel them *sliding* upwards, resting moving closer to the top of my head. From there I felt them grow. I already couldn't really hear anything, but now I was aware of an odd muteness to everything as my ears altered themselves to a new, alien form. They were longer, reaching past even the big puff my hair had become. At that point they actually curved down inwards and still kept growing, as if they flopped under their own weight. Finally they stopped, thankfully. I could feel some extra fur at the very ends of my new ears, a white curl. At least now I could confirm that my ears were white, since they were long enough that I could see the tips if I moved them over a bit.

I heaved forward as I felt a sudden tug on my face. More specifically, my nose. There was an odd, unpleasant pinch and as my hands rushed to my face and I struggled to look at what was happening I could tell why. My nose was shifting, flattening down into a round, soft, small button. From the very corner of my eyes I could see it turn black with no obvious fur on it anymore.

"Oh god... oh god... I-I'm not human...!" All this fur, and then the ears and now my nose? What exactly am I going to be at the end of all this!? I panicked now, for real, looking down and around my body. It was only a matter of time before something else changed. My face was strained, and I could feel the bones and skin shifting and stretching and shrinking all over. It was altering even more. I could tell I still had a humanoid head after the first wave but now, I wasn't so sure. My head shouldn't have been so round, my mouth so small, my chin so featureless. My tongue ran over sharper canines and a distinct lack of lips.

"No no no...!" I whispered. I don't know why I suddenly now felt like fighting. Maybe it was because the headaches and aches weren't as intense anymore, that I felt a bit more awake and aware of my body.

I could feel my shoulders stiffening again, my bones cracking, altering. This change was even more drastic than the last. I could only moan weakly as I looked down, seeing the changes happening to my arms. They... they're shrinking. The entire limb squashing down in length, all while my hands shook and twitched involuntarily. I held them up and watched, my thin fingers receding down into my hand, leaving some kind of weird blue digitless stump of a paw in its place. My other hand, of course, was the same. They were still a bit flexible, but the lack of thumbs probably meant I wouldn't be grabbing anything easily any time soon.

My new hands went to my gut. There was a lurch and I swear I could hear my body audibly straining. I realized that despite me not moving from my sitting position, the sand below me was

getting closer to my eye level. The reason was obvious. I was shrinking. My tall, lean form was disappearing into nothing. I must have lost at least a foot. Then another. Humorously my tiny arms were a lot more in proportion to my upper body now, at 'least'. Regardless my body was still changing. The skinny, womanly curves rounded out more to go with my new size.

The fur on my hips began growing again, almost like a natural skirt or something if you ignored that it wasn't growing on my front, just the sides. Of course, I wasn't really paying attention to that. I was paying more attention to my legs. Just like my arms they began to shrink away, hips growing smaller as I saw with my own eyes my naturally long legs lose practically all of their length. It was like an invisible force was flattening them down closer to my body.

Once they got short enough I got to see my feet. They were reshaping, altering to something more inhuman. It was a more extreme version of what happened to my hands, really, as I saw my feet squish down into digitless, tiny stubs with barely any flexibility.

I was acutely aware at this point that I was becoming an animal of some kind, of course, but perhaps more concerning was that it *wasn't an animal I recognized*. No, this body was something not of this Earth. At the very least I had never heard of a species of small white-and-blue furred... whatever I am that stood on two legs and had no paws.

As I pondered what to do with this information something began to push from my back. I sat up atop the fallen pile of my clothes and turned my fluffy blue neck around to see what was happening now. I could see in the moonlight two lumps pushing out of my back above my bottom. As much as I wanted to feel them, my little arms could barely reach. Either way, I did get to watch them push out, longer and longer, steadily gaining more fur, one growing atop the other. I realized that I was growing a tail. Actually, I was growing *two* tails, which very definitely confirmed my suspicion that I was not any sort of real animal.

They had finished growing, white with a large curl at the end and blue at the base, when my eyes grew fuzzy. Were they changing too? Obviously I couldn't really see them do so, but after rubbing at them for a while I was surprised to find that my vision had cleared up when I reopened them. No, that's kind of a lie. My vision was better than ever. Despite the darkness of the night I could see pretty well, and everything was oddly crisp and clear. I guess monster eyes are better than a human's.

Was it finished? I wasn't sure. I noted that the soreness and nausea seemed to be mostly gone. All that was left was a tired feeling. Like waking up from a deep sleep, I guess. I dared not move. I just wanted to will this all away, to pretend that I wasn't some kind of freak lab animal. I ignored the sand in my fur and the very real feeling of tears beginning to well up in my eyes. What was I to do? What could I do? Go into hiding? Find help?

"Hey... what's that?" I heard a voice. I could feel my tiny heart stop for a second. The worst had happened before I even had the chance to take precautions or run away. I had been found.

I could hear the person, a woman from the sound of her voice, approaching me. I could dash away like nothing happened, although I wasn't sure if I was properly used to my new body. For some reason I decided to just stay there. When she sounded close I faced the music and turned to look at her.

Oh.

Oh no.

I thought it was the worst before, but it really did just spiral down even farther. What was with my luck today!?

Standing before me with an expression both confused and concerned was someone I recognized. It was my supervisor, my boss from the Casino. *Why. Why was she here?* I guess she lives this way too, and the reason I never saw it was because she stayed later than everyone else.

"B-boss...!" I stammered, before my paws rushed straight to my mouth. First of all, was that my voice? It sounded like a little girl's! Second of all, why the HELL did I say that to begin with!?

Already she was looking at me with wide eyes. She certainly didn't expect the *thing* in front of her to talk, much less to know her. "...Do I know you?" She crossed her arms the way she did when she was really focused on something.

I winced. She must have noticed my distress, as her gaze softened. I couldn't help it. At this point, rather than running away, I really needed someone to just... spill it all to, I think.

So I did.

I told her who I was, what happened to me. She took it surprisingly well. Meanwhile here I am sobbing.

A finger wiped some tears off of my furry cheeks. I looked up at her as she helped me stand up. "Hmmm. I wanted to talk to you about your performance at work, but this seems to be a bad time" she mused to herself. I couldn't help but let her rest a hand on my head.

"W-work...? I-I don't think that really matters anymore. Look at me..." I sniffled. It wasn't fair. I just wanted to impress everyone, and now there's no way I could go back. "You might as well just fire me now."

She placed a hand on her chin thoughtfully. Finally she stood up straight. "Let's walk and talk, Chris." I blinked up at her. She seemed to have ignored my complaining, as she was already moving. I stumbled with a blush as I wiggled off of my clothes and attempted to follow.

"I don't think you should quit or leave work" she started off. Before I could protest or retort, she kept talking. "You aren't a bad employee. Your heart is in the right place and you have the right attitude."

"B-but..."

"Your problem, as I've noticed, is that you lack confidence." She looked down to me. There was a sureness in her eyes, along with a softness that I felt was probably a very lucky event for me to be able to see. "I'm sure of it. The only reason you make mistakes is because you're afraid of making them to begin with. While it's normal to be nervous, you let it get to your head."

"I..." I stuttered. I didn't know what to think, what to say. I could feel a warmness in my cheeks, and a wetness in my eyes.

"That's why I'm giving you another chance. I can see your potential, Chris." She smiled down at me. She practically glowed from my angle. "You can outshine everyone else if you just believed in yourself."

"I-I... I can...? B-but..." I couldn't help but sniffle. "I-I appreciate the words, but I can't really make any use of it NOW. Look at me! I-I'm some kind of circus freak! I can't go back to work like this!"

"Why not?" She said simply. I knew the supervisor had a reputation for being pretty... stoic and calm, but this was... "I think you look cute. Just need a bath and you'll be ready for work like always."

We stopped walking. She placed a hand on my head. Her eyes looked right into mine. "Give it some thought, okay? See you tomorrow, Chris."

I couldn't say anything. Both because I was at a loss for words, and because she left. Her words moved through my head, repeating and repeating. Could I... really?

When I first looked into the mirror after taking a bath, I finally had the real chance to see what I looked like. I appeared to be some kind of... cat, thing. My eyes used to be blue, but now they were red, and the whites turned yellow. I was ashamed to admit that I actually thought I looked pretty cute.

I learned a lot of things when I got back home yesterday. Like how to get rid of sand stuck in fur. And how to dry said fur off. And how to turn on a faucet using psychic powers when you're only 2 feet tall.

Oh, and that I had psychic powers. Moving things with my mind and all that. I discovered it when I got a bit upset trying to take a proper bath like this.

Regardless, I was fresh, clean, and standing in my apartment that looked infinitely larger than I ever remembered it being. Today was a new day, for a new 'me'.

And it was a work day.

Part of me didn't want to go. A huge part. Most of me, really. But I made a promise to the supervisor.

Well, not really, but the way she talked sounded like she really really wanted me to come back.

I remembered her words. I could already feel myself shaking.

I stood up straight. I flashed my reflection the most confident look I could give myself. Right. This was my second chance. Right? Right!

There was no point in getting in uniform. I got a small bag to put my keys and wallet in before heading out.

I left earlier than I normally did so I could avoid any crowds. Just to be safe, I also took a 'quieter' route to work. Hopefully luck would be more on my side today.

Of course, even with my extra hidden route, people would no doubt see me. I steeled my nerves and marched on. I was sure that my reddening face was extremely visible due to my snow white fur.

All these eyes were on me. I tried not to make eye contact.

My ears let me hear the whispers.

"Is that some kind of mascot?" "Awww, she's so cute. I wonder if it's a promotional event!" "You think she'd be mad if I touched her ears?" "Is it a robot or something? I don't see anyone moving it..."

"It looks pretty cool though, right?"

That last comment. It stuck to my ears like glue. Was... no one really freaking out...? A-am I really... cute and cool...?

I eventually made it to Casino, back to the employee entrance to the restaurant area. Because of my detour (and far smaller legs), I ended up getting here late. Funny enough, this might be the first time I ever got here NOT early. The door looked so... huge and imposing from down here. I shuddered and glanced behind me. There was still time to turn back. To run away.

No. No more of that. Remember what she said. Confident. Confidence and I can shine.

My paw pushed the door open and I stepped through.

"Ah, there she is" my supervisor's voice startled me as I walked into the back room. "Everyone, meet the new and improved Chris. Remember, I want you all to be supportive of her, and make sure no one causes any trouble for her."

My eyes blinked in confusion before I noted everyone else in the room. And I mean *everyone*. All of my coworkers. All their eyes were on me right at this moment. I could barely comprehend what to think.

Thankfully none of them were freaking out. At most they were, well, extremely confused, but not upset or disturbed or anything. I realized quickly that she must have gotten everyone together to give a briefing of my situation. I should thank her, I guess. Honestly, I wasn't even *thinking* of how everyone else that worked here would react to me, but it looks like she really was covering for me.

A few of the other caterers gave me some last words of encouragement and apology before opening time came. It was nearly time for my reckoning, it looks like.

"You'll do fine." I heard my supervisor say. I looked to see her standing next to me. "Just remember. Be confident."

I nodded. She smiled to me. "I'll be here if you need help. Now get to your tables!"

I paused, but for some reason her words actually did make me feel better. I nodded and forced myself to stand up straight. "Confident. Yes ma'am! I-I won't let you down!"

I headed over to my section of the restaurant. It was time for work.

Things started off well. I did my best to look as cool and confident as I could. It was less embarrassing if I just... well, pretended that this was all natural.

In a way, it was. This was my body now. This was the 'normal' for me. The people coming in seemed to love it, too. I could feel their eyes on me the whole time each time I walked across to a new table.

Then I noticed that my area seemed more crowded than usual. No doubt word was spreading about the magical cat taking and delivering orders.

One of the other caterers gave me a thumbs up when I caught their eye. My face went red and I rushed back to work. Today would no doubt be the busiest day of work yet.

"Aaaand that's the last of 'em out. Closing time! Bring it in, boys!" "Finally, time to head home!" "Good job out there Chris!" "Want me to get some water for you Chris?"

One of the others handed me a small cup of water. Well, they held it out for me to grab with my telepathy. I was getting pretty good at it.

Why?

Well, let's just say I had a lot of practice during my shift with it. Once you start making sure plates don't fall and attempting to write orders with your mind due to your own lack of thumbs, you start to develop pretty impressive controls.

I was exhausted. I sipped my cup as I watched most of the crew head off, eager to go turn it in for the night. I didn't envy them. I wanted to head home too, but I wanted to rest up for the walk back home.

I let out a soft, cute sigh, looking to my side at the box next to me. It was practically bursting with money. I couldn't help but smile. Was this pride? The joys of a successful day of labor? That smile was getting wider as I held my earnings.

I could get used to this feeling. I hadn't messed up any orders, hadn't taken any spills thanks to my new powers, everyone enjoyed having me here. I was a hit! A star!

I had truly shined today, didn't I?

I floated my empty foam cup into the trash and made my way out of the Casino through the back employee door. Before I did leave, I glanced out to the main halls. People were still out

and about gambling, obviously, but it wasn't nearly as crowded as earlier in the day. It looked so different today, so huge and impressive.

A thought hit me just then. The Casino, that jackpot, what happened to me...

Could it have been a coincidence? Or...

"My luck really is wild..." I couldn't help but giggle to myself as I heft up my things and head out the door.

The moon shined just as bright as last night. It felt so different now, though, so alien. I walked along the beach like any other day, except with shorter legs and fur that's going to be annoying to clean out when I get home. Today I didn't feel down or anything though. Instead, I felt... well, *good*.

It was hard to believe that so much had happened in one day. I was still mixed as to whether or not it all happened for the better. Was it good luck or bad luck, that I had become this creature? Would I be able to turn back into a human, or was I stuck like this?

I turned my gaze ahead of me, and I saw that someone else was at the beach tonight. As I walked closer, I recognized who it was who was walking down the same way I was.

...

As I hurried to catch up to my supervisor, a thought occurred to me.

I wondered if she had any kind of relation to my luck for the last 24 hours. It was her who found me out here and helped me...

Perhaps it's a coincidence, but I don't really believe in those anymore after all this.

I couldn't help but laugh, calling out to her to wait for me.

The End