

# Plants & Spiders & Animals, Oh My!

**For Clancy**

**By TheSpiralledEye**

*Erik and his friends decide to try out a discount transformation service; they have no say in what they will each become and as a result wind up as a spider, cow, crocodile, snake and rose bush.*

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Walking into the Diamond was everything Erik had been promised by the advertisements. The city's newest and most modern shopping centre, designed to try and revitalise the mall culture that had died with the rise of the internet in the 2010s. The Diamond boasted several stories of shops, food and experiences including but not limited to five star restaurants, movie theatre and even a small exotic animal zoo on the third floor.

As he and his group entered the ground floor signs advertised everything from a dollar store on the ground level to expensive boutiques and a sky garden. It really was a wonderland with everything you could possibly want; a one stop location for shopping and fun.

“Man, I can already feel my money slipping through my fingers.” Zac sighed with a sad smile.

“Oh look, there is a restaurant deal for couples!” Lily squealed, hugging herself close to Zac’s arm. “Oh can we go?”

Chloe cleared her throat awkwardly and Lily pressed her lips together; she hadn't wanted to invite Chloe along on their little double date with Zac and his girlfriend Rose but Erik had felt sorry for her. She'd been more interested in The Diamond than any of them so when she found out Erik and his best friend were taking their girlfriends opening day what was he supposed to do? Not invite her?

They couldn't change the day either, it was hard enough between Zac's football practice and Rose's cheerleading to find a day that worked for them all to hang out together.

“I am sure there is something we can all do together as a group.” Rose spoke up diplomatically, stepping between the two other women. “I heard a rumour there is an arcade with a full on rollercoaster near the top level.”

“Yeah, I saw it on the way in, it goes outside the building and everything!” Zac added enthusiastically. “Why don't we head up there and if we see anything fun on the way we can stop.”

“Sounds great.” Erik nodded, Lily pouted but said nothing.

Once the others were a little head Erik hugged his girlfriend close.

“Don't worry, I am sure we can go on a romantic outing here in the future. It's going to be here forever after all.”

She smiled and nodded.

“I guess you're right. I just like a good deal, that place looked expensive.”

“We'll budget.”

“If we don't spend all our money today.” Lily giggled, looking around at all the shops they were passing as they hopped on the escalator.

The group made their way through several shops and levels; thankfully managing to steer the girls away from the many clothing brand stores. With all the different things to do here the last thing Erik wanted was to get stuck sitting on a bench while Lily, Rose and Chloe tried on three identical dresses they insisted were very different. As they made their way to the third floor Erik jumped in surprise as Chloe cried out.

“Look, it's Meta Tech!”

Indeed, there was a temporary booth set up with several silver human sized tubes and signs advertising the transformation company. Erik had heard of them of course, but their treatments and experiences were so expensive he'd never given them much consideration, there was no way he could afford one even if he was interested.

‘They have a special on.’ Zac pointed out, indicating a sign.

“Fifty dollars for an hour's transformation.” Chloe said, reading it aloud. “Apparently it's a deal they have going on with The Diamond to help fill out the zoo and botanical garden on this level; some of the animals and plants didn't arrive in time for the opening.”

Curiosity peaked, the group wandered over to watch as a teenage girl stepped up into the booth wearing a strange, skin tight suit that shimmered with wires that had been woven into the fibres. Her family stood close by with excited grins. A younger girl who looked like a miniature version of the teenager was bouncing on her toes with excitement.

“Now remember, I can still understand you once this is done.” The older girl grinned, “So treat me well!”

“I will! I will! You'll see, I'll prove I'm ready for this!”

An employee came over holding a strange looking ray gun and held it up.

“Ready?”

“Absolutely!”

The employee aimed the ray and shot a thin beam of pure blue light into the centre of the suit and Erik watched as before his eyes the teenager in the booth began to change. Her body morphing and shifting as her fingers fused together, her neck turned long and her body was forced onto all fours.

The whole change took only a minute or so but when it was complete there was no sign of the blue suit. Instead, a beautiful chestnut mare stood in the girl's place, tossing her head excitedly. The younger sister squealed with excitement as the employee managed to coax the now horse into a halter and handed it over.

“Now remember,” said the father. “You have to take good care of your sister this month, maybe then we can consider getting you a horse.”

“I will! I will!”

Zac whistled, impressed.

“A whole month, that would cost a pretty penny if an hour costs fifty bucks.”

“There are entire floors of this place designated for five star restaurants and designer brands, I’m guessing there are plenty of rich people around. A shame though, it would be interesting, wouldn’t it?”

“Well you can always take our new fifty dollar deal.” The employee smiled, walking up to them at the edge of the crowd, “we have five suits left for the deal and there just so happens to be five of you. I’d say it’s fate.”

Erik knew when he was being sold something; if anything this woman was coming on a little hard but he’d be lying if he said he wasn’t intrigued. What would it feel like to change his entire body shape like that girl had?

“Should we try it?” Zac asked and after a moment all his companions nodded; clearly he wasn’t the only one who was curious.

“Wonderful!” The employee clapped her hands together before holding out a scanner and taking her fee, “follow me right this way.”

She led them to a hanger where four more of those same shimmering suits were kept, all apparently pre programmed with the transformation.

“Simply put on your desired transformation and stand in front of one of the booths.” She instructed, “Then I will activate the suit with the ray and you’ll be on your way! Of course, as part of the pay off for the discounted price, you will be asked to spend most of your hour in either the zoo or botanical garden as part of the exhibit, but honestly, I think that’s a win-win! The exhibits are much more fun to be in than just walking around the mall.”

Erik’s enthusiasm dimmed slightly as he looked over the labels and he could feel the excitement around his friends fizzle as well; cobra, cow, crocodile, tarantula and rose bush of all things.

“Are these really the only options?” Erik asked, regretting having paid up front.

“That price is heavily discounted.” The employee reminded them, “and trust me, all of these can be lots of fun. I have even tried a few myself!”

“Shall we just draw lots?” Lily suggested and they all nodded, seemed like the best way to go. Erik just prayed he didn’t get the spider.

Lily quickly wrote the transformations down in her notepad and ripped up the pages, scrunching each into a tiny ball and tossing them down on the table so nobody could tell which was what.

“Oh let me go first!” Chloe begged, snatching one up before anybody could answer and unrolling it.

She giggled.

“Cobra....that could be fun.”

Chloe was, to put it mildly, a sort of pudgy girl. She’d been blessed with wide hips and a pear shaped body that no amount of dieting would ever truly make slim. Erik could see why the idea of becoming a super skinny snake would be appealing to her.

“Alright, us next!” Zac grinned, grabbing one for himself and Rose only to pull a face. “Cow!?! Seriously!?”

“Well you are already a bull of a man.” Rose teased, poking him in the bicep, “a cow isn't that far off.”

Zac stuck his tongue out at her as she unrolled her own paper.

“Crocodile...”

“Oooh, my girlfriend is going to be a big ferocious monster.” Zac grinned, “I’m okay with that.”

Both of them shared a flirtatious look and Erik got the distinctly uncomfortable feeling that he was learning far more about his friends sexual preferences from this exchange than he wanted to.

A cold sweat broke out on the back of his neck; nobody had drawn the damn spider yet. Which meant it was still on the table. He grabbed one of the last papers and practically ripped it open.

“Rose bush.” He blinked, unsure how to feel.

On the one hand, it wasn't the damn tarantula, which was nice but on the other...a plant? At least as an animal he could move and communicate a little, as a rose bush wouldn't he just spend his hour sitting in a pot plant? What a waste of fifty bucks. Lily didn't seem that happy either but was trying to act positive.

“Maybe it'll help me get over my fear of spiders?” She shrugged, eyeing Erik's slip. “At least I'll be able to move.”

They all broke off to the booths where they could change, putting on the suit filled Erik with an odd mix of dread and excitement. On the one hand, becoming a plant was terrifying but on the other, he was curious, and it was only an hour after all. The suit was surprisingly comfortable and made of a kind of stretching, ultra light material that conformed to his body perfectly. As he stepped out he was surprised to find that somehow, they seemed to be one size fits all as everybody else was looking snug and comfortable as well. Chloe bounced up to the transformation booth, giving a shy wave to the small crowd that was still gathered to watch.

“Ready?” The employee asked and she nodded.

“I wonder what it'll feel like to have no limbs...” She giggled before the beam hit and the wind was seemingly knocked from her lungs.

At first, Chloe's skin seemed to shimmer, taking on a shiny texture as tiny scales began to form all over her skin as the suit melted into her body. Her fingers elongated, stretching and narrowing, while her nails extended into fine, pointed scales. The transformation continued, her arms and legs gradually losing their human shape, morphing into sinuous appendages adorned with intricate scales that glistened under the harsh lights of the mall's fluorescents.

Her facial features shifted next; her nose and mouth receded subtly while her eyes widened, their irises turning into a striking shade of gold as the pupils turned slitted. Scales cascaded down her face, transforming her visage into something reminiscent of both human and serpent. Her hair melted into her skin, melding seamlessly with the serpentine transformation. Chloe's body elongated, coiling and twisting as it took on a distinctly serpentine form. A sleek, scaled body emerged, its colours a blend of rich, earthy tones and mesmerising patterns that danced along her new body and a thick frill formed around her head.

She fell to the bottom of the booth, coiling around in a circle a few times and flicking her thin tongue; tasting the air. The cobra wiggled excitably; of course she had no way to speak but even Erik could tell she was enjoying herself.

“Are you okay?” Erik asked and the snake nodded its head, giving them a hiss before shifting from side to side.

Lily laughed in relation.

“She’s showing off!”

A second employee appeared, carefully picking the cobra up and placing her on a table ready to be taken up to the zoo for her hour after watching the rest of them change. The first turned back to them brightly.

“Who’s next?”

“Him!” Rose pointed to Zac eagerly, “I want a picture of him as a cow and I need to still have thumbs for that.”

Zac pouted and even Erik couldn’t help but chortle a little at the expression; seeing a man as big and bulking as Zac pouting like a child was just inherently funny.

“Alright,” he stretched, “Let’s get this over with.”

He stepped up to the platform and one beam of light later his body was also contorting in strange ways. Unlike Chloe whose bulk slipped away with the melding suit, Zac’s increased. His muscle turned to round fat as he was forced onto all fours, fingers and toes merging together into hooves even as his face remained human for most of the process.

He groaned; a low, braying sound and Lily couldn't help but laugh a little as an udder swelled beneath his hindlegs. They hadn't specified that he would become a heifer but there you go. Rose pulled out her phone camera just as Zac's ears began to stretch and flatten out at the side of his head and his face became bovine to match his body.

After a few moments the cow stepped forward somewhat awkwardly on its heavy hooves. It was hard to believe that was really Zac, even as Rose eagerly snapped pictures.

"How do you feel?" Rose giggled, "Okay?"

Zac nodded and brayed a little, Erik could be wrong but he was sure he saw something close to a smile on the cows lips. As much as a bovine mouth could muster anyway.

"So does this mean I can call you 'Bessie' now?" Rose teased, indicating to the udder.

Zac turned, awkwardly sticking his head between his legs to admire the udder and brayed again, nodding.

"Did you want to milk her?" The employee offered, holding up a bottle. "We keep this around especially for such transformations.

Rose's eyes lit up and turned back to her bovine boyfriend.

"Oh, can I?" She asked breathlessly and to Erik's utter surprise, Zac mooed and nodded.

It seemed his friend had gotten over the embarrassment of being a cow pretty quickly as he turned willingly and let Rose sit next to his hindlegs to milk. Right in front of a crowd; all of whom were watching with curiosity.

Rose gently took hold of one of the teets and gave it a pull and squeeze, repeating the gesture a few times before a thin stream of milk shot from the tip into the bottle. Zac mooed in approval, seemingly enjoying the experience and Erik found himself blushing. He felt like he was watching something...taboo. Like he'd just walked in on his mate in bed, even though logically he knew that wasn't true. There was nothing inherently sexual about a cow being milked...right?



“Aw, what good milk you made.” Rose praised, giving Zac a pat on the head. “Good Bessie.”

The cow mooed happily and Erik had to hold back a chuckle.

After a few minutes the bottle was filled and passed over to the booth’s employees and a halter placed on ‘Bessie’s’ head. Rose was giggling to herself, obviously getting a kick out of watching her normally dominant boyfriend being lead around on a lead like a docile cow. Zac was led over to where Chloe was waiting and Rose jumped to her feet.

“Guess it’s my turn then.” She smiled, “Zac seems to be having fun. I want in.”

She stepped up to the booth and even the employees seemed to buzz with excitement.

“We don’t get to do the crocodile often.” The one holding the ray admitted, “I’ve never seen it personally. Ready?”

Rose nodded and the beam shot out.

Unlike the other changes, this one seemed to take a moment to kick in but when it did Erik felt his eyes going wide with a mixture of horror and fascination. Rose’s curvy, lithe body was bulging, muscles stretching and changing shape in a way that was almost body horror inspired.

Her limbs shrunk, thick leathering hide covering them and the rest of her body as her bones contorted into their new shape. She flopped down to the ground, belly low to the floor as she balanced on her now stumpy legs.

Her mouth opened as her skull elongated, rows of sharp teeth glinted under the harsh lighting and a strange gargling hiss escaped her throat. Her eyes were the last thing to change, pupils slitting as the iris turned a vivid shade of yellow-green. Erik felt his stomach churn; there was no way that had been pleasant, right?”

“Did that hurt?” He asked, “It looked...unpleasant.”

Rose shook her long head back and forth then shivered, she seemed...happy. She lumbered out of the booth and snapped her jaws as she admired herself in the mirror.

“Does that mean you’re okay?” Lily asked, she snapped her jaw once more and rumbled.

“I can't believe that's her.” Erik shook his head in disbelief, knowing that the huge monster was really their friend, the cheerleader, was unreal.

Rose hissed at them playfully and Erik felt his heart speed up; even knowing he was totally safe he felt a little uneasy being so close to such a dangerous animal. Rose's jaws could snap him like a twig if she wanted.

“Oh! We should get a picture!” Lily suggested, “when else can we do something like this? Erik, put your head in her mouth. Imagine what people will say when they see it!”

“What!?”

Rose snapped her jaw and hissed, nodding as much as her new bulk allowed; Erik's stomach tied itself into knots; how the hell did this end up happening?

“Oh don't be such a scaredy cat.” Lily teased, tossing him her phone, “I'll do it if you're so afraid.”

Erik fumbled, barely catching the phone and Lily got down on all fours closer to Rose's eye level.

“No biting.” She giggled and Rose hissed, opening her jaws wide so that Lily could stick her head inside.

Erik could feel his palms sweating as Rose slowly closed her mouth around Lily's head enough to pin her, without causing her any harm. He snapped a few pictures and the crowd held their breath before Rose released Lily and she got to her feet. There was a wide smile on her face and Erik could practically smell the adrenaline coursing through her veins.

“That was exhilarating.” Lily breathed, “my turn! I want to keep riding the high. If I wait much longer I'll chicken out.”

Erik waved her forward, eager to put off his own change as long as possible. Even if it meant watching his girlfriend turn into a tarantula. The beam hit and he held his breath; he watched as Lily did as well, standing stock still for more than five seconds before groaning and

rubbing at her forehead. When she removed her hand, there was an extra, beady black eye there, then another, and another.

All of a sudden her limbs began to thin and change, an extra set of arms appearing below her normal ones, then another; all eight limbs getting thinner and more flexible as they became more and more spider-like. Lily leaned forward, just barely keeping herself from falling down on all fours (all eights?) as a bulbous abdomen sprouted from her ass. There was a shriek from a woman in the crowd and one man turned pale and fled. Erik couldn't even blame them.

She opened her mouth to say something or perhaps cry out, Erik couldn't be sure, but as she did so all that came out was a terrifying hiss as two mandibles formed from the sides of her lips. Instead of looking horrified, Lily only looked confused and slightly curious, bringing up one finger to run along the fangs before they too disappeared into her new spider appendages.

Finally, all humanity left her as she began to shrink, her face forming into that of a normal spider, albeit a huge tarantula. Erik was speechless as he watched the arachnid skitter from side to side, lifting each leg in turn and attempting to see itself by twisting its odd body. Not it, she, it was still Lily...sort of. At least he could take solace in the fact that no spider would actually move like that.

She lifted up her front two legs, moving from side to side and Erik felt a chuckle bubble up in his chest; she was *waving*. It was almost cute in a creepy sort of way. At least it was until she finally found the mirror and started baring her fangs; girlfriend or not, that was creepy.

Eventually she skittered over to him and Erik swallowed.

"You...good?"

The spider's whole body bobbed in her best impression of a nod. Erik swallowed again, trying in vain to wet his dry mouth as he bent down and offered his hand. He tried and failed to repress a shiver of revulsion feeling her crawl up into his palm. Erik could feel the hair on her legs itching at his skin already.

"Does it feel weird?" He asked, but of course she said nothing.

Right, not like she could speak or make noise the same way the others could.

"Can you control all those legs? Is it hard?"

The tarantula bobbed again and Erik felt his fear begin to dissipate. With a grin he started to call out legs, watching as Lily lifted them each in turn to prove she could, even skittering under his hand to hang there for a moment before returning to his palm.

All of a sudden she moved, far faster than any spider should be allowed to move frankly, down his arm to his pocket. It took all of Erik's self control not to scream a little. Even if he logically knew it was Lily it still didn't feel nice having a spider crawl all over him. She stopped at his jean pocket, tapping against it with one of her legs.

"Huh?"

She repeated the gesture and understanding suddenly washed over him.

"Oh right, pictures."

He fumbled awkwardly as she crawled back to his free hand and posed for several snaps. Erik could feel the eyes of the employees and his friends on him; he was the only one left. He didn't realise until he took his fifth picture that he was actually stalling.

Lily didn't seem to mind though; she was having a ball. Lifting and contorting her body in ways a human one simply couldn't. At one point she even lowered those fangs to Erik's skin and squeezed, not hard enough to break the skin, but certainly hard enough that he felt it. That cold sweat on the back of his neck doubled in strength and he was seriously worried his shirt was going to stain.

"O-okay that's enough of that." He laughed nervously. "Stop now."

Lily paused and for a split second he was actually afraid his girlfriend was going to bite him but then, to his relief, she let go. With a sigh he placed her on a nearby table next to Chloe who hissed in greeting. No more putting things off, it was time to find out what it felt like to become a tree. Or, bush rather.

Erik bit his lip as he stepped up to the booth, his mind was racing. As a plant he wouldn't be able to move or talk, even Lily had more ways of communicating than he would. Was he really going to do this? Maybe he should just kiss the fifty bucks goodbye and call it a day. But then his eyes met the others, all waiting for him expectantly; he couldn't be the only one to chicken out. Especially after the monstrous transformations Lily and Rose went through; he'd never live it down. The employee placed a pot before him half filled with brown earth.

“I know it’s a bit awkward but if you can step here.” She instructed, “you’ll fit soon enough.”

Far more timidly than he wanted to, Erick stepped into the small plant, feeling the hard ceramic squeeze his feet as he struggled to fit. The woman aimed the gun and he braced himself as the light shot into his suit. Erik wasn't sure what he'd been expecting; an impact feeling of some kind at least but it genuinely felt like nothing.

Then, a creeping stiffness began to spread throughout his body. The urge to stretch in an effort to get rid of the slightly uncomfortable feeling was strong. He raised his arms up, feeling the muscles burn satisfyingly before locking into place. The blue suit forced his legs together much like they had Chloe's but instead of shrinking they seemed to become thicker, solidifying together as his skin began to harden into bark. It was oddly relaxing; it took no effort to hold himself in place as the bark stiffened and his flesh turned to wood. He could feel smaller branches and tiny leaves beginning to grow out of his increasing limbs as he began to shrink.

His feet became roots that burrowed into the dirt of his pot and he could feel how cool and refreshing it was. The moisture beneath the surface soaking into the tips of his roots as his eyes closed and his transformation finished.

He was blind, deaf, mute and paralysed and yet he didn't feel any panic. His only sensation left was touch and it was oddly relaxing. He remembered once hearing about the soothing qualities of sensory deprivation tanks; this must have been similar. All he could do was focus on the slight breeze between his leaves and the soft caress of air against the petals of his flowers.

Existing this way was effortless; he didn't even have to expend energy subconsciously breathing or pumping blood. Instead he could simply *be*. He almost felt sorry for the others in their animal forms; they could never understand what bliss this was.

He felt a slight change in the air and decided his pot was being picked up and moved; likely taken to the botanical garden where he was to spend his hour. He wondered if his sense of time would be affected by the deprivation; he hoped it would stretch on, he was in no rush to end this any time soon.

A brush against one of his flowers; he could feel something leathery against him. Then the brush of sharp teeth and hot breath; Rose. One of his flowers was pulled up slightly as she sniffed and he got an odd sense of satisfaction knowing how good his flowers smelled. A moment later something entirely different began to scent him. A delicate, forked tongue, tiny and soft, lapped at his leaves and flowers, a warm slithering body accompanying it. Chloe climbed through his branches, coiling herself around the outstretched limbs and exploring his insides, beneath the thick layer of foliage.

It felt odd to have a creature moving inside him in a way; even if she was still outside his hard bark layer. He would have shivered if he were able, as it stood, he could only exist and let his friends continue to explore his new form.

Another torrent of hot breath as Zac bent his head down to investigate; his thick, dull teeth even plucking a leaf from one of his branches. It didn't hurt, but Erik would have been lying if he said it was a pleasant feeling. Somebody must have told him off though because suddenly the cows breath was gone and replaced with something much lighter.

The tingling, ultra light touch of spider legs tickled his outer leaves as Lily joined Rose inside his foliage. It was an odd feeling; without his human skin her hair legs no longer felt itchy or uncomfortable. To his new wooden form it felt...natural, to have creatures crawling and existing alongside him. Eventually though, he felt the brush of human hands parting his leaves and gently removing his friends. He couldn't be sure but he assumed they were heading for their respective exhibits.

Somebody was moving him as well, he could feel the change in wind as they moved through the shopping centre. Suddenly, there was a blast of moist warm air and Erik was hit with a sense of utter relaxation and belonging. His leaves could taste the fresh air and greenery in the air; warm sunlight, heated by thick glass, touched his leaves. This had to be the garden.

He was placed down in the sunshine and his blooms opened even further to absorb the light. He could feel the photosynthesis working and his roots burrowed deeper into the soil of his pot. He instinctively knew that when he changed back, he would be utterly relaxed and revitalised by the experience. Feeling utterly at peace, Erik settled in and savoured every moment.