

Invaded Space, Part 1: Meeting New Faces

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Dreamt on: August 22, 2004

Recorded on: August 22-25, 2004

(At a Fur-Con, Winter)

...

"Come on, Rob. Don't tell me you didn't bring a costume?"

I looked up at my annoyed den-mate...and sighed.

"I brought one," I said. "I just don't want to wear it right now, that's all."

Corey zipped up his suit...a raccoon...and sighed. "Any special reason? Cause... if you need help, or somethin..."

I chuckled...as I held up his costume's head.

"I'd like to spend one night out of the fur at these things," I said. "Kinda...good luck thing, y'know?"

I felt a heavy paw fall on my shoulder...and looked...

...at Jeff, our other den-mate, in his skunk costume.

"All right," he said, his voice very muffled, "but tomorrow, we want you in the fur, got it?"

I smiled...and clapped his shoulder. "Deal, Stinky."

Jeff crossed his paws...and huffed...as Corey laughed.

"So...we'll see you later then," Corey said...and slid the head on.

I nodded. "Got your keycards?"

The raccoon nodded.

"All right," I said...and we left our room.

...

Damn...not many promising ones tonight...

The white-furred vixen swirled her drink, frowning.

Normally, we've got at least two by now...

She sighed...and took a sip of her drink...then froze, staring...

...at the three people who'd just entered the hall.

She eyed them...then ran a paw over a silver bracelet on her right wrist.

Let's see...the skunk's only average, a bit underfed...the raccoon...hmm... possible candidate...and the third...

Her eyes widened as her scanner displayed its findings.

No...it's not possible...

She looked up at the white-haired human at the bar...then back to her scanner... and tapped it.

It re-scanned the subject...and displayed the same findings.

She looked at the human...stunned.

One of our kind? Here?

The vixen got up...and left the bar.

I had better tell Sahndyae...

...

(The next morning)

...

"All right you! Up and at 'em!"

And with that, I was unceremoniously dragged out of my sleeping bag by a skunk and a raccoon.

"Murph...urble... *yawn*...time?" I asked, rubbing my eyes.

The raccoon held a clock up to my face.

I blinked a few times...then my vision cleared.

9:30 AM.

I sighed...and slowly got up, stretching.

The skunk grabbed my arm.

I looked at it...as it handed me my bag, then pointed at the bathroom.

"Can I at least wake up first?" I asked.

The raccoon waved a finger in my face...and pointed to the bathroom, stomping a paw on the floor.

I sighed...and slid into the bathroom, locking the door behind me.

"Damned insistent little buggers," I mumbled as I undressed. "Could at least let a fella wake up first!"

Scratching at the door was the only reply to my comment.

"All right! I'm hurrying!" I snapped...then triggered the Change, becoming a red and white furred, black-pawed, blue-green eyed bipedal fox.

I sighed...and pulled out the clothes I wanted to wear: a black t-shirt and cut-off jeans complete with tailhole.

Silently, I got dressed...then stowed my sleepwear...and opened the door.

I heard faint gasps from the raccoon and the skunk...then slid past them and set my bag down on the floor.

I felt a gentle tug on my tail...something I hated...and turned.

Slowly, the raccoon ran a paw up my tail...then looked up...and let go, flashing a thumbs-up gesture.

I returned it...and grabbed my keycard and wallet, putting them in my pockets...then turned around...

...nearly colliding with the skunk.

I jumped, startled.

The skunk looked me over, up and down...then ran a paw along my arm...and nodded at the raccoon.

It returned the nod...then looked at me, as did the skunk.

I traced a question mark in the air, confused by what they were doing.

They put their paws over their muzzles...their "We're not talking" sign.

I huffed...then shrugged...and mimed a drink.

They nodded...and we left.

...

The vixen checked her scanner, irritated.

Come on...where are you?

She frowned at her empty glass...and was about to get up...

...when her scanner flashed.

The vixen looked at it...then at the door...and smiled.

There's the skunk and raccoon...but where's the human?

Then the skunk entered the hall...and the vixen's muzzle fell open.
 Standing in the doorway...was a being similar to her...only it had red and white fur...and black-furred paws.
 She glanced at her scanner.
That...that's the same reading as the other day!
 She looked up...
 ...as the fox tapped the raccoon on the shoulder...pointed at itself...then at the bar.
 The raccoon nodded, patting the fox's shoulder as it left.
 The vixen smiled.
Perfect...it's alone...
 She got up.
Time to find out why it's here...
 ...
 "Can I get you something?" the blonde waitress asked.
 I sat on the stool...and smiled.
 "Club soda with a straw, please," I said.
 She blinked, confused.
 "I thought you folks stayed quiet in those things," she said, filling a glass.
 "Sorry to surprise you," I replied, sliding a \$5 over to her and taking my drink.
 She left...and I took a sip.
Besides...I can't fake a suit all the time, I thought.
 "Could I...buy you a drink?" a female voice said.
 I looked off to my right...and felt my ears heat up.
 Standing there...was a pure white furred, gold-eyed bipedal fox...with bracelets on its wrists, dressed in a blue t-shirt and rather skimpy black shorts.
 "Um...sorry...but I'd...ah...like to finish the one I've got first," I stammered.
 She nodded. "I understand." She pointed at the next stool. "May I?"
 I nodded...and she sat down.
Wow! She...she's hot! I thought...then slammed back to reality.
Wait a sec...that...
 The vixen smiled...and extended her paw.
 "I'm Misty," she said, her muzzle moving to form the words.
This isn't a costume! She's another Were!
 I smiled...as I took her paw in mine.
 "Rob," I replied. "Pleased to meet you."
 ...
 Misty's heart froze.
This one...is a...a male? A male of our kind?
 "So...you having a nice time?" he asked.
 Misty felt her ears heat up. "Sort of," she replied.
By the Mothers, I cannot believe this...
 She smiled.
Oooooohhhh...Sahndyae will be sooo jealous.
 "How about you?" she asked.
 He shrugged. "Just glad my roommates let me off the leash, that's all."

Her ears went up. "Not literally, I hope."
He chuckled.
"Nah...they just harassed me till I put the fur on, that's all," he replied, then looked at her. "I bet you can relate, huh?"
She chuckled. "Not really. I spend every day in the fur."
...
My eyes bugged.
"You're...not serious...are you?" I asked.
Misty nodded...then looked confused. "You...don't?"
I shook my head.
...
Misty's eyes widened.
"How...why don't you?" she asked.
Rob shrugged. "Cause most people'd freak at seeing a six-foot tall fox, that's why."
"They...would?" she asked.
Rob nodded...then looked at her.
"You...aren't from around here, are you?" he asked.
Misty shook her head. "I'm from..."
Think! Think! What was it...?
"...Vancouver," she finished, relieved.
"Really? I'm from Michigan," he said.
The vixen smiled.
Phew! Thank you, Mothers...
...
"So...you just a fan of this stuff?" I asked.
Misty shook her head...and I felt something brush my tail.
I looked...and saw Misty's tail gently running up mine.
"I guess...you're a dealer, then?" I asked, feeling my ears heat up even more.
Misty smiled. "I...guess you could say that. You?"
I shook my head. "Writer..." I looked away. "Well...aspiring writer, anyway."
I felt something touch my paw...and looked up...
...at Misty, who gently squeezed my paw.
"Would you...like to get together later, Rob?" she asked.
I felt my tail spasm...and barely avoided fainting.
"Uh...huh..." I said. "Dinner okay?"
The vixen nodded. "Sure. Six?"
I nodded...then froze...
...as she leaned in close, taking a whiff of my neck.
I inhaled, nervously...and felt soothed by her scent.
"See you then," she said, pulling away...then smiled. "And, please...keep the fur on."
"I will," I said...and managed a weak smile. "You, too, Misty."
The vixen's smile grew wider.
"Oh, I will," she said...and walked away...
...leaving me to lean back against the bar, drained.

Whoa...another werefox...here...

I smiled.

Maybe...I can finally make a friend...

...

Misty slid into her room.

"<Mys-tai? Is that you?>" a female voice chattered from the bathroom.

Misty smiled.

"<Yes, Sahndyae. It's me,>" she replied. "<I have news.>"

"<Me, too,>" the voice said...and the bathroom door opened, revealing a jet black furred bipedal vixen.

A **naked** vixen...holding a canister containing a clear fluid.

"<Ah...been busy working, have we?>" Misty asked.

The black vixen huffed.

"<Well, one of us should be...seeing as how you haven't gotten any of the goods yet,>" she snapped.

Misty sat on the bed, smiling.

"<I've got something **better** than goods,>" Misty said, cooly.

"<Oooohhh...>" Sahndyae said, sitting next to her. "<It had better be...cause we have only two more days to fill this order.>"

Misty took the black vixen's paw.

"<I...found...a male of our kind,>" Misty said.

Sahndyae giggled. "<Right, Mys-tai...and I'm one of the Mothers.>"

Misty held up her paw...and tapped her scanner, displaying her findings.

Sahndyae stared at the findings, stunned, her muzzle falling open.

After the scanner finished, Sahndyae swallowed.

"<Is...is this...accurate?>" Sahndyae asked.

Misty nodded.

"<He's one of us,>" she said. "<A male Foxian, Sahndyae. Here.>"

"<A male...an **actual** male?>" the black vixen asked.

The white vixen nodded.

"<How long has it been...since the last one was seen?>" Sahndyae asked.

"<Three contrai,>" Misty said.

Sahndyae whistled.

"<I'm meeting him tonight for dinner,>" Misty said. "<You coming?>"

Sahndyae shook her head, got up...and opened the bathroom door.

Misty looked inside...

...at a leopard, in the tub...with a metal collar around its neck...mrrring and purring...with a metal container over its groin, filling with a clear fluid.

"<Sorry,>" Sahndyae said. "<We need to get the product, remember?>"

Misty giggled...and got up.

"<Guess I'll get to work,>" she said.

...

(5:45 PM)

...

"<Well, we should have no problem filling that order,>" Misty said, looking over the room...

...at the ten fursuit-clad humans, mrring and writhing about the room.
 Sahndyae switched a full vial for an empty one over a collared tiger's groin.
 "<See what you can do when you **actually** work?>" Sahndyae quipped.
 "<Speaking of which...aren't you going to be late?>"
 Misty looked at the clock...and scrambled up.
 "<Oh, you're right!>" She ran for the door...then stopped. "<Will you be okay?>"
 Sahndyae gently ran a paw over the leopard from earlier...and smiled as it purred.
 "<I'll be fine,>" she said.

...

(6:00 PM)

...

"Hi, Rob."

I looked up...and got up, sliding behind the other chair and pulling it out for her.
 Misty smiled as she sat down.
 "Thank you," she said as I sat back down.
 "Welcome," I said. "Sooo...how was your day?"
 She rested her muzzle on her paws. "Not bad. Pretty busy, though."
 "Um...what exactly do you deal in?" I asked. "Cause I walked all over the dealer area...and didn't find you."
 "Oh...I...uh..." Misty scratched at her ear. "I kinda...deal in performance pieces..."
 My ears shot up. "'Performance pieces'?"
 Misty nodded. "It's...um...kinda hard to..."
 "So, basically fur-otica, huh?" I commented.
 She chuckled. "Yeah. Right, sure."
 I nodded. "Well, that's stuff you really can't show here."
 Misty smiled, flicking her tail.
 "So...what do you write?" she asked.
 I ran a paw along my head. "Oh, uh...mostly coming-of-age stuff..."
 Her smile widened. "But...also some...of what I do, right?"
 I blushed. "Um...yeah...a little..." I looked up...and saw our waiter approaching.

Thank God.

"Hi, folks," he said. "Nice costumes."
 "Thanks," I said. Misty nodded.
 "What can I get you?" he asked.
 I looked at Misty. "Pizza okay?"
 "Perfect," she said. "Pepperoni and ham."
 "Great. I'll go get that for you." The waiter left...
 ...leaving Misty and me alone.
 "So, um...here we are," I said, running my paw up my arm.
 "Yeah," Misty said, chuckling nervously.
 We were quiet for a while...then...
 "Um...didn't you change clothes?" Misty asked.
 "No," I said. "My den-mates padlocked my bag, so it's either the clothes I have on...or I go around naked."

Misty smiled. "That wouldn't be so bad, would it?"
I felt my cheeks heat up...and looked at the table.

...

Misty smiled.

He seems...so nervous...and it makes him so cute!

"Here you go, folks," the waiter said, setting the pizza down.

"Oh, uh...thanks," Rob said, looking a little relieved.

...

The waiter left...and I gave Misty a piece before getting one of my own.

"How're your roommates?" I asked.

"Pretty good..." Misty said. "She's been pretty busy with her work."

Misty took a bite of her pizza...then set it down.

I started chuckling.

"What?" Misty asked.

"You have a little cheese on your muzzle," I said.

"Where?" she asked, waving a paw along her muzzle.

"Here...let me..." I said, reaching out.

"Hey!"

"Look, hold st..."

I froze, staring into her golden eyes.

Then, slowly...we leaned forward...and softly kissed.

...

Misty's heart raced.

Oh, Mothers...this...this is wonderful!

She closed her eyes.

I...I feel...so warm...

...

Sahndyae shook her head...as a warm feeling flashed through her mind.

Then, the vixen smiled.

I guess Mys-tai is enjoying her date, she thought.

...

My heart stopped.

Oh...oh, wow...

I felt my tail swish back and forth.

This...this is what...kissing feels like?

Slowly, we pulled away...and opened our eyes.

"Um...you still have cheese on your muzzle," I said softly.

Slowly, Misty reached up...and plucked the cheese off her muzzle.

"Got it," she said, softly.

I smiled. "That...that was nice."

"Yeah...it sure was," Misty said, blushing.

I gently took her paw in mine.

"Rob...um...could you...come up to my room...I...I...uh..."

My eyes bugged.

"Y-y-y...your room?" I asked.

Slowly, Misty nodded. "Uh-huh."

My heart rate tripled.

OhGodOhGodOhGodOhGodOhGod...

Misty's ears went pink...and she looked away.

"I mean...I know it's...kinda sudden and all..." she said.

I swallowed.

Ah...fuck it....

...

"Okay."

Misty's ears shot upright...and she stared at me. "Okay?"

Rob nodded. "Okay. We'll go to your room...if you want to."

A smiled crept across her muzzle.

"I'd...like that, Rob," she said...then something clicked.

Grtik! Sahndyae!

She got up. "I'd better call my roommate...make sure she's not...working."

Rob nodded. "Okay. I'll pay the bill and get a box for the pizza."

The white vixen quickly walked off...and slid into the ladies room once Rob looked the other way.

Empty stall...empty...aha!

Misty slid into an empty stall, locked the door...and raised her right wrist to her muzzle, tapping a spot on the silver bracelet.

"<Sahndyae? Sahndyae, it's Mys-tai. Acknowledge.>"

Scant seconds later, a reply came back.

"<Acknowledged, Mys-tai. What's wrong?>"

Misty's ears heated up.

"<Um...could I...use the room for a little while?>" she asked.

"<Good timing, Mys-tai. I was just wrapping up our collection for today.>" There was a pause...then, "<You bringing him up here?>"

"<Uh-huh...and I'd like some privacy, okay?>" Misty said.

A giggle came over the line.

"<Okay, Sister...I can clear out in about ten minutes. Good luck. Sahndyae, out.>"

The line went dead...and Misty lowered her paw to her chest.

I hope...that I won't need luck, she thought.

...

I looked up...as Misty approached...and smiled.

"Get ahold of her?" I asked.

"Yep. She was just wrapping up a...session," she said. "Shall we?"

I nodded...and we started walking.

Then, I felt an arm slide under my left arm...and something rest on my shoulder.

I looked...at Misty, who was leaning on me...and blushed.

...

Misty glanced up...as the red fox looked away...and smiled at the pink glow from its ears and cheekfur.

He's just...so cute...

...

"Well, here we are," Misty said, opening the door and stepping inside.

I followed...and was shocked.

Her roommate finished a "session" ...and the place looks spotless!

"Nice room," I said, setting the pizza box on the table. "And...where's your roommate?"

Misty sat on the bed. "I told her...we wanted some privacy." She smiled. "After all...I've seen how nervous you get when it's just me..."

I nodded...and blushed.

Misty giggled.

"You really look cute when you blush," she said.

I looked up, shocked. "C-c-c-cute? M-m-m-me?" I asked.

"Uh-huh," she said.

I slowly walked over to the bed...and sat next to her.

"Wow..." I said. "Y...you're the first person to say that..." I chuckled. "Aside from my mom, that is."

"Well...you are," Misty said.

I looked at her...and smiled. "I guess...you're kinda the expert on cute, huh?"

Now, Misty blushed, her fur glowing pink at its base.

"See...I'm not the only one who looks cute when they blush," I said, smiling.

Misty giggled. "So I've heard."

She looked up at me...and smiled.

"You remember...what we did in the restaurant?" she asked.

I nodded...and Misty held my left paw in her right.

"Could we...do that again?" she asked.

I ran my right paw along the back of my head.

"Well, we've got plenty of pizza left..." I said.

I felt her paw touch my muzzle...and she leaned forward.

"I think...we don't need the pizza," she said...and kissed me.

...

Oh...oh...God...

I sank into the kiss.

I think...I'm in love...

Then, I heard a feral growl...and my eyes snapped open...

...as Misty slammed me down onto the bed.

"*Unf!* Misty? What're you...?"

I froze...after seeing the feral, hungry gleam in her eyes.

Oh, shit! She's in fucking heat!

Misty growled...and lunged forward.

I rolled her over...and got up...

...

"So...what do you..." the black-furred vixen began...then trailed off...

...when she saw the red glow emanating from the bracelet on her wrist.

"What's that?" her companion, a person dressed as a panther, asked.

"My beeper," Sahndyae replied, getting up. "Um...I'd better go. I'll see you tomorrow, okay?"

The panther nodded. "Okay, Sandy."

Sandy walked out of the bar...then ran up the stairs.

Mys-tai...hold on...

...

I backed away from the bed...

...where Misty was crouched, growling at me.

"Misty...calm down..." I said soothingly...then got hit in the back...and knocked onto the floor.

I rolled over...

...as Misty pounced, landing on top of me, her paws clamped on my wrists.

...

Sahndyae stared at the scene before her: Mys-tai, snarling...straddling a squirming red and white furred, black-pawed fox.

Did he attack her? she thought.

Then, she noticed...that Mys-tai was slowly forcing the red fox's legs apart.

Oh...no, Mys-tai...don't...

...

"<Mys-tai!>"

My ears shot bolt upright...as a black blur tackled Misty, knocking her off of me.

I scrambled up...then stared...

...as a black-furred fox held Misty with one arm...and began gently nuzzling her...

...and Misty slowly stopped struggling...and began mrring.

Is...is that...her roommate?

Then, I watched...as one of the black fox's paws slid down to Misty's groin...and began gently rubbing her...

...and Misty leaned back, into the black fox, eyes closed.

Oh...

I felt my heart sink...as I slid out of the room, quietly shutting the door behind me.

...

Minutes later, Sahndyae finally spoke.

"<Feeling any better?>" she asked.

Slowly, Misty nodded...then her eyes snapped open.

"<Rob! Where's Rob?>" she asked, flying out of Sandy's embrace.

"<I guess he left,>" Sahndyae said. "<Can't blame **him**, though...>"

Misty looked at her.

"<After all,>" she went on, "<he didn't go into rrktyr.>"

Misty's muzzle fell open...and she sank onto the bed.

"<Oh, Mothers...what did I do?>" she asked...and started to cry.

Sahndyae held her close.

"<It wasn't your fault, Mys-tai,>" she said.

Misty sniffled...and looked up.

"<It's my fault,>" Sahndyae said...and sighed. "<If I had been more attentive, instead of focused on work...>"

"<Sahndyae...it's not your fault,>" Misty said...then sighed, sniffing. "<I have to talk to him...>"

"<Tomorrow,>" Sahndyae said.

“<But...>”

“<Do you want to go into rkttyr again?>” Sahndyae asked...then smiled.

“<Tonight...let me take his place...>”

She gently nuzzled Misty.

“<...and, tomorrow...we’ll find him and explain things, okay?>” Sahndyae finished.

Slowly, Misty began returning the affection.

“<Tonight...is for you,>” Sahndyae said, easing Misty to the bed.

...

The raccoon and skunk entered their room...and froze.

The fox they were rooming with...was sitting at the table, its head on the wood...staring out the window.

They looked at each other...then the raccoon pointed at the skunk...then at the fox.

The skunk made a slashing gesture with a paw...then pointed at the raccoon and fox...and brought its paws together.

The raccoon sighed...then took its head off.

...

“Rob? You...you okay?” Corey asked.

Slowly, I pulled my head off the table...and shook it.

I felt a hand on my shoulder.

“What happened?” Corey asked.

I huffed...and flipped open a notebook.

“Met a vixen...fell for her...” I wrote, then added, “Found out...she’s a lesbian.”

“Oh, man...” Corey said.

I slid the book away...and slumped forward, my muzzle flat on the table.

“Rob...if you...need someone...” he began.

“Jesus, man!” a muffled voice said...then became clear. “He just got hurt...and you’re horning in on him?”

“All I’m doing is trying to comfort him,” Corey snapped. “Why do you care anyway, Jeff?”

I heard scuffling...then got up...

...grabbed both of them by the fronts of their suits...

...and slammed them on the bed, staring right into their eyes.

“Now, you listen to me,” I growled softly.

Their eyes widened.

“I did not come here...pay two hundred bucks...to be your fucking referee,” I snarled. “Or be hit on by either of you.”

I let go...and stormed out, slamming the door behind me.

...

(The next morning)

...

Misty watched the bar’s entrance, her tail twitching nervously.

“Nervous, Misty?” Sahndyae asked, smirking. “Or just eager?”

Misty sighed. “I’m...scared, Sandy. I mean...what do I tell him?” She looked at the black vixen. “How do I explain what happened?”

"Maybe you should just..."

"There they are," Misty said.

Sandy sighed...and looked at the entrance...where a skunk and a raccoon had just entered.

"He's usually behind the skunk," Misty said.

They watched as the two entered the bar...

...and no one followed them.

"You sure they were the right ones?" Sandy asked.

"Yes," Misty said...then leaned close. "<The scanner proves it.>"

"<Maybe we should ask if they know where he is,>" Sandy said.

Misty nodded...and got up. "<You take the skunk. I'll ask the other one.>"

...

The raccoon felt a tap on its shoulder...and looked...

...at a gorgeous white furred, gold-eyed fox.

He swallowed.

The fox flipped out a small notepad, wrote something down...then held it up.

"Where's the red fox that's normally with you?" he read.

The raccoon pointed at the pad...and the fox handed it and the pen to him.

...

Misty watched as the raccoon wrote a lengthy reply...then handed the pad back to her.

"We...kinda fought. He got steamed and walked out. Wasn't there when we got up this morning. His stuff's still here, though...so he's probably still here," was the reply.

Misty nodded...and bowed at the raccoon...then left.

...

"Well?" Sandy asked.

Misty sighed.

"Apparently, they had a fight last night...and Rob just walked out," she said, "and stayed out all night."

Sandy nodded. "Same thing the skunk told me. C'mon."

She walked off...into the ladies room, Misty in tow.

...

"<What are you doing?>" Misty asked...while Sandy tapped her scanner.

"<Odds are, your friend's still here,>" Sandy said. "<All we have to do is...ah! Got him!>"

"<Where? Where is he?>" Misty asked.

"<He's on the roof,>" Sandy said...then her wrist started beeping. "<Grtik! I've got donors coming in five minutes.>" She looked at Misty. "<Will you...be okay by yourself?>"

Misty nodded. "<I...I think so...>"

Sandy put a paw on her shoulder...and smiled.

"<You're...attracted to him...aren't you?>" she asked.

Slowly, Misty nodded.

"<Then get going,>" Sandy said.

Misty hugged her, gently skritchng Sandy's neck...then left the stall.

Sandy sighed...then slowly left the stall.

May the Mothers watch over you, my Sister, Sandy thought.

...

Misty stepped out onto the roof of the hotel...and froze.

Standing at the far edge of the roof, its fur rippling in the breeze...was Rob, looking out into the sunrise.

He...he looks just like an urtek after a long battle, she thought...then slowly stepped forward.

"Why...didn't you tell me?"

Misty froze...

...as Rob turned to look at her.

"Why didn't you tell me...you were a lesbian?" he asked.

Misty blinked, confused.

"A...lez-bee-n?" she asked. "What's that?"

Rob stared at her, surprised. "A girl...who has sex only with other girls."

Misty blushed.

He...he thinks...

"Um...maybe...I should..." she began...then sighed. "Rob...there's something... I need to tell you."

...

I leaned against the railing, silent.

"I...I'm not from Vancouver," she said...then looked up. "I'm...not even from this planet."

I chuckled.

"Wait a second...you mean...you're from outer space?" I asked.

Slowly, Misty nodded.

I ran a paw over my eyes...and started laughing.

"God...this is too much," I said, still chuckling.

"Look..."

I looked up...and my muzzle fell open.

...

Misty tapped her bracelet, expanding the projection of the Milky Way.

"Here is Earth...or Sol 3, as we call it," she said...and traced a very small circle in a spiral arm. "And here...is Foxia, my home." She traced another circle, this one in another spiral arm. "It takes about two of your months for a round trip."

"Wow..."

She looked up...and saw the fox staring at the image, entranced.

"Fully interactive holograms..." he said. "Cool..." He looked up...and blushed. "Sorry," he said, sheepishly.

Misty giggled. *He's just like a kit at times.*

"That's all right," she said. "So...do you believe me?"

He nodded. "So...um...about last night...?"

She sighed. "It was a case...of rrktyr."

"Rick-what?"

"Rrktyr," she said. "Sort of a...frenzy...brought on by a lack of sexual contact in our kind." She looked up. "Surely you've experienced it?"

...

I took a breath...then thought about the one week a month when I've been overly frisky...and slowly nodded.

"Maybe," I said. "How long...had it been...?"

Misty blushed. "A...about three months."

I laughed...and she looked up.

"You get like that...after only three months?" I asked.

She nodded...and looked puzzled. "Why...?"

"Cause...I haven't had..." I swallowed, blushing, "sex...ever...and I'm almost thirty."

...

Misty's eyes widened.

Impossible! He...he hasn't...

Then, it hit her.

"That may be...because you were raised here...instead of on Foxia," she said.

He looked up. "What?"

She took his paw. "Rob...you're a Foxian...like me."

"What?" he asked. "But...but...I'm...I was **born** here? To **human** parents? I can **become** human."

She watched...as his form changed, the fur retreating into his body as it altered...until a white-haired human stood next to her.

"See?" he said. "Human...not some alien fox."

Misty sighed...and tapped her right bracelet...calling up a projection of the readings she'd taken when he was in his human form...and his fox form...then added her own readout next to them.

"See how alike our readings are, even in your human form?" she asked...then looked up. "You're some "alien fox", as you said...because this..." She tapped her scanner again, calling up one of the human readings she'd taken, "is a human's reading."

She watched as his eyes bounced from one set of readings to the next, searching...studying...then, realizing the truth.

"But...how?" he asked.

Misty leaned on the rail next to him.

"Three hundred of your years ago," she said, "the males of our kind...vanished."

"Vanished?" he asked.

Misty nodded. "They were there one day...and simply gone the next. None of our historians know why...but it seems one of them...or more, maybe...found their way here...bonded with the native species..." She looked at him, "and, now...here you are."

...

I swallowed...and looked at the readouts again.

Even in my human form, all of the readings matched hers...almost exactly.

I sighed...and slumped forward, changing to my hybrid form.

"I'm...I'm...one of you?" I asked.

Misty nodded. "The first male Foxian encountered in over three hundred years."

"Hoo-boy..." I said. "So...that means...all the inhabitants of your world..." I looked up, "are female?"

She nodded. "There are approximately two hundred and sixty thousand of us...on a world smaller than your world's moon."

“But...how do you reproduce...if you’re all female?” I asked. “I mean...wouldn’t you all...die out?”

Misty blinked. “Die?”

I nodded. “When the body...stops working.”

She shook her head. “In all our history...that hasn’t happened.”

My eyes went really wide.

“None of us have...died...” she went on. “As for reproduction...” She sighed.

“Sometimes, on our visits since the males vanished...we take humans back with us...and make them Foxians. “She looked at me. “Only a few humans survive the process...”

Misty looked away. “I know...because I survived it...one of only two from my litter.”

“You...you were...human?” I asked.

Misty nodded. “Seventy years ago...a Foxian found a human child in the woods, barely alive. She took it with her back to Foxia...and had it undergo the process...” She shuddered. “It...it saved my life, Rob.”

She looked up at me, tears in her eyes. “I...I’m sorry...I lied to you...sorry for everything.”

I held her close, rubbing her back as she cried.

“So...you’re seventy, huh?” I asked.

She sniffled...and nodded.

I edged her head up...and smiled.

“Like younger men, do we?” I asked.

She blinked...then laughed.

“But...that still doesn’t explain why your roommate was fondling you,” I said.

“Oh...” she said. “Sandy...my roommate...and I...are a bonded pair.”

“Bonded?” I asked. “Like...wife and wife?”

She smiled. “More like very close sisters,” she said...then sighed, “though there are elements of what humans call marriage involved.”

Then, her smile widened. “Plus...she’s very good.”

I laughed. “I’ll take your word for it.” I smiled. “She older than you?”

“Let’s just say...she’s seen other males,” Misty said, coyly.

“Damn...” I said, wincing...then took her paw in mine.

...

“Misty?”

She looked at him...as he touched her paw.

“This’s...been a lot to take in,” he said. “Could we maybe...?”

She nodded. “Sure. Let’s go.”

They walked inside...arm in arm...tails resting against each other.

...

Misty opened the door.

“I think Sandy’ll want to...” she began...then froze.

I stared into the room...

...and the dozen fursuit-clad bodies on the floor, moaning and writhing.

Misty pulled me in and slammed the door.

It barely registered...

...

“<Sahndyae!>”

The black vixen looked up...and stared, shocked.

“<You brought him here?>” Sandy asked. “<Have you lost your mind?>”

“<He wanted to talk,>” Misty stated. “<What are those people...?>” She glared at the black vixen. “<I thought the order was filled already?>”

“<It was...but they enjoyed it so much,>” Sandy said.

...

I stood there, spellbound...watching the orgy before me.

Then, I noticed that every person on the floor...was collared...and had a container over their groins.

A container...that was filling with either a clear liquid...or a milky white one.

...

“<Look, we need to get them out of here,>” Misty said. “<Let’s collect the goods and get them out of here.>”

“<All right,>” Sandy said.

...

I stared...as Misty and her roommate walked around the room, removing the containers and sealing them up...then placing them in a large plastic box.

Then, her roommate tapped a bracelet on her left wrist.

“Okay, folks...sorry to stop the game...but the system needs to be updated,” she said.

Slowly, the twelve people got up...and stretched. Some laughed as they removed their collars.

“Hell of a game, Sandy,” one of them, a wolf, said...then looked at me. “Who’s that?”

“Oh...he’s a potential investor in our game,” she said...and looked at me. “Right?”

“Oh, yeah...right, Miss Sandy,” I said, coming out of my daze.

The wolf walked over and shook my paw.

“Dude, you’ve gotta get this thing made!” he yelled, his voice muffled. “Their game fucking rocks!”

“Yeah...well, I’ll definitely mention that to my partners,” I said.

“Thanks for your help with the testing, folks,” Misty said as she ushered them out...then shut the door and walked over to me.

“Rob...let me explain...” she began.

“No...no...I don’t wanna know...” I said...and ambled over to a chair, sitting down.

“Sandy, get him something to drink,” Misty said, standing by me.

“Sure,” she said.

I blinked...still in shock.

“I know...that looked weird...” she said.

“You...said...you did...performance works,” I stated numbly.

“Here,” Sandy said, setting a glass in front of me.

I looked down...at the thick purple liquid...then at Misty.

She smiled. “It’s a native Foxian beverage...made from fruit. Sip it.”

“<You told him!>”

Misty looked up...at an annoyed Sandy.
 “<You told him...about what we are?>” she asked.
 “<I had to, Sahndyae,>” Misty replied. “<It was the only way. Besides...he’s a Foxian, too.>”
 “<But he was born here!>” Sandy snapped. “<Raised here! Our ways aren’t his!>”
 “Aahhh...”
 Both vixens froze...and looked at me, as I set the empty glass down.
 I smacked my muzzle. “Not bad...a bit thick, though.”
 Sandy looked at me.
 “Please tell me...you didn’t gulp that entire thing down at once,” she said.
 I blinked. “Um...why? Would that be bad?”
 “Great. Misty, get a towel,” she said.
 “Why? What’s...?”
 Then, I felt my stomach churn.
 “Oh...boy...”
 I rubbed it...as I felt something come up.
 “Hurry, Misty!” Sandy snapped.
 “Okay, here it...”
 “Brrraaaapppp!”
 Both vixens stared...as I blushed, after belching.
 “Sorry,” I said.
 Sandy looked me up and down.
 “He...he didn’t...lurgh,” she said.
 I looked at Misty, who draped the towel around her shoulders.
 “Vomit,” she clarified.
 “Oh...” I said.
 “Look,” Sandy said, sitting across from me. “What you saw...”
 “Is your business,” I said.
 “Exactly,” she said. “It’s what we do.”
 “Whu?” I asked.
 Misty sighed. “Rob...we’re traders. We supply several races with delicacies...like human...sexual products.”
 I stared, stunned.
 “We’re the exclusive suppliers of this,” Sandy said, holding up a full canister.
 “And it’s worth a lot.”
 I ran my paws over my eyes...then back toward the back of my head.
 “It’s just one surprise after another,” I said, setting my paws on the table.
 I felt a gentle touch on my left arm...and looked up...
 ...at a blushing Misty.
 “I’m afraid...there’s one more surprise,” she said...and gently tugged on my arm.
 I got up...and followed her to the bed, where we sat down.
 Misty reached under the bed and pulled out a slender blue box.
 “On our world,” she said, blushing, “when two of our kind are...attracted...to one another...they...put these on...as a symbol of that.”
 I watched...as she opened the box...and pulled out a slender, golden collar.

“Sandy and I...did this a long time ago,” she said, staring at the collar. Then, she looked up...and held it out to me. “Now...I wish...to perform the same...with you, Rob.”

Overwhelmed, I took the collar...and held it in my paws.

It looked like it was made of pure gold...and it felt very warm.

My vision wavered...as the first tears fell.

“Misty, I...I barely know you...” I said, sniffing. I shut my eyes. “You’ve only been in my life for two days...*sniff*...yet...I know...”

I looked up, opening my eyes. “I know, in my heart...in my soul...that I love you.”

Her paws went up to her muzzle...and her eyes started to water.

I squeezed the collar tight in my paws.

“I...I have a life here,” I said. “I...can’t go with you...and I have no right to...*sniff*...ask you to stay...” The tears fell down my face.

“He’s right,” Sandy said...and looked at me. “We will be leaving for Foxia tomorrow.”

“*sniff* I know. I’m...going home, too,” I said. “That’s why...this hurts so much...”

I squeezed the collar to my chest...as the tears really began.

“I...I don’t care how long it is...*snort*...” I looked up at Misty, who was also crying. “I...I’ll wait for you...to come back...so I can wear this...”

Misty let out a sob...as she hugged me tightly.

I rested my head on her shoulder, sobbing...and felt Sandy hold both of us.

...

Sandy gently squeezed the two foxes in her arms.

He...he’ll wait for her...

She started to cry as well.

He really does care for her...

...

I walked back into my room...exhausted, my cheekfur soaked from all my tears.

“Rob? Um...you okay?” Jeff asked.

I looked up...and nodded. “Uh-huh...”

“Hey...” Corey said. “What’s that?”

I looked back down...at the collar in my paws...and smiled.

“A gift...from a very special fox,” I said.

...

(The next day)

...

“Man, that was a blast!” Corey yelled as we strode into the lobby.

“Sure was, right, Rob?” Jeff asked.

I nodded. “Yeah...it was,” I said...then looked away...and stopped.

Standing near the hotel’s fountain...was Misty.

“Um...scuse me, guys,” I said...and walked off.

Jeff and Corey watched as I walked off.

“Dude...that’s the one who was looking for Rob yesterday,” Corey said.

“Nuh-uh,” Jeff said. “It was a black one, not white.”

They watched...as I stopped in front of her.

“Wonder what she wanted him for, anyway?” Corey asked.

...

“Um...hi...”

Misty looked up...and smiled.

“Hi,” she said softly.

I glanced around. “Sandy getting the ship?”

She chuckled. “No, she’s checking us out of our room, that’s all.” She sighed... then looked up at me. “I’ll try to be back as soon as I can...”

“I know,” I said. “And I’ll be waiting...well, not here...but back in Michigan, probably.”

Misty smiled. “Don’t worry...I’ll find you.”

She looked up at me, her gold eyes glistening.

“Our kind...have a special way to say...goodbye,” she said.

“Um...it doesn’t involve anything...strenuous...does it?” I asked, nervously.

She giggled. “No...just mirror my movements.”

She lifted her right paw up to shoulder level, facing me.

I gently placed my left palm against it.

She closed her eyes...and I did the same.

On instinct, I brought my right palm up...and touched her left paw.

...

Sandy watched...as our arms traced out a graceful circle, our hands resting against each other.

He is one of us, she thought. He’s performing the olacta perfectly.

...

I took a breath...as our hands came together in front of us...and opened my eyes...to stare into Misty’s.

“O’ahna maret o’belak,” she said. “It means...”

“Until we see each other again,” I finished.

She blinked, surprised. “H...how did you know?”

I smiled. “I...I just did...instinct, I guess.”

We leaned back, still holding hands.

Then, she gently kissed me on the lips...and pulled away, letting go of my hands.

I felt my heart break...as I watched her go.

Then, slowly...I walked back to my roommates...and left the hotel.

...

(Hours later...aboard the Foxian ship Ryhkrett)

...

Misty stared out the view screen...as the ship sped away from Sol 3.

“<Navigation system, engaged. Defenses armed. Auto-flight...activated.>” Sandy leaned back in the helm’s chair. “<The start of a long trip home...>” She smiled. “<At least now we can get that new photon engine for the ship, right, Mys-tai?>”

Misty didn’t reply.

Sandy got up...and walked next to the white vixen.

“<It...it hurts...to be without him, Sahndyae,>” she said, quietly.

Sandy gently put her arms around Misty.

“<I know...>” she said, tenderly patting the back of Misty’s head. “<It hurts me, too...just like it hurts when we’re apart, Sister.>”

Misty sniffled. “<I...I know...>”

“<Besides...it won’t be too long till you see him again, anyway.>”

Misty’s ears shot up...and she looked at Sandy.

“<It won’t? But...how?>”

The black vixen smiled.

“<I have an idea...>” she said.

...