

There's a bar out there, past the moons of Jupiter, snuggled tight into the rings of that big gorgeous gas giant Saturn. It's called the Assembler. Simple name for a not so simple bar. It sprung up out of nowhere. No one seems to remember when it first came to be, only that it's absolutely packed on Saturday nights. Nights like tonight.

The lower artificial gravity makes the crowd glide just a little higher up and down to the soft ephemeral electronica that the DJ booth is pumping out. It's not so much a throng or pulsating crowd as much as a slowly gyrating intimate slow dance of about two hundred.

And then there's you. Sitting up on one of the catwalks, nursing a drink. Staring out at the crowd and watching. Watching for *them*.

They emerge slowly. You're never really sure where they come from. They just start to appear in the crowd. The first sign that you've noticed them is really the tightening of your own bio-suit. There's really no scientific reason for why it happens. The polymers of your suit just seem to cling tighter when they're around. It's fascinating really, maybe that's the reason you keep watching for them.

They're all different, but all the same really. Each one a different species, each with its own unique look, and yet they are all wearing something so similar to one another, they all dance the same fluid dance through the crowd you could swear they were all one person. An otter...well, one presumes it's an otter with that big rudder tail sticking out the back end, but it's hard to tell with the large opaque mask over its head, in a shiny neon blue environment suit that's polished to a mirror sheen, slides through the crowd brushing passerby with its glossy paws.

Another one, a shy mouse-doll-esque figure wobbles up near the outskirts of the dancing crowd. She 'bumps' into several of the patrons on seemingly unsteady high-heels. The bubblehood she's wearing fools them into believing she doesn't know what she's doing, but you know different. You've seen them all at work, know how a few minutes from now they'll all have someone different eating out of the palm of their hand (or kneeling down in front of them, or bending them over a table...you get the idea). There's always a tap tap tap on the shoulder of their intended –

You turn about, shaken out of your reverie by a black clad figure. You've not seen this one before. They look feline, lion maybe by the way the latex bulges around the edge of their tail, but as with the rest of them it's very hard to tell. And if there's a mane in there, it's well hidden by the rest of the latex that coats the feline from head to toe. The mask is the biggest clue there's a cat underneath, or at the very least someone who's doing a very good impersonation of a cat. They're staring at you, looming in close in, leaning their muzzle in to 'sniff' at your neck. You can feel the escape of air, the shiver it sends down your spine for a moment before he leans back and extends a finger and curls it towards you beckoningly.

In something of a daze you wander after him, down the stairs and back onto the main floor. He slips into a softly bluish-light filled booth and pats the seat next to him. Maybe

it was the hum of the music, maybe it was just curiosity, but you're sitting next to him now, letting his latex covered paws slide over your body, tracing your contours with a feathery lightness that leaves you wanting more. As the delicate touches slide all over you, your attention is drawn to a booth opposite yours. The otter you spotted earlier has found someone for his own attention. A snow-leopard by the looks of the tail, flirting with him, giggling and tracing their hands up and down that tight latex bodysuit of the otter's.

Tracing their hands up and down over tight latex, just like your hands are doing right now. Admiring the slickness, the body restrained beneath the tight material. You can feel a corset, black like the rest of the feline, pressing their shape into just the right shape to get your attention. Now that he's so close you can almost make out a set of letters and numbers stamped(?) on his chest. B82. A name maybe? No, name doesn't *feel* right here. A designation maybe. A call-sign.

A glance back at the snow-leopard and the otter confirms, they've found the otter's call-sign too, the way their hands are tracing over the otter's chest now. The feline next to you gently slides a finger around the side of your muzzle and delicately drags your attention back to them, just as the otter is doing the same with their snow-leopard.

Flash. You blink, confused. Something just happened, you're pretty sure. The feline is 'looking' right at you now. Their glossy black eye-ports staring deep down into your eyes, and then you see it again, a flash of color (purple maybe?) just from the rings around the eye-ports. And again, and again. Pulsing, syncing with the beat of the club, with your own breathing, with your own thoughts. And the pulse is slowing. Just like your thoughts.

The feline is looming over you now, body grinding up against your own. You can feel yourself aroused, your body is hot and flustered and you have no idea when you laid back in the booth, or for that matter where the rest of the bar went. You're so focused on the pulsing, the breathing, and the lack of thought that for all you know the booth could have receded into the ground, the whole club vanishing as you and your feline 'friend' descend into the depths of the club's underground tunnels. For all you know, you're now lying on a table, no longer staring at the feline, just staring slack-jawed up at pulsating lights, right next to the snow-leopard.

For all you know, those criss-crossing lights are gently scanning your body, monitoring your arousal, delving deeper into your thoughts for what turns you on and crafting the perfect fantasy for your evening. And behind you stand the otter and the lion, B28 and B82, their forms locked in place. If you could see behind their visors you would probably see their own slack-jawed faces, their minds just as blank and thoughtless as yours now are.

For all you know, that's exactly what happened last night. You just remember waking up, sore in exactly all of the places that make you feel warm and fuzzy inside. You remember sitting up, treading over to the restroom of your hotel facility and opening the

door to see pieces of rubber, of anonymizing squeaky submission hanging from the shower rod. You remember exactly which pieces go on in which order, despite never having put them on before. You know exactly when to do this, where to go, and what your purpose is. At least until you walk back out of the restroom again and forget.

Welcome to the Assembler.