

Ninetales TF

Foxgamer01

Content warning: Pokémon, Transformation, Big paws

Pokémon is the property of Game Freak

Copyright © [2024] by [Foxgamer01]

All rights reserved.

No portion of this written work may be reproduced without written permission from the publisher or author except as permitted by U.S. copyright law. This includes but is not limited to, the distribution of Patreon-exclusive content or early access content distributed during the exclusivity period.

A stream of code flowed past Alex's face, reflecting on his glasses. The programming code would be a random series of letters and numbers to any average person. For someone like Alex, it was as though he read another language in perfect understanding. He spent much of the day typing in code, and all that was left was to spot some errors, if any.

It would be terrible if a nasty bug was left behind in a website he helped build because he typed the wrong figure.

He skimmed through a sea of code until satisfied with the results. He saw nothing that could cause an error, like crashing the web browser or grinding the server to a halt. He might have missed one, but that was why this workplace had multiple programmers building up the code and double-checking the results.

Even if Crafted Code only had five working in the office at any given time.

Alex stood from his chair, pushing it back before stretching his back to get the blood flowing. He adjusted the glasses on his nose while checking his gray polo shirt for any issues. Two pens were still in their pocket without a leak, none of the buttons got loose, and it was tucked into his brown jeans. So far, everything was as it should.

He moved onto his jeans, patting each of his pockets. His keys were in his right pocket, where he left them. He had no wallet in his pockets, so he checked his black desk for it. The wallet sat next to the right widescreen monitor, with a double-sided image of a Ninetales on it. He grabbed it and pocketed it in his left jeans pocket. His black boots still had their shoelaces tied in a double-knot bowtie. His yellow and black backpack lay beside his desk. Everything was set for the end of his shift, which was in fifteen minutes.

That left only two things to do.

Alex sat back down and double-checked the code, not to spot any errors but to see his progress. From what he observed, he made tremendous progress. He would not be surprised if the website would be ready for a demo next week. Once that was done, there would be final touches, teaching them how it worked and getting it online. Alex pressed on save and closed that window.

He checked the computer clock, which was ticking at 2:54PM.

Alex smirked, having just enough time to pull up a small program he created during his downtime. He checked it, making sure it would not be traced to him. The program itself was not meant to be harmful; he would be surprised if

it did some damage. He uploaded it into his work's public server before shutting down the computer. He stood from his chair, picked up his backpack, and waited.

It took about three seconds before the first Japanese Pokémon theme song to play from another cubical.

"Ugh! Again?!" A lady's voice cried out. "Who keeps doing this?!"

Alex took on a stoic expression while he rushed out from his cubical and poked his head to the next one. "Um, is everything alright?"

The dark-haired lady, Emily, lifted her head from the computer to face Alex. "Sorry. I spotted a new program on the server. I only clicked it once, but that was enough for it to play that Japanese song! It's so annoying."

Alex nodded while turning away. "I bet."

"I swear, if I ever found out who's the clown in the building, I'll get payback!" Emily pushed her shoulder-length hair away from her dark eyes. "At least you're sweet."

"Um, you're welcome?"

"I mean it!" Emily did some typing and nodded. The song stopped playing. "OK. Deleted that from our server."

She turned to Alex with an eager expression. "You can be so shy, but you're such a sweetheart. Like when you brought the team some homemade cookies in the breakroom."

Alex shrugged and kept silent for a couple of seconds. "I, uh, you're welcome."

Emily laughed. "Sorry. I always love it when you act awkward." She looked at her monitor. "Sorry for holding you much longer here. It's your time to leave, isn't it?"

"Yup." Alex glanced at his watch. The time said 2:57PM. "Um, see you tomorrow?"

"See ya!"

Alex nodded and walked back to his cubical. He checked his desk, searching for anything he may have forgotten about. Once satisfied he did not, he slung the backpack onto his back. He strolled out from his cubical and walked down the hall.

It was not a prominent office place, with his only dominating half the second floor of this five-story building. The company he worked for, Crafted Code, started a year ago with a growing customer base. They helped create custom websites for local businesses and online creators who could not make their own sites. They also did some

minor stuff, like bug fixes, and sometimes were hired by law enforcement if they needed help with computer-related crimes.

Alex helped with a couple, which he was pleased with. One such case involved a company employee who purchased more computer parts than needed. The official reason he gave was to have backup parts, but instead, he sold the extra parts to gain money. The company grew suspicious when an audit confirmed that they spent more than they should, with little evidence of the backup's existence. Alex was brought in to discover the reason for this discrepancy.

It did not take long to bypass the employee's encryptions and find the hidden financial books.

Alex did not get paid that much for that job, but he did not mind. All that mattered to him was doing a good deed and completing a challenge. He could not help but be impressed with the encryptions that the embezzling employee made, with it taking longer than usual to decrypt. It was a shame he used his gift to scam out a company for a year.

"Hey there, Alex."

Alex paused mid-steps, feeling his thoughts crashing into bits. He turned to his right, where his manager, Sean, walked over. Despite only reaching 32 years old, Sean's hair was pure white. He wore a white polo shirt that contrasted with his black jeans. His mustache reached his ears, though it did little to hide the scar on his cheek.

"Heh, heh. Heading off for the day?" Sean asked.

"Y-yes." Alex gave Sean a quick nod. "I-I know how much you hate us to work overtime."

Sean gave a soft laugh. "I know. I'm proud that you go out of your way to do so. It won't do to have my employees work overtime, voluntary or not. Especially on the company's dime."

Alex brushed the back of his head, feeling the semi-clumpy dirty blonde hair there. "I-I do my best to."

"Heh, heh." Sean shook his head before patting Alex on his shoulder. "Relax. You've been working with us since pretty much the beginning when I was hunting through coffee shops for hires. Yet, you act as though it's your first day."

"I'm not good with people, sir." Alex shook his head. "They can be both blunt and vague at the same time. At

least machines and basic AI have a basic pattern to follow."

"Heh, heh. Of course." Sean nodded. "You take care now. And be careful on the drive home. I heard a storm is coming from the west."

Alex blinked. "A storm? Yesterday's forecast said there shouldn't be anything but a clear sunny day."

"I know. I was confused, too." Sean stroked on his mustache before walking away. "Either way, you be careful out there."

"I-I will."

Alex walked away as fast as he could. He headed to the punch machine with a small rectangular digital screen and a series of numbers to its left. With a couple of fingers, he typed out his work number and punched out.

With a sharp inhale, Alex walked over to the stairs. He was not that athletically inclined, at most walking around his apartment complex twice before work. He felt that taking the stairs was faster than taking the elevator, and fewer people were going through it. It also gave him a better chance to think since he hated having his thoughts interrupted.

He always wondered what would happen if he did go into game development like he wanted. As a kid, Alex enjoyed playing games and learning all about coding and programming to get a chance to join the industry. Even as a hobby, he would investigate games and their engines to figure out how they run and how to mod them to improve their efficiency.

The first problem after graduating from tech school was finding an opening. Even when Alex saw an opening and applied for it, no matter how far, he would always receive a 'we'll call you back' type of response. In fact, it was during one such attempt that Sean met him. He was at the coffee shop, doing an online interview, when he received that response. Sean got curious and asked for a demo, which Alex provided. When he examined it, Sean encouraged Alex to apply for the new company he helped start, Crafted Code, instead.

"Heh, heh. It would be a waste of your talents to go into game development," Sean had said. "Gaming companies these days would hire temps with fake promises of a permanent place, only to can them at the first opportunity. It's better to build websites and handle cyber security."

Alex was reluctant but agreed to apply for Crafted Code. When the owner saw Alex's demos, he was hired. Since then, he worked for them. The pay was alright, enough to pay for his apartment every month, and he acquired no debts before and afterward. He still wished he could apply for a game development job but did not wish to leave his current workplace. As far as he was concerned, as long as Crafted Code did not screw him over, he would remain working there.

Besides, it was fun to prank an occasional coworker with Pokémon songs.

Alex reached the bottom of the stairs, walked through the main lobby, and headed outside. The sky was clear despite the ominous warning of an incoming storm. He still doubted something like that would happen. He knew little about the weather, but the region's sky was a peaceful, late summer day.

He shrugged and went to his bright red 2004 Honda Civic vehicle. It was not a powerful vehicle, but it was reliable even after two decades. He unlocked the car, put this backpack on the passenger side, and sat in the driver's seat. Alex reached into his bag and pulled an iPod Touch, inserting an audio jack into its aux port. He pushed the cassette tape adaptor to play music with the car's speakers.

Alex turned the car keys, turning the car engine on.

Music from Pokémon the Series: The Beginning played, though not from the left speaker.

Alex frowned at it, with it struggling to remain on for the past two months. Perhaps he should head to a repair shop to fix the speakers or try to fix it himself. Then again, it might cost a lot over a speaker or both front speakers. He also would not know what to do, even if he checked a YouTube video to see how it was done. After all, it may be the speaker's cord or the speaker itself. How would he figure out what was the problem?

Either way, getting it repaired for what was ultimately a minor thing was not worth it.

Alex huffed and drove his car out of the parking lot.

#

Alex reached halfway to his home when he saw the incoming storm.

It was to his right where he saw a wall of clouds coming from the west. It was as dark as night, despite him remaining on the sunny side, and approached faster than expected. The wind picked up enough that the vehicle swayed from the force. He gritted his teeth and kept it on the lane.

His vehicle was the only one driving on this highway near a cliffside. Down below lay a beach with nobody on it ever, perhaps due to a lack of access. The ocean crashed against the beach, and each wave was more brutal than the last. The trees bent away from the wind, struggling to stand up.

It would be suicide to remain driving in such conditions.

Alex grunted, keeping control over his Honda Civic despite the harsher winds. It was enough that he dared not to remove his eyes from the road. A bit of sea water reached above the cliffs, giving his car a slight drizzle. He inhaled and held his breath briefly, wondering if he should have taken the other route.

At least there was a place to park his car for a short while.

On this highway lay an old, decrepit shop that once sold merchandise for those traveling from out of state. The shop went out of business when this highway lost traffic due to a new road nearby. He never went there, but it would be a place to hold out until the storm blew over.

After a couple more minutes, Alex approached the old store and flinched in surprise.

The building was there but somehow remodeled into another type of shop. The wooden sign, which said **Gaming Goods** on it, hung above the door and wiggled against the wind. Rather than old with bricks falling off and the roof caved in, the walls were intact with fresh white paint, and the roof was upright and solid. It was like it had finished reconstruction moments ago and was ready for customers. The only signal of what it used to be was the dirt parking spot.

Alex knew this was impossible.

He drove down the highway this morning to work.

It was an utter trash of a building.

"How?" Alex whispered.

The storm had already made this day crazy, but this mysterious shop had made it insane. Nobody should be able to patch up a shop that was almost destroyed and ready for customers in mere hours. Yet, the open sign on the front door hung as though mocking him. He felt clashing instincts, one telling him to drive on and the other telling him to stay. He breathed in, settling for a compromise to stay but not go inside that store.

This day grew insane, though not as much as Good Fox Day.

He could not believe he thought of *that* day of all days.

Alex shook his head and parked by the store. He turned off the car, followed by turning off his iPod Touch. He sighed and leaned back against his seat for a second. He pressed his forehead against the wheel when the car swayed a bit. Only then did he dare to turn toward the incoming storm.

A pair of huge shadows danced under the clouds before diving into the ocean.

Alex widened his green eyes as much as possible, almost to the point of popping them off. That must have been his imagination, right? He could not have seen what looked like a pair of dragons, right? It might all be in his head.

Right?

Despite trying to deny it, Alex grabbed his backpack and rushed outside, slamming the door shut behind him. The wind howled outside as though cursing him for leaving the safety of his Civic. His dirty blonde hair waved in the gale, trying to rip off his head. So, with little choice, Alex rushed into this mysterious store. He opened the wooden door, where a bell rang in response, and hurried in.

Alex blinked two times at the shop's interior, which was even more impossible than how quickly it had been reconstructed.

Rather than being a small store, enough to fit twenty customers, this was beyond the size of any warehouses or malls he ever stepped in. He could not see the other end of the store or its side walls, no matter how far he looked. It reached on, perhaps for miles, with countless aisles to observe. Each aisle also held products, with no barren spot for them.

Despite it all, it still did not reach the insanity of Good Fox Day.

Why did he think of that day again?

"Ah, what a storm that's coming," a voice said to Alex's left.

Alex turned to the voice's origin and flinched from the shock. There stood what looked like an anthro jackal. He looked slim and realistic, from the golden-brown fur all over his body to his blinking green eyes. Rather than facing Alex, this anthro jackal looked through the window in marvel. He flicked one of his triangular ears.

Now, this was getting weird.

"Er, hello?" Alex said.

The anthro jackal turned to Alex and curled his lips into a grin. "Hello there."

Alex suppressed a flinch when the anthro jackal walked toward him. He brushed his cyan shirt and navy blue jeans for any sign of dust on him. Alex could not help but note the jackal's colossal tail, which at least doubled his height. The jackal extended his padded hand-paw toward Alex, who hesitated before shaking it. It felt so warm and natural to him.

So many things happened within the past fifteen minutes, enough that Alex could no longer deny the fantasy he stepped into.

"So, er, are you actually an anthro jackal?" Alex asked.

The anthro jackal laughed and set his hand-paws on his hips. "It's about time someone figured that out! Now, you cannot believe how many people walked in and thought I was some fursuit-wearing weirdo or an animatronic. I'm happy that someone got it right!"

"Um, you're welcome?" Alex shrunk away. He felt nervous about this stranger. "So, um—"

"The name is Luke. I'm the owner of this wonderful shop!" Luke swung his fuzzy arm all around the area.

"Here, we carry all kinds of gaming goods!" He paused to give Alex a smirk. "Heh. Gaming goods." He continued his speech. "From the marketable like Pokémon to the obscured like Gothos, from all gaming consoles in existence to even gaming products you never heard of, we have it all! We even have a section of jewelry like rings or necklaces, which may not involve games!" He laughed for a few seconds. "That I left as an honor for the previous owner."

"Um, cool?" Alex flinched. "S-sorry. I didn't come here for any of your products. It was to hide from the storm."

Luke nodded. "I figured that was the case. Might as well give out the huge speech anyways to see if you're interested."

Alex nodded before looking around. "If it was any other day, I would be excited to be here." He rubbed the back of his head. "So, um, is it alright if I browse this, um, magical," he had a questioning tone on the word 'magical,' "store? I, um, would rather get as far away from the storm."

"Sure!" Luke gave him a thumbs-up.

Alex inhaled and rushed deeper into the store, ignoring further statements from Luke. When he wanted to keep his thoughts going, everything that another person

said might as well be through a broken radio. He thought about this mysterious store, which must be magical in nature. That would explain everything since he stepped in. It was like he was taken by a dragon and dragged away from his everyday life. And when that imaginary dragon dropped him, he fell into a fantastical world, unlike anything he ever knew about.

Though it was less dragon and more harsh storm in his case.

He knew this should shock him to his core or at least be in denial. After all, who ever heard of a magical store that was far bigger on the inside? What about that anthro jackal, not a human, running the place? Not to mention that he only came in because he saw what looked like two massive creatures that looked like dragons in a storm.

Or were they two huge birds?

Then again, the world has become strange in recent years. Though he rarely browsed into the dark webs for his safety, Alex did check it if his curiosity got the better of him. At least he knew how to protect his identity during the rare times he browsed there.

Within the dark webs echoed rumors of humans that either turned into anthro creatures, real or fictional or

turned outright into those creatures. Sometimes, a shop that was bigger on the inside was mentioned as being involved. Other times, it was through mischief by some members of an organization. One even claimed that this happened for decades, with it only becoming whispered knowledge thanks to the rise of the internet and—

Alex shook his head before finishing that last thought. He already thought about *that* day twice already. No need to think about it for a third time. Just pretend that day never happened, and life would go on.

Alex stopped shaking his head and blinked. Instead of being around video games, toys, plushies, and other products, he was in a jewelry department. Rings of many types, gold, silver, and steel, lay on shelves with gems or molded designs. Necklaces that held animal molds on them hung on hangers, each one beautiful. He could not help but gasp at this stunning display.

He shifted his course to head deeper into this department. Various rings lay in cases, some like curled-up dragons and wolves and others like prowling panthers. Necklaces like a cabbit curled around a green emerald and a Snivy hanging on a sapphire hung on a head level. He smiled, marveling at the designs.

One ring caught his eye.

It was a golden-white ring with a fox-like creature curled around in a circle. Its nine tails coiled around, reaching the forepaws with ease. Its ruby eyes stared into Alex's green eyes, with them glowing as though on fire. It was a beautiful ring, so much so that he bet it would be worth a lot.

Alex could not help but pick up the case it was in.

He rubbed the ring where the fox-like creature's head lay. It felt cold and smooth to the touch. Alex raised an eyebrow, wondering if he should wear it for a moment. On one hand, it was out in the open, ready for someone to try it out. On the other hand, Luke said something before he left and went deeper into the store. Perhaps he should head back to him and ask what he meant.

Instead of listening to his advice, Alex slipped the ring onto his right hand.

Alex grinned, marveling at how beautiful it looked on him. He was not vain, but he knew that this ring fit him. Maybe he should ask Luke if he could buy it. It might be expensive, at least around a hundred dollars, but it would be worth—

The creature's red eyes glowed brighter for a single second.

Alex flinched, but the glow faded away. He wondered what that was all about. Perhaps he imagined it, but then he was in a magical shop during an insane storm. Maybe it was working its magic on him, but what?

He found out when he felt a tugging feeling on his rear.

"Gah!" Alex grunted while reaching back. There, his spine and nerves, muscles, and skin stretched out longer. It pressed against his rear, with it running out of space. Before he could do anything, it ripped through, leaving shredded pieces of his pants on the floor. "Ow! What the?!"

Alex twisted back and widened his eyes.

Rather than seeing one new appendage growing from his spine, he saw nine.

The appendages grew out, covered in golden-white fur with pale orange tips. They at first stretched upward to his head level, only to curl downward. Each of the lengthening tails was huge, enough that it confused him that he felt no pain from the weight. The tails only stopped growing when they reached his boots.

Alex gasped, touching one of the tails. It felt smooth yet bushy, as though he already groomed it. He stood

there, confused as to how this happened. Perhaps it was the ring he put on, but to change him this fast?

Perhaps he should have listened to Luke before walking away.

Alex's fingers cracked, with the fingernails narrowing while blackening. Golden-white fur also sprouted on each finger, spreading downward. Thick paw padding formed under his fingers and palms, giving him a firm grip. By then, the fur had already reached his wrists and spread onto his arms. It felt painful for the sprouting fur underneath his watch, so he ripped it off.

At the same time, he felt pain coming from his feet. It felt as though his boots were becoming too small on him. Ripping sounds came from within, with the front of his boots distorted from his digits pressing against them. Black claws ripped through, followed by the rest of the boots splitting in half. His white socks ripped apart from how much his feet stretched longer, leaving only the remains on his ankles. Alex stumbled a bit, regaining his footing when he stood on the front of his feet. Already, golden-white fur covered them with thick padding on the bottom. Rather than stopping their growth, his feet-paws expanded in size until they were at least three times larger than his previous feet size.

"W-woah!" Alex gasped with wide eyes. "H-how?"

His clothing felt ticklish when the fur spread underneath them, enough that he felt tempted to take them off. He resisted the urge even as he rubbed his shoulders and knees. The fur spread up his arms, legs, and even his back. Alex wondered if he would be forced to go on all fours.

Despite his concern, he remained anthropomorphic. The fur reached his stomach and chest, growing thicker halfway up his chest. It grew as thick on his shoulders and back as though it were a slight mane. The fur spread up his neck, popping off the top polo shirt's button.

Once it reached his hairline, his dirty-blond hair grew long and thick. It bent backward, reaching a moon crest shape on his head. His hair-fur also lightened in color until it was the same golden-white shade as his fur. His hair-fur only stopped growing when it reached halfway down his back. Alex reached up and brushed his hair-fur in shock.

His ears shifted upward while stretching into a triangular shape. They ended up on the top of his head, with the hair-fur between them. His ears wiggled and flicked, with golden-white fur growing on both the outer and inner sides of his ears. The triangular ears stretched upward until they reached the same height as his hair-fur.

Alex opened his mouth to speak, only for his jaws to crack. His mouth and nose shifted forward, his teeth

growing longer and sharper. His nose blackened while flattening, taking on an upside-down shape. His stretching nose and mouth took on an acute angle. His glasses, which managed to hold on even after his ears went up his head, slipped without a proper way to stay on his stretching muzzle. He caught it before it reached the floor and huffed. He set it on the sides of his face, pressing it up so it would not slip off again. By that point, golden-white fur covered his face.

Alex closed and opened his eyes, emerald green eyes turning ruby red during that blink.

He gasped and looked over himself, realizing he turned into an anthro Ninetales.

"W-woah!" Alex blinked and blushed. His nine tails swayed behind him, which only made him blush brighter. "Um, how?"

"Sigh. I thought you might not have paid attention."

Alex flinched and spun around despite wanting to shrink into a ball. There stood Luke, who leaned against one of the displays with an amused expression. He laughed and shook his head before looking over his claws.

"I must say, you look pretty cool," Luke said. He walked over to Alex and patted his shoulder. "Especially

with having tails as long and large as mine, though not as numerous. Not to mention your large feet-paws there."

"I-I-I'm sorry!" Alex took off the Ninetales ring and put it in its box again. "I-I'll pay for—"

Luke laughed. "Lelehehe! No need! You can have it for free!"

Alex blinked. "Wh-what?"

"I admit that I usually ask people to pay for this stuff after they get transformed." Luke shrugged. "Heck, I paid when it happened to me, even after being hired to help. And it helped that, once transformed, the product became inert. My mentor theorized that the Athrú, the creators of this shop and lovers of transformation, set it so items can't be reused and have to make new ones for the same results."

"Um, who—"

"But today is a special occasion!" Luke pulled Alex into a side hug. "Perhaps it was fate that put you in this position."

Before Alex could say anything, the entire shop shook. It was unlike an earthquake, where the ground rumbled for a while. It was momentarily as though something big

stepped or landed nearby. Alex flinched from the shaking, wondering if it would happen again.

The shop shook again just as Alex thought about that.

“Ah. That’ll be them.” Luke winked at Alex. “Now, let’s meet our guests.”

Luke let go of Alex before walking toward the front of the store. Alex stood there for a second, wondering if he should follow. On one hand, or hand-paw, he had no clue as to what could cause the shop to shake. Given the size of the shop, it must be something big and strong to make both feel it. Getting on their bad side would not be a good idea. On the other hand-paw, this must be a once-in-a-lifetime deal from Luke’s expression. Perhaps he should swallow his fear and meet these guests.

Alex swallowed and followed Luke despite not liking this idea.

Within a minute, they reached the front of the store. Luke smiled and opened the door. It was quiet outside despite it still showing that dark storm out there. It should have been screaming out, but for some reason, the storm stilled. Luke turned to the left and laughed, waving there. Alex followed, poking his head out from the door and almost falling from shock.

There stood two Lugia, which towered over the shop itself. They were both silver-white, perhaps with a slick type of feather that clung to their bodies. Their tails, which stretched long and ended with two bluish-black pointy plate-like protrusions, hovered over Alex's car. Similar blueish-black plate-like protrusions lay on their backs, opened outward. Their wings curled over, with the ends of each shaped like hands.

"Hello there, Mike," Luke said. He reached over and patted the right Lugia's foot. "And I see you brought Michelle."

The Lugia dubbed Mike nodded and gave a music-like cry.

"I'm glad that you're doing well." Luke gave Mike and Michelle a deep bow. He continued to face Mike. "I've taken care of your shop as best as I could. I even saw some neat things that happened because of its magic. Once, I sold a game based on a fangame involving Pokémon fusing with each other. Not only did it transform the new owner into one such hybrid, but it somehow also caused another fused Pokémon in the game to come alive and appear in the real world."

Michelle gave Luke a musical cry, though there was some confusion in her tone.

"I know. It's weird."

Michelle did another musical cry, turning upward.

"Hey. The time has passed. In fact, I doubt that the shop's magic will affect you again." Luke shrugged. "Never did for me. But that's what I love about owning this shop and having weird stuff happen." Luke winked at both Lugia. "Finding out new things."

Alex dropped his jaw in shock and wonder at the two massive Lugia. His mind clicked, remembering when he stared into the storm earlier in the car. A pair of large shadows danced with each other and then dived into the sea at that time. Now that he looked at those two Lugia, they looked much like those shadows.

Both Lugia turned their heads toward Alex, which made him shrink back.

"Oh! That's the latest person that this shop transformed!" Luke rushed over to Alex's side. "Don't be afraid. They won't hurt you." Alex inhaled but nodded back. Luke smiled, pulled Alex before them, and said, "Say hello to Alex, our former human turned anthro Ninetales."

To Alex's surprise, the two Lugia nodded, curling their beaks into an amused smile. It almost felt like they were in the same kind of joke Luke was in. They bent down,

positioning their head toward Alex and Luke. Alex hesitated before patting both of their heads. It was so smooth that he could not discern one feather from the other, assuming they had feathers.

Mike and Michelle turned to each other, nodded, and gave out a musical cry.

“Ah, time to leave?” Luke pressed his fist against his chest. “May we meet again, old friend.”

Mike and Michelle spread their wings out and flew into the sky. They flapped their wings toward each direction at least once; despite showing no visible or seemingly sending no physical force, the dark clouds split apart in all directions. The afternoon sun shone on them, with their silver-white bodies almost glowing in the light. With another flap, they went into the sea.

Alex watched with wide eyes. “Um, er, I’m so confused. We have LUGIA?! Not one, but two?! B-but they’re a fictional character!!”

Luke bent over and laughed. “There’s also a Ho-Oh, but he rarely comes down.” He turned to Alex and smirked. “This world has many wonderful things, and you just saw one of them. I’ve been living in that world ever since I started working in this shop, and I’m so, so happy for it.”

"I, um, good for you." Alex looked back to his tails. "And, er, I admit that I like this form. I look good."

"Nice!" Luke patted Alex on his shoulder. "And please, keep the ring. When you wear it, always remember this day."

Alex nodded and grinned. "OK. Thank you."

Alex extended his hand-paw over to Luke. The other stared at it for a few seconds before reaching out and grabbing it. They shook, squeezing the other's hand-paw. Though it had taken the turn for the strange, Alex could not help but feel happy.

His happiness ended when he turned to his car. "So, um, how do I drive with nine massive tails and two massive feet-paws?"

Luke leaned toward the car and rubbed his muzzle. "That's a good point." He smiled. "I have a couple of suggestions if you don't mind."

#

Alex the anthro Ninetales leaned forward on his chair, typing in programming code in his improvised office. His nine large tails swayed back and forth, happy that this chair did not have a back. When he felt sore or stressed,

he leaned back and stretched, using his tails to stay upright.

It worked after learning how to best position his tails the fifth time.

Alex typed in the last of the code, double-checked it for errors, and saved it. "OK. Sending you the update."

The updated program was uploaded to his apartment's internet and sent to Crafted Code's server. He also added an extra program to the server, which held no possible traces of him. Alex turned downward to his laptop's screen, where a Zoom icon lay.

"Heh, heh. Excellent, Alex," Sean said. His voice came through into Alex's buds in his ears. "It's a shame that you can't be here in person until you get your car modified."

Alex nodded, remembered that this laptop did not have a webcam, and said, "Yeah."

Alex remembered the week before when he transformed to his current form. Luke offered him some kind of necklace with a blue gem. He said it would make him human as long as he wore it. Though it felt tempting and much more convenient, Alex declined. For some reason, he felt more comfortable being a Ninetales than a human.

Maybe it was because of the tails and paws.

Instead, Luke took Alex's Honda Civic inside his store and transported the store into a closed auto store near Alex's apartment. It was then that Luke explained that his store could transport into any room, even a closet, as long as it was empty. Alex's head spun when he heard about that.

Alex and Luke parted ways after they took the car to the designated parking space. He wondered if he would ever meet him again. Better yet, he speculated if he would meet those two Lugia again. He hoped it would be sooner rather than later, if only for some things.

He wanted to ask Luke about them and their relationship with each other.

Alex pressed his glasses upward so they would be level with his eyes.

The first English Pokémon theme song played, causing Alex to stifle a laugh.

"Oh, COME ON! AGAIN?!" Emily cried out in the background.

"It looks like our mysterious prankster has done his stunts again," Sean remarked. "Heh, heh. I can't wait for you to return to the office if only to find out who in the

building is uploading those annoying programs into our server."

"Y-yeah, boss," Alex said.

Alex continued to think back to the previous week when he had contacted his boss. He told him about his condition, which Sean was doubtful of until Alex sent selfies. Even so, it took a physical trip to the apartment for Sean to believe his claims. Alex explained what happened, excluding the details about those Lugia, with Sean promising to help him.

For that reason, Alex worked from home until his car was modified to handle his tails and feet-paws. The auto workers explained that it would take at least two weeks, so Alex converted his kitchen into an office of sorts; he did not trust himself to work in his bedroom without slacking off. He wondered if he would attract unwanted attention once he began driving again.

At least his car windows were tinted, and this state made tinted windows legal.

The auto workers were also working to repair his car's speaker system at no extra charge.

"Alright, you did a good job today, Alex." Sean paused for a moment. "It makes me wonder if you should

work from home from now on. Maybe you can still find the culprit that way.”

“Oh, please don’t do that to me!” Alex shook his head. “I-I can barely keep my head straight—”

“Heh, heh. Relax. I was kidding.” Sean chuckled. “You did a full shift today. I know that you should be with us when we show the website to our customers tomorrow, but please stay at home. It might go crazy, whether from picking you up or being there physically.”

“That’s a shame.” Despite his words, Alex felt relieved. He never felt comfortable talking to multiple people at once. “I’m sorry.”

“Don’t be. Heh heh. Have a good rest of your day.”

“I-I’ll do my best to.”

The Zoom call ended. Alex leaned back while giving out a sigh. He looked at his kitchen, his improvised office, and thought about making some adjustments. Perhaps brightening the lights would help make it feel like an office space. Or maybe some scented candles, like the one Emily had. That always made him feel like he was at work.

Alex huffed and opened his email account.

He saw a few emails, like one from a Chinese gaming company, waiting to open. He tossed that one in the trash without even opening it. Though he wanted to enter the gaming business, he saw nothing good when recognizing that company's name. The last time he heard, the company fired almost an entire studio of workers not too long after they published a game.

Perhaps Sean had a point about the state of the current gaming industry.

Another email caught his eye since he had not seen that email address before.

He opened it and read its content.

Dear Alex,

I heard about the company where you currently work, Crafted Code, and saw some of your website demos. I must say that I was really impressed by them. They look super awesome.

I was hoping that you'll make a site for me. This website is basically going to be an online store. I know that I could use Etsy or Redbubble for it, but I want something under my control. Besides, it's meant to be both for my fans who watch my streams and for my local friends who are super

talented. I know one who can do amazing rock carvings.

I have attached a list of how I and my friends wanted the site to look. I hope it won't be too much. And I hope to hear from you soon.

From,

LycanChanger

"Huh. A custom online store?" Alex raised an eyebrow and adjusted his glasses. He should get someone to remake them so they would stay on his muzzle and not rely on their arms. He huffed, thinking he should do stuff one thing at a time. "I wonder why."

Alex opened the attachment and skimmed through it.

"Hmm. Nothing too complex. Though now I see why this LycanChanger really wanted this site made." Alex nodded and smiled. "I'll see if I can talk with my boss about it."

Alex pulled out the buds, pulled out his phone, and made his call.

His life made a weird turn, but he did not regret anything about it.

The End

Luke will return.

To everyone who has read my stories, from my earliest story, Fox Case, to my first TF story, Ho-Oh TF along with Lugia TF, to my first 'book' Fines Malum, to my comeback story, The Pokémon Prometheus, to this story, I have one thing to say.

Thank you for reading.

Knowing that plenty of people are reading my stuff helps refuel my energy to write more.

I have plenty more stories to write, including those I've been commissioned to write.

Please keep on reading, and take it easy out there.

Foxgamer01

About Author

Standing over six feet tall, Foxgamer01 is a writer born in Arizona and currently living in Arkansas. Though he initially wanted to be in the gaming industry, he did not realize until later, after years of playing with random toys and imagining adventures with them, of his gift of being a writer. Even then, it took some computer classes with a dry professor in college that solidified his change in becoming a writer.

Foxgamer01 has been writing, at first through notebooks and later through laptops, since 2009. There was a dry spot between 2013 and 2018, thanks to distractions and work, but he has been writing consistently since. He had written over a hundred short stories and six 'books,' including one collab story.

Foxgamer01 would like to thank fellow friends and writers Greyhound1211, SnekKnack AKA Nick, Tails230, and Kinshou-fox AKA The-Writing-Dragon AKA Huggles. They have been the biggest inspiration for getting him to write. Though Foxgamer01 carried a lot of regret over the years, he would never regret the days he founded their writings, which triggered his desire to write his stories.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read my story! I really appreciate it. If you enjoyed it, then you'll definitely want to check out my gallery accounts at:

<https://www.furaffinity.net/user/foxgamer01/>

<https://www.deviantart.com/foxgamer01>

<https://www.weasyl.com/~foxgamer01>

<https://furrynetwork.com/foxgamer01/>

I have a lot of great content there that I think you'll love.

Also, if you're interested in supporting me and my writing, please consider visiting my Ko-Fi and Patreon accounts at:

<https://ko-fi.com/foxgamer01>

<https://www.patreon.com/foxgamer01>

Every little bit helps me to keep creating and sharing my stories with the world.

Lastly, if you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to contact me at:

foxgamer01@hotmail.com

I'd love to hear from you and answer any questions you may have.

Thanks again for your support, and I can't wait to share more of my work with you soon!