

Part 1

A year had passed since I first went to college at a state university. The school year was over, and I was moving out. This is how the story began...

I pressed the green sweater up against my chest, staring at how it looked against my fur in the mirror. A deep ochre green against my orange, black, and white fur pattern. "Ugh, what was I thinking?" I frowned and tossed it onto the bare mattress of my lofted bed next to a pair of black stockings riddled with holes. "I don't know how other tigers can stand it! There's just SUCH trouble coordinating a wardrobe with orange, black, and white fur." I felt my tail thrashing. "I should just go monocolour. I can't imagine the dyeing routine would be THAT bad..."

My roommate, Xavier, looked up from shoving boxers into a brown box. "You own like four green shirts. Why is that one suddenly so bad?" He was wearing a deep blue shirt and blue jeans. The lucky bastard was a skunk, and he only had to worry about black and white in his fur color, and they went with everything.

"Pastels! Pastels work fine with the color pattern! That one's far too dark." I pointed at the offending sweater, which was drooping off the top of my bed, threatening to fall to the floor.

"Setting aside your craziness, are you secure enough financially that you can throw away perfectly good clothes?"

I scowled at him, then turned to the sweater and grabbed it before it fell off the bed. I scowled at it, and then folded it up into a plastic storage box with the rest of my clothes.

Xavier rolled his eyes. "Thought so." He went back to packing clothing. "So can we talk about something other than your non-problems now?"

"I suppose I'll allow it. For now." I chuckled and started working on packing up shorts. "Have you had any nibbles on the 'get a third roommate' hook yet?" I smiled. "I mean, we can't move into an apartment with just the two of us! People will talk!" I swished my tail and purred, faking a tone of astonishment. "He shacked up with a skunk?!? Before even graduating college?!?' Oh, I would just DIE of scandal!"

This finally got him to smirk. I'd been trying to get Xavier to at least smile for the last few hours since we started moving out of the dorms. "Yeah, I'm pretty sure no one would care." he rolled his eyes. "But yeah, I do have a few people lined up. The first one said they might be able to meet us here and drive over to the new apartment with us. If that happens, try to be polite, and not so... YOU... you know?" He filled up a box and began duct-taping it shut. "You can be a bit intense when you go Full Teri."

I let out a soft huff and rolled my eyes. “Well, I NEVER!” I made a show of being more offended than I really was. “I’d almost think you were ashamed of me.” I plopped onto my bed, now stripped bare to the mattress. The mattresses belonged to the school, so we were leaving them behind when we took everything else with us. “I’ll have you know most people who aren’t big grumpy antisocial stinky skunks think I can be quite charming!” I stuck my tongue out at him. “So nyah!”

Xavier’s smirk had remained. I was getting him to smile. “So is that my nickname today? ‘big grumpy antisocial stinky skunk’?” He folded his arms and gave me a withering glare. I glared right back. He was smiling, and that was how I knew I didn’t have to back off.

“Nah. Today’s nickname is Tuxedo.” I chuckled. “Nicknames only really work if they’re not much longer than the original names, dummy.” He snorted as he started unhooking his alarm clock and putting it away. “Ok, I wanna stop being silly for a moment, Tux, and go over the plan again. So now that Summer Session classes are over, we need a new roommate if we’re going to live somewhere off-campus without going too broke.” I watched as he nodded. “And since neither of us know anyone who is looking to move out that we can both stand, we’re just meeting with new people that neither of us know, right?”

“Mostly, yeah.” Xavier bent over to pull some stuff out from under his dorm bed. I gave him a wolf whistle while working. Granted, I hadn’t been staring at his butt, but he didn’t KNOW I hadn’t been. “There’s one or two guys you might have met before, but most of them are totally new to both of us.” He pulled out a box of large hardcover books and set it on his bed, waving some dust off of it.

There was a knocking on the door. Xavier looked over. “Oh hey, that might be the first guy. Can you go check? I need to see if these books are third edition, fourth edition, or a mix of both.”

I raised an eyebrow. “Editions? What are you-” I stopped. “Nope, forgot I have to maintain a front of not caring about your weird fantasy games. Let me go answer the door.” I sashayed towards the door to our old dorm room, opening it and giving the person behind it my best smile. “Hiya! I’m Teri, and you must be here about the roommate thing-”

He was wearing a red sweatshirt. The same bright crimson as blood. That and the blue jeans around his waist were the first things I noticed about him. He always wore that same damn outfit, and I’d made a habit of joke-retching about it when I saw him in it. He’d gotten his fur color bleached like he’d been talking about, so the slate gray of his fur had turned almost white. He looked like he’d lost a bit of weight since I saw him last. “Hey Teri! I-”

I shut the door on him, biting a lip. “Xavier! You didn’t tell me it was him! Why is my ex here?”

Xavier turned. “Oh, I wasn’t expecting him until later today. Look, I know you and Kristoph have some issues still, but-”

“No!” I shook my head. “Not Kristoph! We never really dated so I don’t consider him an ex, but that’s really not the point!” I pointed at the door as he started opening it. I hadn’t even locked it. “Why is *SAMSON* here?!?”