

Chapter 15

“Hello, new and old followers!” Mal wigwagged his tail. “Thank you for taking time to watch this brief video post. I can’t believe over 2,000 of you already follow my Chatter and Telegraph accounts in this first month. Thank you!” Mal sags his shoulders slightly. “My performer feels very overwhelmed over all of this. I’m just a furry fan like the rest of you.”

“Please remember, this account is for Mal, the Malabar giant squirrel, mascot for Second Fur Mascot Costumes. This suit is currently owned by Second Fur and not the performer. Their website should be at the bottom of the screen and it will be linked as the first comment. Please look at what they have to offer if you like what this performer has been able to do with this suit. Pistachio, Mal’s current performer, has his own personal account.” Mal’s tail wigwags back and forth a few times. “But please don’t overwhelm him with requests. He can be as timid as the species of his fursona.”

“I’ve posted this video message today because what I need to talk about is too long to post as text on either Chatter or Telegraph. Normally, this account would be strictly for Mal and Second Fur Mascot Costumes, Mal’s upcoming appearance schedule, photos at events, and so on. However, due to some of your recent posts Pistachio needs to step forward and explain a few things.” Mal looks down briefly, removes his head, and then back up.

“While I appreciate all the love and the push to draft me as White Mountain State University’s new mascot, please stop. No, seriously. Please stop. WMSU’s Nutty the Squirrel is a beloved character dating back to the mid-1960s. By tradition Nutty is always performed by a student. In fact, it’s one of the few college mascots in the northeast with a scholarship fund covering half the performing student’s tuition for the year. The competition to be able to wear the Nutty mascot suit is intense. Last year over two dozen students competed. And it’s a demanding job. In addition to making appearances at various sporting events, Nutty acts as an ambassador for WMSU appearing in parades, local festivals, and visiting children in the hospital.”

“I, Pistachio, graduated from WMSU. Those who follow my personal account know I am the advisor to the WMSU Student Furry Club.” The screen briefly shrinks moving Pistachio to the left side and on the right is the WMSU logo with FURRY displayed vertically, sharing the U. A squirrel’s tail wraps to the left from the tail of the Y and under WMS. “What you may not know is that I was one of many who worked hard fundraising to create the endowment to fund the Nutty Scholarship six years ago. So, while I appreciate your votes of confidence over my abilities, please stop the campaign to have Mal replace Nutty. It’s not fair to the students who work hard to bring Nutty to life. Instead, what you could do that would make a positive impact is donate to the Nutty Scholarship fund. Maybe through your help we could make it a full tuition scholarship. The link should be at the bottom of your screen and will also appear in the first comment of this video post. Thank you.”

Pistachio looks down long enough to slip Mal’s head back on, and then back up. “That was a bit strange letting my performer take over like that.” Mal shivers. “But I agree with Pistachio on this. Besides, I’d have to dye my fur as Nutty is a North American red squirrel.” (drooptail) “And I really like my fur the way it is.” He brushes a forepaw against his head.

Second Fur by Aldin Busheytail

“More importantly, I’m happy to announce that Second Fur is teaming up with White Mountain State University to refurbish and update the Nutty mascot suit. As such, Nutty will not make as many appearances as usual this summer. But come fall, Nutty will have better vision for the student performer and a programmable robotic tail. Nutty will be able to tail wigwag with all the WMSU sports fans.” Mal is replaced in the video by footage of WMSU students in stadium bleachers waving fake red squirrel tails and chattering loudly, trying to distract a visiting basketball player attempting a free throw.

“Finally, on a personal note, CatamountCon just made their official announcement ending a month of rumors. Yes, I will be their Guest of Honor next year. I am very humbled by this. While my performer has been in the fandom for many years, he’s new to suiting as me. I hope to see a lot of you there. Registration is already open and you’ll find a link in the first comment.”

Mal looked straight at the camera. “Hello old and new followers! It seemed like just yesterday we were at 2,000 followers. Here it is, early August, and we’re now at 4,000. I’m shocked and surprised so many are so interested in this humble squirrel. Thank you! Today we have a couple of guests with us who helped to design me.” Mal points to his two guests one at a time. “Sheila Floc created the software that lets my performer operate me.” Mal shuddered. (chitter) “That gives me the chills to explain it that way. And Cantaloupe here designed the built-in coolant system. My tail doesn’t just wigwag ‘cause it’s cool. It wigwags ‘cause it helps keep my performer cool. Sheila, Cantaloupe, explain away over what you did to help bring me to life...”