

Sylvie Mayer

The Metamorphosis

When Sylvie woke up one morning from a night filled with strange dreams, she looked down at herself lying in bed and saw that she was changed into a vulgar and disturbing creature. Her body had been stretched and formed into a long thin cylinder, and she had a pattern of stripes across her back resembling one of the common garter snakes that she and her family found slithering around their garden. *Of course this is just a dream, she thought. Nevertheless, I shall go back to bed and wake up again. Maybe this strange woozy dream will find its place somewhere else.*

Sylvie awoke and to her disbelief she saw a yellow and brown pattern strewn across the belly of a giant, squirming, oversized garter snake, in place of the body of a human. *This cannot be! She thought, but it is not a dream! Maybe if I get out of bed this awfulness shall pass. Maybe it is a delusion, a mirage, an image!*

She dizzily prepared to hoist herself out of bed only to realize that this body was lacking appendages. She was ever so confused and wondered how she was going to be able to get around! With no arms, she couldn't possibly heave herself out of bed, which happened to be the first problem she had encountered that morning. Nor would she be able to pick anything up, which brought her to a second body part that was missing, hands! She could not possibly write, or hold anything, including a fork and knife! How was she supposed to bring food to her mouth? Walking would be another problem when she considered her absence of legs. What an odd creature she had become, an armless, legless, cylinder.

She rolled from her back to her belly and to her back again, and at the edge of the bed she contemplated what to do next. She decided to roll straight off of the bed, and she did, but with no arms to break her fall she fell flat on her face. Landing in a splat, she sprawled for awhile on the floor. She finally rolled back onto her stomach, and caught her balance. She noticed that balancing on her stomach was tricky when she was a type of shape that was intended to roll.

At last she learned to move in a way all snakes do, by sliding and slithering in a haphazard fashion. Although, whenever she had seen a garter snake move, its movements seemed more even and rhythmic.

She continued toward the door of her room which looked so displaced from the ground, unlike from her human perspective. As she slithered she contemplated how to get

out of her room. What a long time it had taken to get up this morning! *A normal garter snake, she considered, would be able to fit under the gap that reached from the door to the floor, but considering my circumference is almost 5 times bigger than any normal garter snake, I shall not!*

Suddenly her body craved heat. She slithered as quickly as she could to the radiator and basked in the warm glow. The heat entered through her rough scaly skin and she laid and laid until she was so warm that even the blowing heat seemed cool.

She had no sense of how much time had passed, and she felt no reason to worry. All she wanted to do was continue with her heat bathing. Although it had been the weekend, and Sylvie had no rush to get to school, she still had homework to do and places to go. All of that had been dismissed from her mind.

Hunger slapped her as she removed herself from the radiator's path, but milk and cereal wasn't the type of breakfast that seemed welcoming to her empty stomach. She slithered toward the door and nearly instantaneously she heard a loud knock. *What Serendipity!* She thought.

"Sylvie," her mother said "what are you doing in there? I didn't want to wake you, but you must be up by now! It's almost noon! Please come down as soon as you're ready!"

That was when the whole situation hit her! She had been turned into a revolting creature! She hadn't thought it out, but what was she going to do? The whole morning had been so hazy, why hadn't she contemplated what to tell her mother?

"Yessssss mothheerr," Sylvie said, surprised by the sound of her voice. The ending letter of each word was nearly twice as long as the entire beginning! Her accent was also quite high, but not sing-songy high, rather squeaky high. Altogether it was a rather unpleasant sound! "I willlll beee dowwnnn ssooonnnn! Please leaavvee theeee doorr opeennn aa crackkk!"

"Darling, are you ill? Do you have a cold?"

"Nooo mother, I amm fiiine."

"Alright sweetheart, I'll leave the door open a bit."

What was she to do? Her family would be enraged! Or at least disgusted! She really did not have the faintest clue how they would react, but she didn't suspect that they would be happy!

Sylvie knocked the door open using her little head. She slid through the open crack and carefully into the kitchen.

Suddenly, to her surprise, she heard a great bang and a crash and suddenly 3 people were coming at her with pots and pans!

"IT'S A GIANT GARTER SNAKE!"

"AHHH, KILL IT!"

"KILL THE SNAKE!"

Voices cracked, and screamed at her. She was utterly confused and afraid! Her family hated her! She hated herself, what she had become when she woke up that morning! What a twisted, convoluted creature she had become! Out of utter fear her body gave off an awful smell. The smell was so horrid she couldn't even stand it! She couldn't believe that she was releasing such a nasty horrific smell!

"Disturbing," her mother said, holding her nose, **"How grotesque!"**

"Let's get out of the path of this awful smell," exclaimed her aunt.

"Yes! Quickly!" her father joked. They all ran towards the door.

"Motherr, Auntieeee, Daddyyy! It'ssss mee! Sylvieeee!" she said, but they were gone before she got a word out. She lay on the kitchen floor feeling rather helpless. It felt like she had lain there nearly forever, and when she finally moved from that spot her stomach grumbled with hunger, and her mind was shaken with fear and anxiety! A tear fell down her scaly snakeskin cheek, and she continued to sulk in her sorrow.

Suddenly she was startled by her father walking through the door. He was carrying a rake, and coming straight at her body.

"Daddyyy, it'ssss meeee!" she said. Her father stopped in his tracks, and looked at her with raised eyebrows.

"Sylvie?" he asked her.

"Yessss daddyyyy it'ssss meeee!"

"What!?! No, no, no! I'm hearing things!" he said, and began chasing her, holding the rake with dignity.

Sylvie bee-lined toward the door, sliding and slithering as quickly as her body would allow! She slid right into the basement, and hid behind the boiler, the heat relaxing her, and making her tranquil. She lazily rolled onto her back, and cried and wailed, until her eyes had emptied.

Her nose jolted her awake, she smelled something delectable. She propped her body on her stomach and located the smell. It was behind two plastic bins. Her long tongue flicked in and out, making a hissing sound each time. She slid her body behind the bins, to find a vole. *How disgusting, she thought, do I really find that delicious? Why do I want to eat that foul being? I really do! I want to eat it!*

At that moment she realized she had no teeth, but before she could decide how to chew the rodent, her mouth snapped open and she swallowed the vole whole.

When her stomach was full, she fell asleep, right next to the boiler, eating up the heat.

The next morning, Sylvie awoke. Her body was overheated and burnt, and her mouth seemed stuffed with fur. She blinked her sore eyes, and then rubbed them until they were able to see.

She gazed to one side of her and saw the bones of some sort of rodent. “Bleghhh!” she exclaimed as she spit a lump of fur out. At that same instant she jumped away from the boiler that she was sleeping next to. Her body was hot, and she had a dark red burnt spot all the way down her right arm, which had been touching the boiler all night.

She peered to her left and saw a large pile of shed snakeskin. She clutched her hands to her head and worried if her family was chasing... “HANDS!” she exclaimed with joy, “HANDS! HANDS! HANDS! I am a human! HUMAN! HUMAN!”

“Mom! Dad!” She ran upstairs screaming and squealing, “I’m back! I’m back!”

“Oh I’m so glad,” her mother smiled sarcastically, “but where did you go?” Her mother and father laughed hysterically, and she joined too, so glad to have had a second metamorphosis, back into a human!