

Chapter 38

“Stash! We weren’t sure if you would come or not considering what you’ve been through.”

The members of the WMSU Furry Club who hadn’t been able to attend the interview pre-screening had been advised what they’d needed to do. None of them rushed-up to him. Instead, they each held-out a hand for Pistachio to sniff and let him approach them to do so. He thanked each of them in turn with a hug after sniffing. When he saw the two who had performed CPR on him, he didn’t wait for them to hold up a hand. He pounced-hugged each of them thanking them repeatedly.

He did likewise for Josie. “I was told how calm you remained after the accident, Josie. While they,” he pointed to the two who had performed CPR on him. “worked on me, you grabbed a fire extinguisher and doused the small electrical fires before they could grow. You’re as much a hero as they are.” Josie blushed at the praise.

There was quiet chitchat through the meal. At the end, the club’s president, Sonja, turned to Pistachio. “Again, thank you for attending tonight, Stash. I and the others know you’ve been through a lot and you’re still trying to sort things out. Some here are jealous as you’ve achieved what they’d like to do. You’ve become your fursona.”

Pistachio drooped his tail. Before he could say anything, Sonja continued. “Yes, that might sound crazy. And we know you’re still trying to figure out what it means to now be a squirrel rather than human, Stash. We’re here for you just as you’ve been here for us. We’re also aware you’re now out on medical leave.” She paused a moment. “And, unfortunately, the university requires that we have an active advisor.”

Pistachio drooped his tail again. “Are you kicking me out, Sonja? Have I now lost Rick one of his favorite hobbies in addition to his job?”

Sonja waved her hands back and forth. “No! Never! Nothing like that.” She gestured around to the others present who echoed the sentiment. “If you’re willing to remain our advisor when you return from medical leave, we want you back. However, the university requires we find a temporary replacement while you’re out on leave.” She glanced at Abigail. “So, we discussed that over the past few days and finally came to a decision this morning. It’s one of the reasons we also personally invited your wife tonight. She was always welcome before as any family member who shows up would be. We wanted to make sure she came tonight as we’d like to ‘draft’ her to fill in for you if she’ll accept the position.”

Sonja turned to Abigail. “Dr. Michaud, we know you’re not a furry, but the advisor doesn’t need to be one. Would you be willing to take over for you husband on a temporary basis?” Sonja held-up a laminated badge. On it was an open spice jar tipped on its side with a red squirrel tail poking out of the opening. Written on the jar was, ‘Mrs. Stash’. “As you’re a ‘normie’ we didn’t know what to do for a badge, until Josie came up with the idea to parody a *Mrs. Dash*TM seasoning spice jar playing up on Pistachio’s nickname among our group.”

Second Fur by Aldin Busheytail

Abbie turned to Pistachio. “Would it bother you, hon?”

In response, Pistachio took the badge from Sonja and looked at it admiringly. He then stared off blankly a moment. “Don’t be alarmed,” he said to the others present. “I need to search through Rick’s memories a moment. He then turned and clipped it to Abigail’s work lanyard. He hugged her to cheering from the students. “Rick wouldn’t be offended by this turn of events. Welcome to the club, ‘Mrs. Stash’.”