

A large, bold, red letter 'M' with a black drop shadow, centered within a red square border.

**Mature Audiences
(18+ years of age)**

Tales of the Purrfect Explorers
Bejeweled
Another Short Story By Shetira

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Prologue

It all began when the Zexta took Shetari Anwae hostage. The famous chi'ta, owner and captain of the private exploratory starship Furry Explorer, had been caught unaware and was transformed into a statue of living gemstone by an automated device sent to hunt her in the streets of the Zexta capital city. Unprotected by the powers of the Lifegate, her fate depended on the ability of her loyal crew to satisfy the conditions the Zexta had placed upon her release.

What the Zexta had desired was for twenty-four willing Ambwassi women to be delivered to Zextacon to be transformed into living jewel just as Shetari had been. They were to be included in some great work of art. Exactly what this piece of art was the Zexta never bothered to say.

So it was that Illwae Shuma, the Furry Explorer's business manager and representative took the Furry Explorer to the nearest civilized world in an attempt to recruit women for this purpose. It had proved a difficult sell. Even though the ship was already famous for its zuka transformation device¹ it was hard to convince even the most alien minded Ambwassi women to give themselves up to a permanent experience which they could not at least have a look at before committing themselves to it.

Two months passed before the Furry Explorer finally returned to Zextacon with its twenty-four passengers. As promised, Shetari was released from her bondage and the women were spirited away to their gemstone fate.

At first upset and unwilling to speak to the Zexta, Shetari soon cooled. A deal was struck which prohibited the Zexta from doing such things as they had to Shetari to Ambwassi visitors to the world. In exchange, Shetari agreed to have the Furry Explorer's advertise the Zexta desire for Ambwassi women whenever the ship visited a civilized world.

After the negotiations ended, Shetari decided to remain on the world for another week, partly to rest after her ordeal. She barely talked of her experience, save to her most trusted friends and fellow senior officers aboard ship and rumors among the crew ran rampant.

It was those crew-spawned rumors that prompted two of the Furry Explorer's crew to sneak off of the ship to find out exactly what had become of the Ambwassi women they had brought to the world. Eshaera Li'urra, a nurse, and Tashi Ma'raea, a cargo handling specialist, quickly made their way to the Zexta jeweler to whom the passengers had been sent in hopes of having a good look at what had been done with them.

1 A device which can transform a humanoid female into a small blob of pure, gelatinous pleasure.

CHAPTER ONE

The Showroom

"Well, isn't this neat," Tashi remarked as the two Ambwassi women stepped into the jewelers ornately decorated front showroom.

There, all around the two curious women, hiding among dense potted trees and shrubs, were Ambwassi and Ashiri² females standing, kneeling, sitting and laying, each of them frozen for eternity in gemstone. The image was both stunning and quite shocking, as both had gotten the impression that gemstone women were extremely rare.

As the two women began to get their bearings in this strange environment, they could see that sapphire, emerald, ruby and softly colored diamond seemed to be the preferred stone types when it came to these petrified women. A smattering of other opaque minerals such as marble and jade complemented the crystalline types and looked more like finely carved, ancient statues than anything particularly unusual. These last specimens complemented the ornate marble pillars which held aloft the room's high, vaulted ceiling.

"I guess," Eshaera responded with a tone of apprehension in her voice. She could not stop thinking that some alien machine was hiding in some dark corner, just waiting to add her to the strange display.

"Look at all these girls," Tashi said as the two wandered among the statues, "there must be at least sixty of them here."

"Yeah," Eshaera responded nervously. "I wonder how they all ended up like this... it's just so strange."

"Same way Shetari got turned to stone probably," Tashi said as she looked at one particularly provocatively posed Ambwassi woman, kneeling on all fours with her back arched, her tail in the air. She was looking over her shoulder with a sexy, inviting look on her face. Tashi could not help but run reach out her hand over the statue's fine emerald ass.

Eshaera watched Tashi reach out to touch the gemstone woman and she had a sudden fear that the gemstone was somehow contagious and that Tashi would be turned to stone the moment she touched it. She cringed as Tashi's hand first touched and then slid along the well formed rear of the petrified woman.

"What?" Tashi asked as she glanced over her shoulder at Eshaera. She could see the slightly terrified expression on Eshaera's face.

"No... nothing," Eshaera stammered in relief when her friend did not suddenly turn to stone before her eyes.

"You've gotten awfully jumpy," Tashi remarked as she continued to enjoy the feel of the stone woman's body. The strange texture of the former fur fascinated her. "The Zexta agreed to only turn willing women to gemstone here. That given, what could possibly happen to us?"

"I don't know," Eshaera replied sheepishly, embarrassed at her sudden lack of courage. She had been on missions before. She had even been forcibly mummified and made one of the living dead but, unlike now, she had been under the protection of the Furry Explorer's "secret" piece of

2 The Ashiri, natives of Ashiria, are the humans of the world of Tales of the Purrfect Explorers.

technology: the lifegate. The lifegate could return anyone protected by its power to normal no matter what happened to them. Now, with no lifegate to rely upon, anything that might happen to either of the two women would be very permanent.

Tashi laughed as she withdrew from the statue before her. Apparently her brave friend wasn't so brave without the lifegate to take care of her. She could also see why the Zexta seemed obsessed so with obtaining women. To just have a statue was one thing, but to know you were looking upon and touching an actual woman frozen in stone was entirely another.

The two moved deeper into the showroom, mesmerized by the visions of eternally preserved beauty all around them. Until, that is, they came to a very different statue.

"Oh... that's..." Eshaera murmured as she looked at the ruby statue before her. The Ashiri woman stood as if caught in the process of walking. She was looking over her shoulder and upon her face was the most horrid look of abject terror that Eshaera had ever seen.

"Well, looks like this one got the same treatment Shetari did," Tashi quietly remarked as she looked the statue over, softly caressing the thighs of the stone woman.

"That's horrible," Eshaera responded, shifting about uncomfortably as she looked at the face of the statue. Again she began to feel uneasy and wondered if the Zexta really would hold up to their end of the bargain.

"Yeah, well like we say, that's just how things go," Tashi observed thoughtfully. "Just because we like things one way doesn't mean the way the Zexta like things isn't equally right for them."

"True," Eshaera replied softly.

"Well, let's see what else there is to see around here," Tashi said as she turned away from the vision of preserved terror.

The two began to wander again, drawn to one side of the room by the sound of gently falling water. There, they found a fountain of stunning beauty. Ornately carved in marble, with plant motifs all over, the fountain was topped with a sapphire Ambwassi woman laying upon her side, her head stretched out over the pool.

Both women were stunned by this particular woman, for from her open, smiling mouth played a continual stream of water. Through the body of the statue was a shimmering path terminating with a thick tube inserted deeply into her anus. It was immediately clear to the two women that the path of water they saw was traveling through what must once have been the female's digestive tract. The glittering water running the torturous, winding path through the sapphire intestines was particularly attention drawing and both women rubbed their bellies as they stared at the strange vision before them.

"I wonder how they kept the path open when they turned her into stone," Tashi commented as she followed the path of the water with her eyes.

"I'm not sure I want to know," Eshaera responded, her right hand instinctively rubbing her own rear. She had never had anything in her ass before and the seemingly huge tube inserted into the statue's anus looked

too big to be anything less than painful. "That can't have felt good... it's just so... so... huge."

"Well, when I was at that pleasure spa on Fi'narru they had anal penetrators at least that big," Tashi remarked, a coy smile creeping onto her face as she turned to Eshaera. "I'll tell you something, the first time I had it, they rammed that thing so deep, so fast, I thought it was going to come right up and out my mouth. It took me a full twenty minutes to get used to it, but it wasn't that bad really."

"You've been done up the ass?" Eshaera asked, a look of shock on her face. She could never understand how anyone could possibly find anal penetration of any sort to be enjoyable.

"Oh yeah," Tahsi replied, laughing. "Every other day for almost two weeks on Fi'narru... about three hours each time."

"Eww!" Eshaera responded, wrinkling her nose in disgust. "Three hours? You got screwed in the ass for three hours?"

"Well, yeah," Tashi explained. "You see, it's a bondage and machine-sex spa. You get to pick your pleasure and they get to pick how long you have to take it, within fair limits of course. The first time I didn't pay much attention to what I was picking and didn't bother to ask what 'anal stimulation' meant."

"Anal stimulation," Eshaera responded wryly, "now there's an understatement."

"An understatement indeed," Tashi said as she rubbed right hand down her hip, fingers curving around behind her. "I let out quite a squeal when they shoved that thing in all in one thrust. I'll tell you something though, when they got that thing pumping along with the even bigger one the rammed up my puss, it was absolute heaven. I swear, there was nothing for me to do but just lay there, all strapped in and bound up, and have orgasm after orgasm."

"Ugh, I don't think I'd like that," Eshaera commented as she turned back to the fountain, her butt cheeks instinctively clenched. "Especially not the ass part."

"Aw, come on Esha, if you ever go there you've absolutely got to give it a try," Tashi responded. She looked down at Eshaera's ass and ran her hand over her surprised friend's left cheek. "Hmm... I'll bet your tailhole would take a really big one too."

"Hey!" Eshaera exclaimed as she swatted Tashi's hand away from her ass.

"Oh, you really are too sensitive," Tashi responded. "Well, if you ever do go there, don't forget to let the boys mount their really sexy nip sucking cups on you. They'll be sure to give you extra-special treatment if they can get some fresh, warm milk out of the deal."

"Ugh, how can you talk about stuff like that in public?" Eshaera asked, shifting about uncomfortably. She never let her typical Ambwassi sexuality get out of hand like so many of her friends did. Even her rare moments of indulgence were a secret for her and her alone to know.

"Because my body is built for pleasure and I'm not afraid of it," Tashi replied, nudging Eshaera's shoulder. "You really ought to loosen up a bit and let yourself go once in a while."

"I suppose I should sometime... but I'll be dead before I willingly take

anything up my ass," Eshaera replied with a huff. She really didn't want the conversation to continue, lest Tashi start talking about any of the other "pleasures" she experienced in her month at the pleasure spa.

"Well, fine," Tashi responded, smiling. "But you're really missing a whole lot of fun. One of your best spots is up your ass."

"Sure, that's what they all say," Eshaera muttered as she began to look around for something else that might grab Tashi's attention and get her to stop talking about anal sex.

"Well, once you're all bound up and getting pumped up your twat you might think differently," Tashi replied nudging Eshaera's shoulder again. She determined that one of these days she was going to get Eshaera to let her tie her up. Then she was going to have a little fun with that sweet virgin ass.

CHAPTER TWO

The Jeweler

The Zexta jeweler had been watching the two women move through the showroom for some time. The hairless, greenish-gray alien had kept out of sight, hidden by the abundant foliage which broke the large room into many secluded spaces. All the time his huge, dark eyes stared covetously at the two beautiful bodies, each tightly encased in its bright green, blue-gray and light lavender bodysuit.

He had been extremely dismayed when the deal had been struck prohibiting the bejeweling of unwilling visitors on Zextacon. For the highly skilled jeweler, catching a specimen at just the right moment was an art. Now it was an art restricted to those sent to lawless frontier worlds to hunt. Though he had been given the twenty-four women brought to Zextacon by the Furry Explorer for his great work, he longed to find a creative way around the agreement to ensure his continued prosperity.

Now, in his shop, there were two stunning examples of the Ambwassi race. Indeed, they were two members of the crew who had negotiated that most unpleasant of deals. This fact inflamed in him and desire for their bodies. He wanted to take them and display them in his great work, something he saw as due payment for the restrictions that had been placed upon him.

He determined to have them. Not by force, but by a bit of cunning.

"Well, I guess we aren't going to find out much about those passengers by standing here and talking about my experiences with ass-fucking bondage," Tashi remarked dryly as she took one last look at the fountain. Talking about her time in the bondage spa had planted the seed of an idea in her mind and now it would not let go. "I'll tell you though... looking at these stone girls here really makes me wonder if this is... you know, the ultimate form of bondage."

"I think I'd call it that," Eshaera responded, a sarcastic tone in her voice. She was desperately hoping for some change in the subject of conversation.

"Well, let's see if we can't find anything else interesting," Tashi remarked as she stepped back away from the fountain.

"Yes, lets," Eshaera replied.

The two women turned away from the fountain and were startled to find the Zexta jeweler had approached silently from behind them and was looking them up and down with a strange, mischievous smile upon his face.

"Oh!" Eshaera exclaimed as she took a step back, her butt pressing against the edge of the fountain, causing her tail to be rammed in between the firm, round cheeks of her rear. The sudden sensation made her cringe and she quickly extracted it from her ass with a strong twitch.

"Welcome to my humble shop," the Zexta jeweler began, his soft though deep and melodic voice washing over the two women and making them feel a bit uncomfortable. "I could not help but notice that you finely formed ladies have been enjoying the display here in the showroom.

Indeed, your presence has complemented the collection rather nicely.”

“Um... thank you, that's a very nice thing to say,” Eshaera responded to what she had to assume was a complement.

“So, I must ask,” the jeweler continued, “what can a reputable jeweler such as myself do for such attractive creatures are yourselves?”

“Well,” Tashi replied after a short pause, “we were kind of wondering what happened to the passengers that our ship brought here.”

“Ah,” the jeweler replied, arching his hairless brows. “Of course, you desire to learn what has been done with that group of finely formed ladies.”

“Yes,” Tashi responded, “that's right.”

“Very well,” the jeweler said, gesturing towards the back of the showroom, “come with me to the workshop and I shall be more than glad to explain all that you desire.”

The workshop was a very different place than the ornate showroom. It was constructed like a warehouse or factory and the walls were lined shelves and all sorts of esoteric alien equipment. A number of large motorized carts were parked around the room. Along the ceiling and supported by huge metal columns was a series of rails, on which hung large robotic arms, each ending in a different type of gripper claw.

All this received only a passing notice as the women's attention was fixed upon what lay in the center of the room. On the floor was a large circular platform reached by three shallow steps. Its dark gray surface was smooth but rubbery looking. A yellow 'x' marked the center of the platform and directly above it was mounted a large, ray-gun like device, its barrel ending in a sharply pointed, green glowing gem.

The group walked past this strange setup and turned into what had at first looked like an alcove but was in fact an opening into an extension of the workshop. There, before them stood two dozen structures covered with white cloth. Each stood four meters tall, it's top tapering to a point.

The two women gazed at the nearest of these objects as the jeweler activated one of the robotic arms swept overhead. With a single motion, it plucked the cloth over the object before them. What they saw left them stunned.

“Oh my,” Tashi murmured after nearly five minutes of silence. Before them was a massive, upright, clear jewel mounted on a stand. Floating serenely within was a sapphire Ambwassi woman. Her frozen pose and expression conveyed a strange sense of erotic excitement and joy.

“That's just... so... beautiful,” Eshaera stammered as the women walked up to the jewel.

“I am very happy that you think so,” the jeweler responded, smiling, “for it has taken many years of waiting for this work to finally come to be. It has been just so difficult to find willing specimens for inclusion in it.”

“So... what is this work exactly?” Eshaera asked, a tone of intense curiosity seeping into her voice. “I mean, it isn't just these is it?”

“No, it is a far greater work than just these,” the jeweler explained. “The first component in a great emerald tree which will stand at the center of a new park dedicated to the glorious art of bejeweling. In its branches shall sit these fine fruit, each a testament to the wonders of the process.”

"The first component? What more are you making?" Tashi asked, her curiosity very obvious to the jeweler by her poise and tone.

"Well, my ladies," the jeweler replied, "the paths of the park shall be lined with bejeweled women, each holding aloft a gemstone lantern. The paths shall wind through a great garden with many bejeweled ladies on display. Finally, beneath all shall be a series of diamond catacombs with many hundreds of bejeweled females entombed within the walls."

"Wow," Tashi remarked as she stepped forward to run her hand along the gem. Bondage within bondage it seemed to her and that fascinated her deeply. "What... well... do they feel anything?"

"The bejeweled women?" the jeweler replied. "Oh yes, they can feel anything which touches the surface of their gemstone forms."

"So... when I was touching those women out there... they... they could feel me touching them?" Tashi asked, the idea that the women could still feel sending a shiver down her spine. It was bondage indeed.

"Yes, they did," the jeweler responded, "but not in the intensity with which living flesh feels. They can feel that there is something touching them... pressing upon them, but that is all."

"What about their other senses? And their minds?" Eshaera asked as she too began to run a hand up and down a corner of the gem.

"For a bejeweled woman, the only sense is that of touch," the jeweler replied. "As for their minds, they become dulled after several days, entering into a dreamlike state where only the sense of touch and emotional serenity exist."

"I would think they would go insane," Eshaera remarked as she stared into the jewel at the woman imprisoned within.

"No," the jeweler responded, "not enough of their minds remain active after a few days to suffer any sort of insanity."

"Interesting," Eshaera remarked softly. To be imprisoned for an eternity with nothing but a dull sense of touch to connect a woman with the world around her seemed, to Eshaera, to be something out of a horror tale and yet there was something strangely inviting about it.

Now, the jeweler decided, was the time to make his attempt at acquiring the two women. He quickly changed his expression and his tone, making a very effective effort to appear as one in genuine need.

"Well, my finely formed ladies," the jeweler said, looking at the women mournfully, "now that you have seen my creation and enjoyed the displays in my shop, I must ask you to hear the tale of my woes, for this work of mine is in peril."

"In peril?" Tashi responded, curious. "Please do tell us!"

"You see," the jeweler began, "the women given to me were too few for me to complete the great tree in time for the scheduled opening of the first portions of the park."

Eshaera was no fool and immediately knew what the jeweler had in mind, though Tashi seemed too curious and fascinated to notice the obvious.

"The great bulk of the tree stands there, but there are two fruit to few to mount in its branches," the jeweler continued. "Unless two fine

Ambwassi women can be found to fill the spaces the tree will be incomplete and the whole matter shall satin my reputation most severely.”

“Two? How convenient,” Eshaera muttered under her breath.

“Is there anything we can do to help?” Tashi asked, earning her an extremely vicious look from Eshaera. She had now become so infatuated with bejeweling that the temptation of the ultimate bondage experience was slowly eroding her self control.

“Well, I do not suppose there are any among the crew of your vessel who might be willing to become part of this great work?” the jeweler asked, his tone of voice hopeful. The last thing he wanted to do was to appear to be asking them directly.

“I... don't know,” Tashi responded softly, looking back up at the jewel. “All things considered I would probably say no.”

“Ah... I see,” the jeweler replied, making sure to look quite dejected. “I don't suppose there is any other way you might know of? I am truly desperate, as the tree is supposed to be completed in only two days.”

“Well, maybe there is a way. Can... we be alone for a little while... to talk?” Tashi asked the jeweler politely.

“Of course,” the jeweler replied, seeing that his play had done as much as it could have been hoped to do. “I shall return in a short while.”

“No!” Eshaera exclaimed after the jeweler had left the storage area, not even waiting for Tashi to speak.

“Oh, come on, Esha!” Tashi responded emphatically. “Think about it!”

“Think about what Tashi?” Eshaera snapped back. “I am not having my ass turned to stone just to make some alien happy!”

“But... think about what it must feel like,” Tashi replied, “to be completely encased so tightly...”

“Are you completely nuts?” Eshaera asked, staring straight into Tashi's eyes.

“No!” Tashi responded, taken aback. “You know temptation is going to get you one of these days. Why not this? It's just so beautiful and... sensual looking.”

“Temptation may get me but at least I'm not going out and looking for it,” Eshaera replied dryly. “Let's just go back to the 'Explorer tell the girls about this little alien's problem and leave it at that.”

“Yeah, sure,” Tashi responded sarcastically, “and we'll never hear the end of it. Every day we're going to have to listen to them talking about how we came back and asked them all to do something that we wouldn't.”

“Well then we can just drop the whole thing here and now,” Eshaera said, turning back toward the massive jewel.

“Oh sure,” Tashi responded, “and when they finally hear about that we'll be forever known as a couple of cowards who didn't have the guts to do something permanent. You know how they are.”

There was a long pause as Eshaera tried to think of something to say that would get Tashi to give up on the idea.

“Well?” Tashi finally asked, an impatient tone in her voice. It was now clear to Eshaera that Tashi was already set on going through with it.

“Fine, if you want to do it, go right ahead!” Eshaera answered, turning back to Tashi. “I'm not. Period.”

There was another long pause as the two stood there staring at each other.

"Well, I think I will," Tashi replied, breaking the silence, "but you're the one who's going to have to go back and explain to everyone where I am and how come you didn't join me."

"Oh, Fuck!" Eshaera responded, realizing that she would definitely get in trouble for sneaking off of the ship. Having to explain what had become of Tashi would only make things worse.

"And you know," Tashi added, a slightly cruel idea sneaking into her head, "chances are you'll get blamed for me getting 'bejeweled'... talking or tricking me into it or something. You know the rules... if you're responsible for causing something permanent to happen to another member of the crew you have to have the same thing done to yourself, willing or not."

"Dammit Tashi!" Eshaera exclaimed, looking down at her feet. She was now becoming quite upset with the situation she had somehow gotten herself into. While she wasn't sure if she would actually be blamed for causing Tashi's bejeweling she did know the rules very well and they frightened her.

"And what if the jeweler decides to make a fountain of you then?" Tashi responded, playing Eshaera's own sexual distastes against her. "Eternity with a very unhappy tailhole, eh?"

"Oh shit Tashi," Eshaera replied, tears coming to her eyes, "why the fuck are you doing this? Let's just go back to the ship and be done with this all."

"No," Tashi responded, smiling, "I've made up my mind. As for you, you don't really have to join me but are you willing to face the possible alternatives?"

Eshaera looked around, as she shifted about nervously, rubbing her own shoulders in an effort to comfort herself. On one hand she could join Tashi and spend the rest of eternity as sapphire tightly encased in solid diamond. On the other, she risked far greater unpleasantness, but it was something that might well not come to pass.

All this time, the jeweler had been listening in on the conversation, waiting for the right point to return. He was quite pleased to see that his ploy had ensnared one of his visitors. Even more pleasing was that she was doing all the work of acquiring the other one. Not wanting to allow his second visitor time too much time to find an excuse with which to answer her friend, the jeweler returned to the workshop.

"Well, I trust you fine ladies have had enough time to speak?" the jeweler asked, keeping his mournful tone.

"Yes, I'd say we have," replied Tashi, not giving Eshaera a chance to say otherwise.

"So, my ladies, can you assist me?" the jeweler asked in response.

"At least a little I should think," Tashi answered, a coy smile upon her face. Then, gesturing towards the great jewel, she added, "But before we get into that, I'd like to know what a pretty ass like mine would have to go through to get into something like that?"

"Ah," the jeweler responded, his expression lightening. "Well, I think

you might find the whole matter much more exciting if you did not know ahead of time.”

“Why is that?” Tashi asked, a very slight bit of doubt creeping into her mind.

“Things which are expected and understood are rarely as enjoyable as those which come as a surprise,” the jeweler replied. “As it is, our customs do dictate that the first in any batch of bejewelings must do so without any foreknowledge save that of the final result.”

“Ah,” Tashi responded, looking back up at the great jewel and the sapphire figure within.

For a moment, Eshaera thought her friend might actually back down and decide to give up on being bejeweled. Her hopes were soon dashed, however.

“Well, I guess if that's how it works then that's how I'll have to do it,” Tashi said after several moments of silence.

“You... desire to help satisfy my need?” the jeweler asked, feigning amazement.

“Yes,” Tashi responded, smiling. “My ass is yours.”

CHAPTER THREE

Bejeweled

Tashi stood at the edge of the platform, looking up at the ray-gun device which loomed overhead. She was naked, her bodysuit in a heap on the floor behind her. All that stood between her and an eternity of imprisonment in a body a sapphire was the short walk to the center of the platform.

Eshaera stood staring at Tashi's naked backside. She watched her friend's tail twitch in anticipation of what was about to happen. Eshaera was now truly frightened. The decision which she would soon have to make horrified her more than anything else she had ever experienced.

"Well, here goes," Tashi remarked, looking over her shoulder at Eshaera. "Make up your mind soon Esha... the longer you sit on it the more its going to drive you crazy."

Eshaera wrinkled her nose and frowned at Tashi. She was terribly upset with Tashi for having put her in so difficult a situation.

Tashi took a deep breath and ran her hands down her hips. She lifted her right foot and dithered for a moment. She began to feel bad about leaving Eshaera to have to make her difficult decision on her own. She wondered if it would have been better to have tried to convince Eshaera to go first.

Eshaera watched Tashi intently. As Tashi paused she wondered if Tashi's desire to be bejeweled had been all bluster and she was now getting cold feet.

Tashi looked back at Eshaera one last time and smiled softly. She gave a slight shrug and moved quickly to the center of the platform. She then swept around to face the jeweler, her legs slightly spread with her hands on her hips.

For a few moments nothing happened. Then, much to her surprise, Tashi found herself being lifted up into the air, suspended several feet above the platform in what felt to her like a pocket of zero gravity.

"Pose for me," the jeweler instructed. "A pose of openness and acceptance would be best. Please try that for me."

Tashi did as the jeweler wished. She stretched her legs out parallel beneath her and spread her arms wide and back. She raised her chin and smiled.

Without any warning a needle-like stream of energy shot from the device over Tashi's head, causing Eshaera to jump. She watched in horror as the ray struck her friend, instantly enveloping her in a sheath of crackling green power. Then, just as quickly, the energy subsided and Eshaera was left with her mouth hanging open and a tear in her eye. Tashi was still floating there in her beautiful pose, but now she was solid sapphire.

That, however was not the end of the procedure. Again the beam lashed out but this time it formed an energy field in the shape of the diamond encasement. In less than a second the diamond had formed, entombing the sapphire form of Tashi within its mass.

When the energy had completely faded, a robotic arm dropped down

from the ceiling and plucked the gem out of midair. In seconds, Tashi was gone from view, taken to the storage room to join the other diamond encased sapphire women.

For a short time Eshaera looked down at the floor, and around at the various pieces of machinery arrayed on the shelves, considering just what she should do now that Tashi had been bejeweled. She was terribly afraid of the decision she now had to make. It was then that she noticed something which truly terrified her.

Not far from where Eshaera was standing there was a rack containing a dozen long, clear, coiled tubes. Beside the rack was a pictorial instruction panel. One look at the images on the panel was sufficient to fill her with fear. The pictures showed the tubes being inserted into the ass of an Ambwassi female. They were run right through her digestive system and up into her mouth. Most frightening of all was the massive penetrator which had been rammed deep into the woman's tight ass. The penetrator seemed to be there facilitate the movement of the tube into the woman's body and the image of it there, opening the woman's tailhole impossibly wide was enough to bring tears to her eyes.

Eshaera could not stop thinking of the fountain that she and Tashi had seen in the jeweler's showroom. The thought that there was even so much as a tiny possibility that she would be forced to return to the jeweler to experience an eternity of massive anal penetration began to make the idea of joining Tashi seem like a good idea.

The jeweler was watching Eshaera intently. He remembered the conversation which he had overheard in the showroom and decided to exploit what he had learned to help make up Eshaera's mind.

"Perhaps you are more interested in becoming a beautiful fountain," the jeweler began, walking up beside Eshaera. "I have a fine jade base in need of an occupant. Your body would certainly look quite lovely upon it."

Eshaera looked down at the jeweler, a look of disgust on her face.

"Yes," the jeweler continued, startling Eshaera by running his bony hand over her ass, "your body would accept quite a nicely sized facilitator."

Eshaera watched in terror as the jeweler opened a large box beside the tube rack and took out a penetrator which was a full 7cm in diameter. She was virtually paralyzed as the jeweler took the device and pressed it between her butt cheeks. She could feel it pressing against her tailhole through her bodysuit and it made her shudder.

"That is your size," the jeweler remarked, looking up at Eshaera's face, savoring the expression of horror. He pressed the penetrator slightly harder and began to wiggle it against her anus. "If you desire for your body to be a fountain, we can begin immediately."

"No!" Eshaera exclaimed, pulling away with a jerk. "Fine! I'll... I'll... be part of your tree, just get that thing away from me!"

Eshaera quickly pulled her bodysuit off and tossed it in a heap next to Tashi's, keeping an eye on the jeweler to whole time. He was standing there, twisting and turning the anal penetrator in his hands, staring at as much of her newly revealed ass as he could see. She was almost sure he

would stick it up her tailhole just for amusement if given the chance and she did her best to keep her rear from view.

Eshaera backed toward the platform slowly, quivering in nervousness. She was now far more scared of the jeweler and his massive penetrator than anything else. She stumbled up onto the platform, tripping over her own tail. No sooner had she made her way to the center of the dark, rubbery surface than she was lifted into the air.

For a short time, Eshaera flailed about helplessly, unable to orient herself properly in the levitation field. Once she had righted herself, her mind cleared and the full weight of what was about to happen came to bear upon her thoughts. She floated there, shifting about, her legs together and slightly raised, her right hand pulling through her hair, her left upon her now nauseous belly. Tears began to stream down her face as she looked at the jeweler, a terrible look of anticipation and fear on her face.

Eshaera did not see or hear the beam as it struck her from above. One moment she was a floating, terrified creature of flesh. The next moment her external senses had vanished save for her sense of touch. Even her sense of touch seemed to have gone, as there was nothing to feel as she floated there, frozen in her new body of sapphire.

Just as suddenly as she had become stone Eshaera felt a pressure surrounding her entire body. It took only moments for her to realize that she had just been encased in diamond. Then she realized that she was no longer frightened.

Her mind had begun to fade far faster than the jeweler had claimed. She was no longer capable of feeling negative emotion. Nor was she capable of feeling strong positive emotion. Her entire world had become little more than serenity and tight, comfortable encasement.

Eshaera rapidly lost her sense of identity and her capacity for rational thought. The dreamy world of the bejeweled washed over her and she was, to herself at least, no more.

Epilogue

The public presentation of the great emerald tree was a very successful event. By the end of the first day more than fifty thousand visitors had come to look upon and admire the grand statement of the art and power of bejeweling. Not the least of these visitors was Shetari and some of her fellow senior officers from the Furry Explorer.

By this time everyone had noticed the absence of Eshaera and Tashi from the Furry Explorer. Finding them proved quite easy, as the jeweler had taken special care to mount them in the lowest levels of the tree, at eye level for those on the raised walkway which surrounded it. There, they supplanted two of the original twenty-four passengers, who would eventually be used in the underground catacomb portion of the park.

Shetari suspected that the two crew members presence in the emerald tree involved less than honest conduct on the part of the Zexta, but she remained silent. She did not want to upset her latest deal: the purchase of a full set of Zexta bejeweling equipment.

So it was that the first Furry Explorer crew members became eternally bound in stone. They would, most certainly, not be the last.

THE END