

## The End of the World (and Other Lies We Tell Ourselves)

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# **The End of the World (and Other Lies We Tell Ourselves)**

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## Summary

They tell you that you are Yumyan Hammerpaw. You do not know if you believe them.

AKA

What would happen if they tried to reverse the cure?

You were born today.

At least, you think you were born today. Language is still new to you, as are your thoughts and your body.

The body is old, though. It's slow and unresponsive, and it aches when it moves. You find yourself sighing loudly whenever you try to change position too quickly. Someone else lived in this body for a long time, you think. You wonder who he was.

They tell you that your name is Yumyan Hammerpaw. It will do. The name rings true, and you have no other with which to replace it. Yet somehow, you feel like a disappointment. Hours into your new existence, and you know that you were supposed to be someone else. Someone brave, someone commanding, someone charismatic. You don't know if you are any of those things. Certainly you have done nothing so far to prove yourself thus. Yet everyone expects it of you anyway.

Molly -- for she said her name was Molly, and she has no other with which to replace it -- sat you down in a big chair today. It was right in the middle of what you learned was the Mess Hall. You recognized the place, the chair. It felt right that it should be yours. And yet, you could not put a reason on why. Sitting there felt right, but the way you did so was clearly wrong, for it did not bring back the memories that Molly so hoped you would remember. Her face when you told her that there was nothing there is not something you will soon forget.

You have an intense desire to own things and to announce your ownership of them loudly. You do not know why. It feels right. Yet the way you say it comes out wrong, makes the people around you cry. You do not want them to cry, and so you have stopped.

It was Song, you think, who first put together what was happening to you. She's nice, that Song. You don't feel like you know her, not like you feel like you know Molly and Shoestring and Kipo. It's a relief, really. She doesn't look at you with the same kind of expectation as the others. She observes you, still, but she is only curious. She does not expect you to be someone else. You get the feeling that she is just as confused by you as you are.

She told you that your body used to belong to a Yumyan Hammerpaw. He was the leader of the Timbercats, and apparently he was a good friend to all of these other people. Then Emilia "cured" him of his life, of his mind. You spent a good while as a regular cat. You remember those days, vaguely. Running around and exploring and doing whatever instinct told you to. You don't remember anything before that.

She told you that you had undergone a "catastrophic loss of cognitive capacity." Your brain had shrunk too quickly too fast, and all of the memories that made up Yumyan disappeared in an instant. The only thing that remained was the feelings you associated with certain places, certain people. It explains why you fall into easy conversation with Molly, even still, even not knowing the first thing about her.

It doesn't explain what you should do next. You are not Yumyan. No matter how much they tell you that you should be, you cannot bring yourself to be Yumyan. You cannot bring yourself to pretend, even if you know that Molly would sleep easier at night, believing him to be back. You feel, somehow, that you cannot lie to her, no more than you could lie to the moon or the stars that watch your every move.

It was Jamack who was the most helpful in that regard. He offered no solutions, but he told you what he did when he found himself lost. He wandered. Picked a direction and went until he couldn't go anymore and started a new life there. It worked out for him in the end. Maybe it will work out for you, too.

You pack up the things they tell you are yours. You feel somehow like you should pack up the entire village, but you do not want to uproot these people's lives. Instead you take a small rucksack and a map with the addresses of sympathetic souls marked on it. You head East, into the wilderness. As you go on, you find that you no longer recognize any of the faces, but that's fine. It means that no one expects anything of you. Whenever they ask, you say your name is Yumyan Hammerpaw. You have no other name with which to replace it.

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