

Chapter 65

“So, yes, though my character has been feral most of my life, if I had been given a choice in my transformation, I’d have preferred to be more anthro or somewhere in between. It’s a challenge being a quadruped in a bipedal world. Next question.” Stash pointed to someone and a staff member ran over with a microphone.

“What’s your sex life like?!”

There were a combination of catcalls and gasps in the crowd. Stash standing on stage with a lapel microphone clipped to his fur glared towards the questioner as his tail lashed about violently a moment before he got it under control. He chittertsked as he glanced at Sublime Green sitting at a table just off stage. “There’s one in every crowd, isn’t there?” Sublime Green shrugged. Stash turned back to the questioner. “This is not an after-dark session, bub. All questions in this ‘Grill Pistachio Q&A for Charity’ panel should be PG rated or under as was explained at the beginning and in the panel description. We’ve got young furs present. I’m not going to answer that question in any kind of detail. I’ll say this much. Despite my accidental transformation, we find ways to make it work. And she knows just how to,” he paused briefly, “pet me.”

There were catcalls to that last statement.

“Wow, you’re a dirty minded group. Remember, this is a family-friendly panel. I meant that last statement literally. I love how she brushes my fur.” Stash brushed down his fur with one forepaw. “She knows just were to scritch me to get me to thump my rear leg like a dog.”

There was some laughter in the audience.

“Bub, we’ve been together a little over 15 years and legal for 13.” Stash raised his left forepaw enough for the plain gold ring on his clawed finger to catch the light. “We met as students at WMSU and tied the knot before we graduated. And we’ve been together ever since. So, we must be doing something right, huh? Especially, when she’s remained by my side despite my change. Look, there’s more to a successful long-term relationship than just a good time in bed, bub. And that’s all I have to say on that.” He glanced at the clock as many in the audience applauded his answer.

“It looks like we’ve got less than 10 minutes left. Time for one or two more questions. Please remember to keep them *family-friendly* folks.” He pointed to a younger audience member. “Yes, the young lady near the middle left with the blue wolf ears on your hat.”

A staff member jogged over and handed a microphone to the female pre-teen.

“May I pet you, Mr. Stash?”

The audience erupted in laughter.

Second Fur by Aldin Busheytail

Rick waited for the laughter to quiet down. “Well, I guess I walked into that one, huh, folks? Young lady, before I answer that, I’ve got a question for you. Who brought you to the con?”

“My dad,” she pointed to him sitting two seats over from her.

“Would you please give him the microphone for a moment.”

She complied.

“Hello,” her father said.

“Hello, Mr...well, let’s just call you Blue Wolf’s Dad, if that’s alright. Do you have a fursona or are you what we call a ‘normie’? That’s someone who doesn’t have a fursona but is here to support their child’s hobby.”

“At the moment, I’m a normie, but that may change. I think I’m having as much fun as my kids this weekend.”

Many in the audience cheered.

“That’s wonderful. Would you please stand-up for a moment?”

He complied.

“Will all the other parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents and anyone else present who are normies supporting a young furry fan for the weekend please also stand up.” He waited as those asked stood up. “I want to recognize all of you for doing that in supporting your son, daughter, niece, nephew or grandkid this weekend. Sadly, that’s not the case for a lot in the furry community. Thank you for doing it. Let’s give them a round of applause.”

After the audience cheered on the adults, they sat down, Blue Wolf’s Dad tried to hand the microphone back to his daughter, but his son wearing a cap with red fox ears sitting between them tried to snag it.

“I’d like to ask a question, too!”

“Check with your sister to make sure she’s fine with it,” Rick butted in. “I do promise to answer hers in just a moment.”

She nodded to her brother.

“Well, she beat me to it. I was going to ask to pet you too Mr. Stash. So...um...” He thought for a moment. “Do you find it difficult to drink soda?”

Stash gigglechittered. “Great question. No, I don’t find it difficult provided I have a straw or pour it in a cup. I’ll demonstrate in a moment. Back to your sister’s question. Audience, should I let her pet me?”

There was very loud cheering. Rick pointed to the fursuiters including Sheila and Cantaloupe around the room holding donation pails for the con charity. “Well, let’s see if you can ‘bribe’ me into saying yes. Pony up for the North Kingdom Humane Society. Fursuiters, please keep track as best you can. I’ll ask you how much you’ve collected when you’re done going around the room. In the meantime, Blue Wolf’s Dad, please bring your two young furs up here on stage.”

As the fursuiters made their way around the room and money was placed in the pails, Rick scampered over to Sublime Green’s table and grabbed a water bottle. He returned to the stage, bottle in mouth, as the father and his kids arrived. He sat-up again and took the bottle out of his mouth. The son looked a bit nervous. “Don’t be afraid,” Rick reassured the child. “If anything, I should be afraid of you two, a wolf and fox. Both could make a snack of me.” He wigwagged his tail about his back. There was some laughter in the audience.

“Do you two have fursona names?”

Sublime Green held a microphone to each, who said their names in turn.

“Snow Wolf.”

“Flame,” the boy answered shyly.

“Neat. Well, Flame, as I said before, as long as I have a straw or cup, it’s easy for me to drink. Otherwise, I can’t without making a mess. That’s why I asked you both to come up here on stage. I wanted to make sure you got a close-up look. As you can see, my muzzle and lips are not like a human’s. These buckteeth don’t help any. I’m not sure at times how I can speak so clearly with these teeth.” Rick paused a moment as he held back his lips on one side so they could see the gap between his incisors and his molars. “If you want to touch my muzzle gentle before I continue, go ahead.” He waited while both gently poked at him. Their father also joined in. Flame giggled and relaxed.

“That gap between my incisors and my molars makes it hard to keep my lips properly closed around a bottle or can. As it is, I had to practice for a while to properly sip from a cup without dribbling. But a can or bottle, I haven’t been able to cleanly sip from either no matter how much I practice. Watch what happens.” He grabbed his water cup from the podium in one forepaw. He tilted his head back and tried to drink from the bottle. He dribbled mostly into his cup and some on his fur. The kids giggled. He let out a sigh. “As you can see, it just leaks-out the sides of my mouth. Good thing this is water and not soda, or I’d have sticky fur.” He set the glass down, capped the bottle, picked the glass back-up, and the proceeded to take a sip from the glass using both paws. “Ahhh.” He looked out to the audience and pointed to the various charity collectors. “Give me an estimate of how much each of you collected.” He paused adding it up in his head. “Wow! About \$349.25!”

The crowd cheered again.

Rick turned to the young Snow Wolf. “I guess, the answer to your question, Ms. Snow Wolf is yes, you may pet me. But give me a moment.” Rick put the water bottle and glass aside on the podium. He then sprawled out on the floor. “Alright, both of you go ahead and pet me. Dad, this is your chance to snap photos.”

It wasn’t long before his microphone picked-up his chitterpurring. Suddenly, one of his rear legs started thumping to the cheering of the audience.

“Looks like Flame found the ‘secret’ spot.”

Both kids giggled and continued to pet him for nearly a minute, only stopping as Sublime Green came up on stage. Stash hugged both kids. Their father offered to shake hands. Pistachio pulled him into a hug. “This is your chance to give me a quick pet too if you want.” He said. Dad gave him a quick pet to the cheering of the audience. “Thanks for being good sports. Let’s hear it for Snow Wolf, Flame the Fox, and their Dad!” The crowd applauded again as the three made their way back to their seats.

Sublime Green spoke into his microphone. “I’m afraid that will have to do it for Q&A. Let’s give a round of applause to Pistachio.”

The crowd cheered again and slowly filtered out. The room was next scheduled for the dance competition rehearsal, closed to all but performers and staff.

“Are you sure you want me to lead the fursuit parade?”

“Of course, Stash,” several of the fursuiters called out. “The Guest of Honor, if they’re a suiter, always leads. You’ve got one. You just can’t take it off.”

The parade route lead through several corridors and eventually outside, where staff did their best to herd the group together for a photo.

“Where’s Stash?”

(gigglechitter) “Up here, silly.” Stash called-out from the tree he had scaled and was now dangled from facing downward about 10ft (3m) up. “Where else would you expect a squirrel to be? I figured this would be the best place for me in the photoshoot.”