

Silver and Indigo

by Yuuki/Sapphire

It's been quite a while since Sapphire had a day when they could truly mentally rest. Physical rest was easily achievable with their flexible working hours, a very manageable workload, with some quality internet and media consumption for a couple hours before a good night's sleep. However, mental rest is something scarce for them, tugging ceaselessly at the back of their head in every hour of the day. Wake up, load up the car at the warehouse, deliver everything, return home, consume media, sleep. A manageable routine, but also a draining one. Burnout came quiet and settled into their body, their mind, their very core, despite some days having way less work than others. Something needed to change. And that's when it happened.

The feeling of warm sands and a dry, salty taste of air from the dream lingered on their taste buds as they groggily squeeze their hands on the pillow, waking up from an exceptionally good dream. They slowly contort in bed, stretching their body and groaning at having to tend to their adult, waking life and at its own slow misery... however, their body feels a bit odd this Saturday morning. They remember a quick announcement on the delivery driver group chat about no shipments today, so they decide to just... lay in bed as much as they can and enjoy every bit of free time they've been given.

The odd feeling morphs into a faint tingling sensation on their lower body, spanning from under their armpits, through their thorax and spine, towards their hip bones, both at skin and at deep bone levels... allergic reaction to the cotton fabric of their pajamas, they think. They try rubbing their fingertips and palms gently over these areas, the faint tingling slowly turning to a very alien feeling as everything seems to shift just as slowly right under their skin: organs and bones seemingly rearranging themselves, skin bulging and stretching, a prickly feeling with only slight aches, like tiny cactus thorns poking them from the inside.

They quickly take their pajamas off to see what's going on, slight anxiety and curiosity taking over as they stop dead in their tracks, bones aching, skin stretching and giving into the feeling of something expanding inside them. They instinctively hold their breath and sweat starts beading on their forehead as they feel new shoulder blades grow, right below their original ones, bones pushing through and molding skin into familiar yet alien sights and feelings: shoulders, muscles, tendons, elbows, nerve endings, wrists, knuckles, and then hands. Five-fingered, slender, smooth. The same tan skin tone as their own original pair, now resting on their twin mattress, an impossible sight turned reality.

This new, extra pair of limbs weren't an unusual sight for them: they've seen it many a times in old paintings, in artworks, in photo-manipulations and stories they've read over the years, mingling in and interacting on communities comprised of people that have the same "odd" tastes for anything "extra" as them, often fantasizing and daydreaming about how it would feel if they were a part of them. In fact, they fantasized and daydreamed about many things that could happen to them, and even their own idealized body. This time it didn't feel like a fantasy or a daydream, much less like a lucid dream, which is something they have been very familiarized with for quite some time.

The aching and tingling subdued on their upper body, however it was only just the beginning for their lower body. They could feel their hip bones morphing and stretching, their spine bifurcating and their penis receding into the ever-widening gap between their left and right leg, soon enough as wide as one of their thighs. As the stretching stops, bone and muscle now stretches skin on this gap, forming more familiar yet outlandish sights: thigh, knee, calf, heel, foot; the latter being a symmetric equivalent of both their left and right feet, with one big toe at the middle and four other toes surrounding it, now resting on its right side on the bed.

Fresh air hit new growths between their legs. On the right, a set of male genitalia sprouted from the empty space, rough, firm; a familiar sight, one they've grown accustomed to and had all their waking life. On the left, a new, blooming sensation of a set of female genitalia, smooth, soft; a sight they've always wondered about but never had the chance to experience. The two simultaneous sensations hit their brain in sync, one familiar, other previously foreign, leaving them slightly flustered and consequently slightly aroused; female set glistening, male set pulsing against their inner right thigh, both sides fully *theirs*, yearning for synchronized exploration.

Their subconscious desire got fulfilled by the universe, they thought. Twisted, raw synchronicity and pure willpower combined. Feelings of belonging and burning self-affirmation hit them, all at once: the sleepless nights of gripping the pillow tightly and fiercely yearning, the evenings full of dysphoria and dreaming, the afternoons they numbed themselves with work to fend off the feeling of their body not being *right* and no available option fitting them. Everything they once felt empowered them and washed over them at the same time, their fears and anxieties dissolving with every breath, soothing their very core.

As they basked in this new, empowering atmosphere of their own self, they relaxed and drifted off smoothly into sleep once again, their dream now clear as day: endless, golden dunes and warm, salty winds carrying sand, grains of silica gently hitting their phantom body, a version of them they're used to see in the mirror; an endless river runs through the desert, two contrasting streams, one dark sapphire, one shiny silver, meeting gently and becoming one, originating from a warm, floating light, shimmering. They float, not walk, into the river, velvety water gently wrapping around their two calves and heels as they move opposite the stream, towards the origin, warmth beckoning, calling them, firm yet gentle.

As they reach the origin, light and warmth engulfs their whole body and temporarily blinds them, pulsing and soothing their body and mind. As soon as they're able to see, a silhouette stands floating seemingly a few feet in front of them and inches apart at the same time, their fantasized, idealized body, reminding them about their own self: male and female, both and neither at the same time, combined into one, like Salmacis, the nymph who wished her body to be merged with the son of Hermes and Aphrodite; singular, complete, whole. Its left side gentle and soft, flowing shiny silver, opaque and shimmering; its right side rough and sturdy, flowing dark sapphire, gemstone texture almost translucent, see-through indigo; both sides clearly split, yet harmonically coexisting on the same body, different textures splitting its middle leg and whole body right through the middle.

Its face was devoid of any features, sculpted rough and smooth; its voice, both crystalline and human, harmonic and velvety, pitches being heard not through their

ears, but through their mind, raw and unfiltered waves; it beckons them closer, tells them to spread their arms for an embrace, eases and soothes them. It reaches towards them, wrapping its arms around their back, warmth and coldness sinking into them as they can feel a merge happening, slowly but surely. Their eyes open wide on a jolt, their limbs splaying wide on the air, the entity now making itself known within, infinite source of divinity and power within a human vessel, primed and ready to be used. A dual voice lingers on the back of their mind – *"Be clay"* – as everything becomes too bright for them to bear, the dream world collapsing on itself.

Slowly, the warmth of the light is replaced by the warmth of the bed sheets, the dry and salty feeling of the air now being a distant memory, replaced by stale bedroom air. They rub their eyes, propping themselves up on the bed, naked, sleep still lingering. It all felt terrifyingly, pleasantly, *incredibly* real, yet here they were, back into... mediocrity. The ideal body now gone, memories aching, yearning for change, for wholeness. The quietness of the morning replaced by silent tears, then intense sobbing as they bend their legs in front of their face, arms wrapped around knees, cocooning themselves. They wanted to believe it, but felt it was just a dream, fleeting, pleasant but never lasting. *"Was it all an illusion, an intense dream? I don't want to live like this"*, they thought to themselves, before a duet of voices, both crystalline and human, suddenly popped into the forefront of their mind. *"Be clay"*, *"Mold the self"*, the voices repeated, nudged, tugged at them, intensifying with each passing second. They knew exactly what it meant, and exactly what to do.

The voices were exactly the spark of motivation they needed to try it, and so they did. They envisioned their own body, its ideal, desired, dreamed form, and let it happen: the familiar tingling sensations returned, this time the change being much quicker, painless, pleasant. This time they could feel the streams from their dreams *there*, invisible yet ever present, now enveloping them and flowing from, through and back into them simultaneously, warm and cold, fluid, balanced, vivid – *theirs*.

They get up from the bed, limbs nimble and moving smoothly, like they were always supposed to be there, walking towards the full-length mirror on their bedroom. The mirror, previously an embodiment of dissatisfaction with themselves and their own body, now became a window into what they became, an embodiment of curiosity and satisfaction. The ping of a message on their phone faded away from their hearing, just like every noise from the bustling city outside. A feeling of wholeness, equilibrium and finality burned and settled into their core. Gone was the burnout, the doubts, the yearning, the dysphoria, replaced by endless energy, certainty, oneness and euphoria. They became both. They became neither. They became divinity embedded into a human vessel, barely containing itself, endless possibility just a thought away. They became the binary itself shattering into a million pieces, leaving only singularity, oneness. Just like they wished for all their life.