“We're going to get our eyes scarred... for life,” I told my friend, putting on a final layer of red lipstick and adjusting the fishnet hoodie I was wearing over a miniature bikini top. We were getting ready for the Thursday night meet and greet, and honestly had no clue what to expect. Yes, I've been to conventions ranging from anime to comics, and survived a week long LARPing event so I would like to believe I have thick skin regarding alternative lifestyles but I was scared. Scared of being groped; gagged, and just plain disturbed. After all, this was Fetish*Con, the biggest event in its respective industry and deep waters for a newbie to dive into.

While there is a lot that happens behind closed doors (private parties, modeling gigs, etc.) one can still enjoy the convention without being a professional in the industry. The dealer's room has a variety of objects (some of them whose purpose I'd rather not fathom!), but its small size means that it can be successfully navigated in just a tad over an hour. It is the nightlife of the convention that makes it worthwhile, parties at the swimming pool as well as a dungeon where people can explore their various fetishes being open on all nights in addition to a meet and greet on Thursday, a superhero party on Friday, and an all-out gothic party at a nightclub called “The Castle” on Saturday –whose “coolness” factor was so high that I can only describe it as exactly what Hell should be, if Hell was where all of us wanted to go in the next life.

The most surprising thing about the convention? How polite and courteous people were...even though yes, I confess to being just a bit creped out by 80 year old men in leather thongs walking around blindfolded as young women pulled on a string attached to his essentials. But if Fetish*Con is about anything, it is about letting go and just doing whatever you wish (within law and reason) and being in a safe and supportive environment while doing so. I must confess that my stalker experiences at comic book conventions have escalated to the point where a few individuals probably deserve a restraining order, my ass has been squeezed in many a manner, and people have tried to find out my hotel room number through a whole variety of creative means. At Fetish*Con there was absolutely none of this, and I was far more exposed that I've been at any event before so a huge round of applause to the attendees and staff for bringing an environment where you could literally play and not get hurt from it. Fabulous job there!

Overall? Come for Saturday, no pun intended. The superheroine showdown is worth seeing, for the laughs and drama even if you lack a heroine fetish (please, develop one by summer 2012!) and the party at the Castle? When professionals in the entertainment industry give their nod of approval to the atmosphere, music, costumes, and drinks... you know it is a success. Unless you're a professional model, actor/actress ,or photographer, skip the meet and greet on Thursday night as you'll see plenty of latex fashion the whole weekend and arrive Friday, leave Sunday. You'll get your kink satisfied, and unlike Comic Con, your ass won't be groped unless

you ask for it!