

Nomarch was pleased with his new bed.

R&D had been hard at work trying to find the proper, most relaxing way for a gooey sentient creature of slime to sleep, and the best way to test was to let the boss sleep in it. Look what we made! It'll be great.

The current model was slightly concave, made of a smooth insulated polymer that held heat well. It gave slightly under weight, though it still needed The Crucible underneath: their term for the massive rigging of springs and sensors underneath that let them examine the bed's effects. Perhaps when the production model was ready, they could have it set in a slight convex mounting, so that you could properly roll out of bed. Right now it had a bit of feeling like being in a shallow tub, feet above the ground.

Still, given how poorly most mattresses responded to slimes sleeping on them, this was a vast improvement.



Friendly Corporate Slime! - **NOMARCH**

Level 10 Shaman - S.Wolf M

Skills: Qualiamancy, Public Relations, Teamwork

Flaws: Anxiety - Something could be going wrong right now!

Passive: Psi Empathy - Can feel the emotions of others as a sense.

Spell: Transfur - Spend HP to transform a target into a synthetic slime. The resulting shape is based on personality. Charges of this spell can be stored in advance, if left at room temperature.

Spell: Synthesite - Allows targets to share senses. The targets do not have to be sentient, only have a way to sense the world around them.

Spell: Draft Form - Enchants a target and a set of blueprints, allowing them to describe the form they'd like to have. The blueprints will fill out based on their given description.

Spell: Like This - Transforms someone according to enchanted blueprints.

Preferred TF: Role Change

Allowing himself a moment to hydrate and ingest some sugar, Nomarch set forth into the LLC² complex. Some suggested it stood for Liquid Latex Creatures, even if the company was on paper called Luxury Life Creations. The corporate enterprise had changed since the dark times, when Nomarch's father had insisted on a sort of invasive, customer-demeaning brand of smart home integrations. The house would do everything, because people couldn't be trusted, you see.

Nomarch was very glad that the horizon had shifted. With his people at the forefront of magical research, it was important to create FOR the end customer. People should be given the tools to be the best they could be, and a customized featured experience was far better than “well let’s set this thing to TF and see what happens”.

They still made home products, of course, but increasingly the products were also people.

“Good morning, sir.”

Cassandra was a squitten, feline and tentacle all together. She’d tear you a new one if you called her an octopussy, or remarked poorly about her still being one of the few meat creatures in the company. They hadn’t quite perfected tentacle forms to her liking, and she really truly loved the dexterity that came with multiple wriggly extra appendages. Regardless, magic was the most fun she’d had in a long time, and it felt good to be at the forefront of magical form creation.

“Good morning, Cassandra. How are we doing?”

“Synaptics has a demo they want to show off, on improving the touch of the new synth line.”

“Sound promising?”

“Mostly it adds in the little tingles and pleasing resonance feelings. Previous users noted that the skin felt too clinical, digital.”

“Excellent. What about our... acquisition?”

“Dr. Holstoy is in Lab 3, arrived about 10 minutes ago.”

“Oh! He’s early.”

“Yes, I wouldn’t keep him waiting. Poor man’s quite angry.”

“Of course.” Sighing(which was really more of a soft blorp noise nowadays), Nomarch placed his papers on Cassandra’s desk and headed off. **“He has every right to be, I suppose.”**

“Not your fault.”

“We do have to clean up after the old folks, though. Thank you.”

The lights were off in Lab 3, though this didn’t matter much to Dr. Holstoy. Old in body and attitude, his eyes had long since given up trying to see much of anything. Sitting alone in his wheelchair, listening to soft jazz music, he grumbled.

“Dr. Holstoy! So sorry, I didn’t think you’d be her-”

“Spare me. I’m not in the mood for being buttered up.”

“Right, right. How are things with you?”

“I’m blind.” Switching off his smooth jazz, Holstoy leaned back in the wheelchair. **“I’m old.**

Your father took away the majority of my life’s work for his own purposes. And now you want me back here, which I assume means something went wrong and you still need me.” Acid did not drip, but it might as well have.

“Actually, no. We have a new senior engineer coming in on the robotics integrations, that position’s reasonably filled.”

“Then why on God’s earth have you hauled me up here?”

“I wanted you to see something.”

“Too late for that.”

“No, actually, I think you’re just in time.”

“?”

Holstoy did not cease grimacing, for if he were to do that he wouldn't really be Holstoy at all. But this sounded strange and unusual, and he liked strange and unusual things. Well, until the intellectual property was stolen from him, but that would sour most anyone really.

“If I could have your temples for a moment...”

“Gonna stick them?”

“Nothing invasive. Just like... this.”

Warm soft squishiness touched either side of Holstoy's head, and he had the most peculiar feeling of being drawn towards somewhere else, far away yet very near. **“What was that?”**

“Well, once I turn the camera on...”

Buttons were pressed, and Holstoy SAW. It was dark in Lab 3, and a strange black squishy wolf was walking around prodding the computers while he sat in his little wheelchair. Vision, from the ceiling... **“A camera?”**

“Yes, for the moment. Testing purposes. How are the visuals?”

“What in gods name have you done to yourself?”

“You... have been watching the news, yes?”

“Only as much as I can stomach. That shit's happening here too?”

“More than happening, we are working on utilizing it for people's benefit. As you can see.”

“Not sure how weird dog people compares with an MMI(Man-Machine Interface), to be honest.”

“Well, it's quite revolutionized it. Whereas before we could poke and prod electrical signals, attempting to create the reaction we desired, now we can actually directly link your senses across the digital divide. It feels quite natural, doesn't it?”

“...it does, yes. And unnatural at the same time. Looking out at myself.”

“Then let's proceed to the next stage, where we put the cameras... on you. There we go. And... switch view.”

Now he was looking straight forward, watching the gooey wolf with proper visual acuity and perspective. The visor was light, small, and Holstoy couldn't fathom quite how all the circuitry would fit in such a space, much less communicate across a flesh barrier without distortion. **“My goodness...”**

“Looking good?”

“I... I haven't seen like this in... years, really. God, has it been that long?”

“Eyes are just the beginning, too. We can connect you, the person, into the senses of a machine. We can bring you into the machine, and let it become you. THIS... is what I wanted to show you today.”

Drawing back the tarp, Nomarch revealed a bipedal synthetic frame lying on a product bed at some 70 degrees. It was humanoid, but distinctly not human. Ears that swiveled and could be removed, antennae held in the horns. Eyes and a mouth, solid rubber skin that had just a bit of give to it while still sliding across so smooth. No squeaking at all! Wheels in the feet, in case the synth wanted to move at great speed or for long distances.

“This is our latest prototype of the Synth frame. Very mobile, lightweight, quite durable.”

“You want to turn people into these things.”

“People are already turning into things, unfortunately.” Nomarch wiggled his arms in a wave for emphasis, before returning to the android. **“So when faced with an existential crisis of who and what we are, I asked myself... why not choose?”**

“Choose what you want to be.”

“We do, in fact, have very human frames in the lab. But what’s important to us is customization. You can be Anything. You *should* be able to be anything, and we *should* support you with what you want to be. We can MAKE a body, and we have the power to integrate someone into that body. Why should we settle for hand-me-downs?”

“Which you’ll charge for.”

Nomarch wandered over towards the blinds, opening them a tad now that he was sure Holstoy’s eyes wouldn’t react negatively towards it. The campus outside was brimming with strange life, new life. Synth frames and squishy creatures. The loading dock was its own person, as the loading dock manager was more than happy to be a little crane until they got his new body ready. Even when it was, he’d probably plug in when working, and take the mobile one home.

“Which we will expect productivity for. I won’t lie, frame rollouts have been on a basis of being earned. Those who need them the most, those who would benefit most from them, we try to accomodate. But beyond that, those who would utilize them best we improve.”

“Forcefully.”

“No! If they want to.” Grumbling, Nomarch added **“I’m not my father.”**

“Thank God for that.”

“We have the power to help people. We should help people, because we can. What we create can change lives. You’re looking at me right now! Would you have been able to do that before today?”

“Would I still be able to?”



“Of course! It’s a lab model, you’re free to take it with you. That said, you are a pioneer of robotics.”

“And you feel I would *utilize* one of these frames well.”

“If you wish. Personally, I can’t imagine being cooped up in a wheelchair like that, because I don’t have to. Why should you have to? We can fix the cruelties of fate. We can give people so much more than who they already are.”

Holstoy sat in silence for a while, pondering. “You do understand that this sort of change... will aggravate old wounds. Powerful wounds.”

“Considering we’re already looking at the end of the world, I’ll take what I can get.”

“You think it’s that bad?”

“...I think we should have a plan in mind. To continue onwards and survive under our own power.”

“And the government will let you?”

“Well, if the government is in a position to decide that, then we won’t need to hunker down and survive, will we?”

“Hah. Just don’t act shocked when they show up on your doorstep wanting to steal your fancy robots for themselves.”

“Oh I’m sure. Our job is to have enough ready so that they don’t Need to steal them. So that we can support everyone in need.”

“You think you’ll pull that off?”

“No. But deadlines have always been hopes and dreams, haven’t they?”

“Bit more dead in this line.”

“We’ll make it work.” Nomarch closed the blinds, smiling. “We always have.”

LLC LLC is a company of change, delivering high quality bodies and frames for people like you to inhabit. Industrially minded, product oriented, they feel that quality and satisfaction are the most important things to create when building the new world.

They reject the old corporate concept of profit, instead believing that they have the obligation to profit Everyone. Even if new products must be rationed, the goal is for all to be able to partake as time rolls on.

They almost exclusively use synthetic units. Anthroids and sentient slimes are their bread and butter, but all manner of non-biologicals can be seen scuttling about. Their needs are different from meat people’s, and one can expect a sense of racism in regards to “why are you still made of meat?”. It’s not your fault you were born meat, but it is your fault for staying meat now that the optimal, customer-detailed form is within your grasp.

Faction Profile - **SYNTHETICS**

Leader - Corporate Shaman - Morale(++)

Government: Board of Directors - Economy(++), Industry(+), Happiness(--)

Economy: Industrial - Industry(++), Growth(--)

Values: Comfort - Happiness(++), Morale(+), Support(--)

Future Society: Bespoke - When we can create bodies out of whole cloth, people's existence can be created by their own design. You should have the shape that you desire, with the functions you wish to install. Providing this for all members of society requires an impressively high amount of industry and support, but the resulting actualization and happiness among society are quite worth the investment.

Faction Notes: Synthetics feature high cost, high upkeep units. They favor specialization and utility in their populace, being able to handle nearly anything that comes their way. That said, they do spend a significant amount of their income simply on supporting their way of life. Expansion is less about moral judgment than about being able to offer a society so wonderful you won't want to stay away.