

Kim Dalton

Metamorphosis Problem

When Kimberly Dalton 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 bushy-tailed Red Panda! Kimberly sat straight up and blinked. Surely this was a dream! But no, her bushy tail twitched, and something told her it was time for breakfast.

She went to the foot of her bed and climbed down the post. Kimberly then smelled something appetizing. Very appetizing. She scurried across the floor, but when she got to the doorway, Kimberly stopped and sniffed.

Luckily, last night she had left the door open. She continued scurrying through the doorway until she came to her first big obstacle -- the staircase. However, the minute she spotted the railing she knew how to get down.

She climbed the first pole that helped hold the railing up and as soon as she got to the top, sat on the railing. *Here we go*, Kimberly thought. She closed her eyes, and pushed off. After a couple of seconds she opened her eyes. She was almost to the end! She squealed and tried to stop herself, but it was no use. But at the last second, her new animal instincts made her jump onto the floor.

Immediately, she started to scurry away toward the good smell. Ah, it was so refreshing. But she somehow knew if she didn't get to the source of the smell in time, someone else would -- and eat it before her!

Instead of quietly scurrying now, she went at top speed, as fast as her little legs could carry her! Kimberly found that if she ran for a bit, then quickly folded her tail under her like a sled, she would go sliding across the floor making it extremely easy to ram into furniture. However, it definitely got Kimberly to the kitchen faster, which her instincts seemed to tell her, the smell was coming from.

Trotting in, she sniffed again. That wonderful appetizing smell seemed to be coming from... one of the high cupboards! Kimberly scurried up the dishwasher, across the counter and right up to that pesky cupboard.

Now, Kimberly thought, *if I could just get this open...* She pawed at the crack between the door and cupboard frame. To her immense relief, the door swung open.

She sniffed around and soon found that the good smell was coming from the wonderful, delightful, delicious, delectable... *dried mushrooms?*

She wrinkled her nose. Eww! She hated dried mushrooms. She loved them fresh, but dried? Eugh!

Then she remembered she was a Red Panda now. If her instincts told her to eat something, she would just have to eat it.

She held her breath, poked a hole in the top of the cover with her claw, poked her claw into a mushroom – and bit it. To her utmost surprise, it tasted good!

She heard footsteps and someone picking a phone off of its receiver, so she ran and hid under the big red chair in the living room. As soon as she was sure that the person was gone, she looked about for somewhere to get outside. She found an open window with no screen! She scurried through the opening.

Once outside she heard the familiar sound of cars, except 10 times louder! Scared, Kim hurried to the nearest tree and scurried up. Suddenly, she remembered it was Monday! She ran back to the window, climbed in, and got her backpack between her teeth. She used her new tail to help bat trinkets out of the backpack's way.

She re-climbed out the window, and started making her way down the street to school. When she got there, she made her way around the school to the music room, where, as she expected, the door leading outside/inside was open. Kim quietly slipped in, ignoring the obnoxious noises coming from the 1st graders.

Scurrying along the corridors, she found Rm. 16, and quietly went inside. The 4th graders were doing their morning work and Language Arts. Her teacher, Ms. Stoddard, was thankfully outside of the room.

Maybe she could try to communicate with someone. She slipped past her teacher and into the room. Kim then strutted into the classroom, still dragging her backpack. She noticed her class was unusually quiet, but she didn't think anything of it. After all, this was a much more preferred reaction than what Kim expected.

She then climbed up onto her seat and bit her zipper. Kim jerked her head left, and slowly opened her backpack. Once it was partly opened, she crawled inside. Her classmates watched as her pencil case, lunch box, and snack flew out of the backpack and landed neatly on Kimberly's desk. Kim climbed out of the bag, nodded once, as if in approval, and started to leap across desks to the table on which the morning work

was. In a flash, she was across the room to the table, and back with the morning work in her mouth.

She used her sharp front teeth to snap open the button, grab a pencil, and start completing the worksheet. Kim was glad she had enough human left in her to write and solve problems and figure her work out. She had a feeling that her human mind was still in there, most of all because she could read. An animal usually can't read (although some are exceptions), and most can't write. Kim felt lucky that she could still think like a human, although her handwriting was atrocious.

It looked like this: *An animal that lives in the water is a killer whale.* Translation: An animal that lives in the water is a killer whale. Some kids imitated her, but even though they were mirroring her, their handwriting was horrible. It looked like this: *My name...*

Well, Kim wouldn't stand for her friend Naysa doing this. It was so embarrassing! So, on a scrap piece of paper, Kim wrote: *Would you stop it? It makes you look ridiculous!*

Poor Naysa looked at the animal sitting in the chair next to her and almost screamed. "How do you know my name?" she asked, ignoring the other kids that were chanting "Naysa's talking to an animal! She's weird!"

Kim ignored them too and wrote: *I'm Kimberly Dalton. Listen, you probably won't believe me, but I got changed into a Red Panda overnight. I need you to help me change back before tomorrow. Do anything you have to do to get on the computer, even bring me over to Ms. Stoddard to show her I can write, and I'll instruct you from there. My parents are probably worried about me. Trust me. I'd rather not stay a Red Panda the rest of my life!*

Naysa looked at Kim in astonishment. "Ok, I'll help," Naysa whispered. She walked up to the teacher's desk. Ms. Stoddard and Naysa talked for a bit, then Naysa came back. "She wants to see you write!" Naysa said, and picked Kim up.

"OK," Ms. Stoddard said. "Let's see this... uh, Red Panda write." Kim wrote: *Ms. Stoddard, it's me, Kim. This is urgent. Please allow Naysa Perelt onto the computer. No time to explain. Sorry about the messy handwriting.*

Ms. Stoddard seemed surprised. "Yes, Naysa, you may go onto the computer."

"Now what?" Naysa asked Kim.

Go on Google and type in human to animal transformation, Kim wrote back.

Naysa did and one article came up by someone named Samantha Kane. "Here it goes," Naysa whispered, and clicked the link.

A story came up. *"I know you may be reading this for fun,"* it read, *"but this really happened. I was changed into an iguana. It started with a night of weird dreams. When I woke up, I noticed I was a bit green and scaly..."* and the story went on quite a bit like Kim's. However, at the end it said: *"Just soak in a bath the color of your animal if you have been changed. I used plant juice."*

Kim scurried away to Ms. Stoddard and asked her to let her out. Well, she wrote a plead. As soon as Kim was outside she darted back home, jumped through an open window and ran for the spice cupboards.

She grabbed cinnamon in her mouth and got a large bowl out of another cupboard. Kim filled the bowl with water from the kitchen sink, then added enough cinnamon to turn it auburn, like her fur. Then she got in.

To her surprise, she felt the urge to swim around. But she only soaked. After a few moments, she started growing. She looked over her shoulder and saw her tail was shrinking. Kim dunked her head under and felt her ears go down the sides of her head and start evolving.

Soon, she was completely evolved. She ran to the mirror and studied herself, then whooped with joy. She was back to her human form!

She raced back to the bowl and found it empty. Suddenly, her surroundings changed and she was in school again, work half finished and in front of her. She looked around and saw everyone else working, like nothing had happened. And then again, Kim wasn't even sure it had.

But then she caught Naysa's eye and saw that the day had indeed happened, and she and Naysa, at least, remembered.