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Animal Café

Volume 2

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Chapter 11 - Dreaming of Pets

"Mmm?"

"Clara... Wake up!"

"...Vix?"

"Yes... You have to wake up! I want to cuddle with you!"

In front of me was Vix, the cute rubbery red fox. How did this happen? I went to see her at her house because she was sick... but she was only wearing a cute animal pajama when I joined her on the bed. How come she was wearing her pet costume now? Was I asleep for that long?

"Vix? Why... Why are you wearing your suit?"

"You... you don't like me as a fox, Clara?"

"I do... but... And how come you can talk? You are not supposed to talk!"

"Does it really matter? Don't you want to cuddle with me? I thought you would like it."

"..."

How was she talking? I knew first hand that her costume was not allowing her to. I was so confused. Her room was still dark, making it difficult for me to see her properly. But I could feel her; her warmth, her weight, her little cushy paws rubbing my belly. I just wanted to take her in my arms.

I pulled her to me and gave her a good squeeze as she always liked, and in return, she nuzzled my cheek and giggled.

"You are so nice, Clara! You are my best friend."

"I... I am?"

"Yes... I want to stay with you forever. I'll be your pet, and you can play with me as much as you want."

"V... Vix? That's a... nice thing to say."

"Yes, I would love that a lot. And sometimes, I'll be extra nice too."

"... Extra nice?"

"Yes... To make you feel very good. Would you like me to show you how nice I can be? We are alone in the bedroom. Nobody will see us?"

Extra nice? To make me feel good? What was she talking about? Vix had always been so shy and reserved. Cuddling was the only thing she ever did, so I wasn't too sure what she was referring to. I tried to look at her face to understand her better, but her rubber cheek was pressing on mine, preventing me from doing so.

Then I felt something strange... On my ear. Something warm and wet. It sent a big wave of pleasure through my whole body.

"V... Vix? What... what was that?"

"Did you like it? Did it feel good?"

"Yes... but..."

"I always wanted to lick your ear, every time my muzzle was near it. It feels so good to be able to do that finally."

"But... How?... You are wearing... your costume?"

"No, I'm not... I'm a real rubber fox... Please stop thinking... Let me lick you some more. You told me you liked it."

"... yes."

The warm little tongue kept exploring my ear; it was tickling so much but felt so good at the same time. Vix then did the same thing on my neck and under my chin... It was so pleasant; her warm saliva cooled down by her shallow breath.

"Close your eyes, Clara."

I had no willpower anymore. Vix took control of my body and soul; I couldn't resist her. Closing my eyes didn't seem to make any difference at all, though... I may have shut them already while she was exploring my neck.

Her little tongue kept traveling on my face and then reached my lips. Gently, Vix pressed her rubber muzzle on my mouth and slid her tongue inside to meet mine. The sexual ambiance was undeniable; Vix had decided that she would make me feel good that way.

For many long minutes, I let her kiss me as much as she wanted. I was too paralyzed to participate fully, too occupied sensing all those unique feelings.

"Kissing feels great, uh?"

"Vix... This... This is incredible."

"I know, right... I want to make you feel even better now. Would you like that?"

"Mmm... Yes..."

"You are so nice, Clara. I'm so lucky to have you."

Vix began to crawl down, sliding her tongue on my chest... Did I undress when I joined her in bed earlier? My mind was so foggy. Her tongue was definitely licking my bare chest. I brought my hands to her cute ears and then...

"Eeep!"

Her little teeth playfully bit one of my nipples, then her licking immediately soothed the tingling, making me moan softly. Her cushy paw massaged my other boob at the same time.

I never thought Vix, the most adorable pet ever, could turn into this sexual creature. But she didn't stop there. She continued her little trip down my body... She hesitantly reached my belly... my hips... and then my crotch.

"Aaah! Viiix..."

"I love you so much, Clara... I really want to make you feel good down there... Can... Can I?"

"... Y... Yes!"

A new kind of licking began, sending incredible sensations throughout my small surrendered corpse. I moaned more and more, accepting everything the little fox girl was giving me. Her soft tongue was the best thing in the world and touched me in a way I had never been touched before.

"Vvvviiiix! Aaah! Aaah!"

"Hehe! Wake up, Clara!"

"..."

"Hi!"

"... T... Trixie?"

"Yes! What were you dreaming about? It sounded super fun!"

"..."

A cute blonde girl was staring at me with her big blue eyes.

"... What... Where..."

Looking around, I quickly realized that there was no rubber fox in my arms, just the small human Vix, buried in her animal pajama, deeply asleep on my shoulder. Trixie, lying on the other

side of me, was grinning in a way that betrayed the fact that she might have had something to do with my kinky dream.

The bunny girl was resting on her side next to me, with a hand resting on my lower belly. I'm sure my face was violet of embarrassment by now, knowing that I probably made some entertaining noise while unconscious.

"Trixie? Did... Did you... touch me?"

"I'm touching you now... Did I wake you up? I'm sorry. I took my shower and came back to see you guys were doing, and you were both asleep."

"But... Did you... kiss me?"

"Mmm... I'm not telling you that, Clara. Next time, if you want to know, don't fall asleep... hehe."

"..."

That was evil. Trixie was hiding things from me. I knew her, she was the most adventurous pet of the bunch, and I was certain that an opportunity such as this would have been very appealing to her. However, I didn't know if she had done anything or if she was just teasing me, so I refrained saying anything else; anyway, it would have been even more mortifying to discuss what I had dreamed about.

"Clara, today is our date, right? So we have to do something fun! Meet me downstairs when you are ready. I'll make you a sandwich, and then we can decide what to do. Vix can sleep all day when she is not a playing pet. She never does too much when not at work. Don't wait for her to wake up. You might have to move her aside."

"Mmm, okay. But... It's not a date."

"Aww! Don't break my heart! To me, it is!"



I went down the large staircase, needing to make an extra step here and there because my legs were too short, then I headed to the kitchen area where Trixie fixed us a lunch for us... or trying to. She seemed a bit frustrated that she didn't cut the sandwiches in two perfect halves.

"Aaah! Stupid knife! You destroyed Clara's special sandwich!"

"...Trixie?"

"Oh! You are here! Hehe. Here, I made you a sandwich... Sorry... I'm not a very good cook. Apricot was the best at cooking, but she is not living here anymore."

Apricot? I didn't know who Apricot was. Using my fingers, I counted the number of pets I knew; Trixie, Vix, Asha, Accalia, Misti, Oreo, Meeka... Oh... I knew who was missing...

"Apricot? The doggy?"

"Yes... Didn't you notice? She hasn't been around in a while."

"Why... did she leave?"

"Oh, I think it was just not for her... She was sweet and all, but she never felt that it was her calling. So instead of torturing herself unnecessarily, she moved on. I think she went back to her hometown."

I grabbed my plate, and we went to sit in the living room. This apartment was still unreal, and still very super extra large. The couch faced the window wall that was probably 20 feet high. We had a good view of all the other city buildings.

"Trixie... Where are we?"

"Uh? Our home? The pethouse, hehe."

"I know... but... you know..."

"I know, Clara... I know. But it's not my place to explain. I'm not going to lie to you, I know the whole story, but I can't tell it to you myself. You can discuss this with Lucy later if you want, but I'm not sure if she will want to. Most of the pets have no clue either. Lucy is just asking us to respect the place and not break anything if we decide to live here. But for now, I would just like to enjoy my time with you. We have not done anything non-café related in a long time. I kind of miss it."

"Because you are... always a pet."

"I know... I love it a bit too much. I do all the shifts I can. It's helping Lucy too because I'm a crowd favorite. If Vix weren't around, I would be the number one pet! It's because of my long rabbit ears, you know!"

Yes, it was something I noticed. At the café, Vix was always the first one to be selected by the clients. Some of the pets were not even trying to compete with her anymore. There was something so cute and adorable about that fox girl. The way she naturally moved and approached people was just making them melt.

Trixie and I chewed on our sandwich and started brainstorming about our plans for the rest of the day. I think she really wanted to go out and not stay indoors; perhaps it was her innocent way to prevent Vix from stealing part of my attention.

I was not very outgoing, so I wasn't sure what I could propose in terms of activities. Relying on Trixie's suggestions was pretty much the only thing I could do.

"Oh! I know! Why don't we go to a spa for a massage?"

"... I... I don't have... any money."

This proposition swiftly brought me back to the real world. Here I was, sitting in the luxurious living room of one of the most expensive apartments in the city, and I had nothing in my pockets. My tedious job was just enough to buy a bus pass, pay my rent, and get enough food to fill up my tiny stomach. I had no extra to save or spend. The ingredients for Vix's cookies were not something I often bought as I had to choose between that and a used book. It was rather pathetic. Based on where Trixie lived, I thought she wouldn't have that kind of money problem... but... that wasn't the case.

"Oh... Good point... let me go check if I have any money left."

"..."

Trixie got off the couch and went to a small dresser in the corner of the room. She took a small box out of one of the drawers, opened the lid, and rattled the content with her finger. It sounded like there were only a few coins at the bottom of it.

"Ah, bummer! Forget the spa... I'm as broke as you. Stupid money."

"Heeey, guys..."

"Vix! What are you doing out of your bed? You are sick. Go back to your room."

The fox girl slowly stepped down the giant stairs, the size of it making her look even smaller. Like earlier, her pajama hoodie covered her upper face, only leaving her mouth and chin exposed. Her hands stuffed inside the kangaroo pocket and her wobbly legs betrayed her unwellness.

"Nah! I am a bit better... What are you guys doing?"

"Not much... Just trying to figure out where to go, but we are broke..."

"Where did you want to go?"

"The spa... for a massage. But... Hey! No! Don't do it again, okay!"

"Do what?"

"Paying for me again."

"I do what I want. I'll give you some money."

"No! Vix! You always do that. Aaanh! Why am I such a useless rabbit! Why do we need money in the first place! It's dumb!"

"Make me a sandwich in exchange, Trix. I want the same as Clara's. It looks good."

"Grrrr..."

Seeing those two arguing like this was kind of amusing. Their back and forth chat was too high pace for me to place a word, so I just watched them and smiled. Vix apparently was the generous type since she seemed to have helped Trixie more than once in the past. Trixie, on the other hand, didn't appear to be a financial genius.

"Don't you want to have a good date with Clara? You were so looking forward to it."

"Vix! You... Aaaah! Fine! I'll make you Clara's special sandwich!"

Vix dragged her feet nonchalantly to the same dresser where Trixie got her box from and opened a different drawer. Just now, I noticed that there was a label with a name on each one. I guess it was where all the petgirls kept their valuables, including their pocket money. They must trust each other a lot since nothing was locked.

The sick girl pulled her box out and placed it on top of the dresser next to Trixie's. Her small hand grabbed a pile of paper money and transferred it to her friend's box without even counting.

"There... It should be plenty to have a good date. But... You sleep with me tonight, Trix... and Clara too if she sleeps here. Okay?"

"... I love you so much, Vix!"

"Eeep!"

Trixie pulled her friend into a tight hug, which caused Vix's hoodie to fall back! She was facing the wrong way which prevented me from seeing her scars, but I could finally see her short brown tousled hair, which humanized her a little bit. But in a hurry, she pulled her hoodie back over her head to hide her face again.

"You'll see, foxy! Clara's sandwich is the best EVER!"

On her way to the kitchen, Trixie pulled on one of the ears attached to Vix's hoodie, but this time she held it in place by grabbing the front of it. They really liked teasing each other.



"They said we have to soak in here for a bit before our massage."

"I... I like it. It's warm."

"Yes, and in the middle of the day like this, there is nobody else around. Too bad that they forced us to wear those bikinis."

"..."

Indeed, when we got to the spa, we were so not used to that kind of activity that we didn't bring anything to cover ourselves. In our head, getting a massage didn't involve a warm pool; good thing they had some cheap ones for sale, probably for people who didn't want to take the risk of staining their own with oil, salt, mud, or whatever other strange things they were using here.

Trixie didn't think swimsuits were necessary, of course, and she kept chasing me around the pool. She was overexcited since we got here, almost uncontrollable.

"Gotcha!"

"..."

After cornering me, she wrapped her legs and arms around me and pressed her forehead against mine.

"Told you it was going to be a good date..."

"It's... not..."

"Not a date... I know, I know. So... Do you like women?"

"... Women?"

"Yes, women. Like you and me. Us, delicate creatures."

"I... I don't know!"

"Do you like guys then?"

"... I am not sure... I live... alone."

"Why are you so nervous all the time? I'm not going to eat you. Your speech is so much better when you are calm. Am I that scary?"

Was she scary? No, she was not scary, but she definitely made me nervous. Did she understand that when I was not at the café, I wasn't talking to anybody at home? I was not socializing at work either. The café was the only safe place where I had an opportunity to mingle, and I could only do it because the pets were not threatening, and I didn't have to compete to place a word.

Earlier at the pethouse, when Vix and Trixie talked to each other, there was no hope for me to insert myself in their discussion; they were going way too fast for me even to hope to keep up.

How did Trixie expect me to do well when she wrapped herself around me, with her nose less than an inch from mine?

"Trixie... Stop!"

"... Stop? What did I do?"

"You... you are too close. You make me nervous and... it's hard for me."

"Oh... Sorry..."

Trixie got off me, moved to my side, lowering her head. We both sank a little bit until our lower jaw was submerged. I guess we both had something to be ashamed of; Trixie was too forward, and I wasn't enough.

"You are not like that when I'm a latex rabbit, Clara. You always let me get even closer."

"... I know... It's different. It's easier when you are a pet."

"Is it because I talk too much?"

"I don't know... maybe... but I'm... messed up."

"Nooo... Clara! You are not messed up! You are just..."

"... messed up."

I knew this little hesitation from my friend wasn't voluntary, and I felt guilty for capitalizing on it just to prove her wrong. What was I trying to achieve with this kind of negativism? It didn't feel right. Was it that I had it so hard all my life that I didn't want to change anymore? Was self-loathing a better strategy to attract people and get hugs? I doubted that it was the case, yet, I was doing it anyway.

"Clara, you remind me so much of Vix. Always avoiding fun as if it would bring you suffering. And you probably get along better with her because of that. Within a few minutes at our place, you were already cuddling with her in the bedroom and you seemed fine with it."

"..."

"Sorry, I'm a bit jealous, I suppose. I just wanted to have fun with you."

"Teach me."

"Uh? What?"

"Teach me... how to be... more like you."

"Clara?"

"I want to be like you!"

"But... Why? You just said I talked too much... that I was too intense."

"I don't like myself... so I want to be like you... because I prefer you more than me."

"..."

Now I've done it. It was the first time Trixie couldn't find an answer to something stupid I said. She just stared at me with a shocked expression, stuck between disbelief and pity.

"Alright, girls. It's time for your massage. Come with us. You're going to love this!"

The massage ladies came to pick us up for our backrub. Silently, we got out of the water and used the towels they handed over to us to dry ourselves. Trixie looked so sad and wouldn't even look at me anymore.

They led us to our tables, and we got what we paid for. The treatment was neither a pleasant nor a relaxing experience, and now, I felt even more guilty because we totally wasted Vix's money. The small fox girl wanted Trixie and I to have fun, but I ruined everything with my clumsy words and negative attitude.

After our massage, we went back to the locker room to dress back up, and that was when the silence became unbearable. Trixie tightened her fist and came to me, looking at the floor. She looked angry now.

"How could you say such a thing, Clara!?"

"..."

"Yes, you have problems! We all do! Yes, your communication disorder has no easy fix. But it's the same for all our issues! It's always hard. Guess why I'm a pet, Clara, and why I take as many shifts as I can at Pets & Cakes!? It's not just because I want to sell cakes and get cuddles. I'm running away from my problems too!"

"..."

"But you know what? I'm getting better... I have friends now. You are my friend. But when I'm around you and hear that you don't want to be yourself, it's mean! It's just mean. Don't do it anymore, okay? If you want to be more like me, that's fine. But when you say that you don't want to be yourself, it's like telling me that what I love is crap, which makes me feel worthless like I felt in the past. Didn't you learn anything when you saw Vix trying to hide her face scars from you? Did it not hurt a lot to be unable to love her the way you wanted?"

Trixie was now crying and pressed her forehead on my chest, trying to get close without daring to look in my eyes, fearing that I would reject her affection again.

She was right... I had not realized it at all, but I did the worst thing I could have done to her because I lacked the guts to change and get better. I had no right to do this. As she said, it was mean.

"Trixie... I'm..."

"You're sorry?... Right. Don't say it if you don't mean it. You can play with the rabbit pet if you want, but don't play with the human. I'm too fragile. I need my friends to let me love them. I don't like being rejected. It hurts!"

"I... I love the pets... All of them. I need them. They help me... Lucy helps me too. But... I thought... If I were more like you... it would make things easier outside the café."

"Yeah... But discarding who you are won't do you any good. We love you the way you are... If you become like me, you won't be the same person anymore. What would be the point of becoming somebody else? Let us love you, as you are, then take it with you... That is the only way... take the love we give you and carry it with you. That will make you happy, and then it will make me happy. Do you understand?"

"... Yes."

"And if you ever say mean things like this to me again, I will... Mmmphh!"

My lips locked with hers... Did I just do that? Why did I feel it was the right moment to do this, to kiss her while she was about to threaten me? She didn't try to pull away... We just stayed there, immobile, waiting to see what would happen next.

After a few seconds, Trixie decided on the next move. She grabbed my waist and pressed her chest against mine, pushing the kiss a bit deeper. Her little tongue started to caress mine gently, the same way it happened in my dream earlier today... it was the same sensation... the same warmth... the same taste. But this time, I returned the kiss, because I could.

For a minute or two, we made ourselves feel good... really good. To me, this was my first real kiss. What we had done before was too one-way to count. Yes, this was a real kiss... one that felt right and made me feel fuzzy inside.

When Trixie pulled away from me, a thin strand of saliva linked our tongues that were still slightly out and resting on our lower lip. Her cheeks were flushed, and her facial expression visibly indicated that what we did turned her on quite a bit. There was no doubt in my mind that I looked the same way.

"I... I forgot what I was talking about."

"Me... Me too."

"Clara... Can we go home now? I want to spend the night cuddling with you and Vix... I'd like that a lot."

"I would like that too. Vix got us the best gift ever."

"You got that right!"

I swear... There was something magical about those petgirls.

Chapter 12 - Delicious Pets

"Open wide!"

"... mmmph!"

"There you go... Thanks so much for doing this for me on your day off."

I nodded... that was all I could do now that my mouth was stuffed with the soft mouthpiece, and my nose was invaded by the nose tubes. Lucy was turning me into a white rabbit again. I always seemed to end up in trouble after something nice happened to me.

I had an amazing time with Trixie and Vix the other day; I got to see Vix out of her suit, then I got my first real kiss from Trixie. But it turned out that the rabbit petgirl also liked to get close to Vix because she got her cold... and she also transmitted it to Misti. Being Trixie, a girl who craved physical contacts a bit too much, came with a downside.

That said, Lucy was now down four pets. Apricot probably left the café forever, Trixie and Misti were recovering from their cold at the luxurious pethouse, Meeka's shift was over and was out of town, and me, of course, I ended up being the backup plan.

When I showed up at the café today, Lucy was somewhat panicking because she usually had a crew of six pets, but now she only had four; that wasn't too good for the café. She could operate with five, but with only four, people started to turn heels knowing they wouldn't get to spend quality time with their favorite rubber animals.

So this morning, Lucy "asked" me to be a pet to compensate until tomorrow. Useless to say that it was not my plan for the day. I thought I would get to spend time with my pet friends and maybe chat with Lucy about the mysterious pethouse, not work. But since I didn't know how to say no, I accepted.

I clapped my cushy paws together and made sure my fingers were comfortable sitting in them, and then Lucy zipped my suit up and locked it before turning me around and gently pulling on my long ears.

"Too adorable. So, you remember that you have to act like Trixie as much as you can, else the client will suspect something is weird?"

"..."

"Sorry, I had to turn you into our most sexual pet, but Trixie is super popular. When she is away for too long, people start asking questions. It's okay, right? You are well protected inside the costume anyway. You have nothing to fear."

"..."

"Okay, follow me. I'll let you in the lounge. Then I'll open the shop. If you make the clients buy a lot of cakes, I'll give you a nice reward when your shift is over."

A reward? I wondered what she meant by that... I didn't ask for anything. I just wanted to help and enjoy being a pet again. I didn't get to do that too often.

We walked downstairs, and she let me enter the lounge. Immediately, Vix, Oreo, Asha, and Accalia came to see me. They knew it was me and not Trixie this time, so they all gave me small hugs to welcome me as a temporary staff member.

It didn't take long before I ended up on the floor under a pile of rubber petgirls. It was so fun to feel like an animal again... so relaxing. I didn't have to talk, I didn't have to worry about what I looked like, I didn't have to worry about if this was the right thing to do. All I had to do was to enjoy myself and return some love to my little friends.

The life of a petgirl was a nice one. There was no need to think about anything real-life related. Lucy would keep an eye on us, feed us, clean us, and more. All that was left for us to do was to give and receive affection. I didn't think I would want to do that full time like the other girls, but it felt good once in a while.

About thirty minutes later, Lucy let a young guy inside the lounge; maybe early twenties... and he looked straight at me. It was not the first time I wore a pet suit, but it was the first time it was for work. Sure, one time, Lucy pulled my leg and made me believe that Trixie was a client, but this time it was real. I didn't know that person, and the thought that I could end up cuddling with him was quite scary.

I froze.

The man walked in my direction with a smile... I thought he would hug me... or pick me up... but then...

"VIX! Come here, foxy!"

That was not me he was after. Vix, the cute fox girl, from the other end of the lounge joyfully skipped toward the man and threw herself in his stomach without too much care.

"Oof! Lucy told me you were sick. I'm glad you are feeling better. I'm so happy that you are back. I have so many things to tell you."

Obviously, those two knew each other. Vix looked super happy to see him and vice versa. This false alarm was an efficient wake-up call for me. I couldn't afford to be this scared of strangers if I wanted to do a good job today. Lucy was right, I was well protected inside my costume, and my identity was concealed, so I didn't have much to worry about.

I discreetly observed how Vix interacted with this first client. Honestly, she didn't do much at all outside, staying close, reacting a bit when her client was petting her, and returning occasional hugs. I wondered if she really cared about him or if she just wanted to make him buy more cakes.

A bit later, Lucy let more clients in, this time it was a young couple. I had seen them at the café before but wasn't quite sure what pet they liked to play with the most. I never really paid any attention to that kind of detail. They looked in my direction, but Oreo and Asha were sitting with me, so it was hard to tell who they would request.

With a sign of the hand, the woman called one of us over... Which one? I was not the real Trixie; I didn't know who her favorite clients were... But Asha and Oreo apparently did. They started pushing me off my butt, trying to tell me that those were mine... or that I was theirs.

The nervousness set in, but knowing that I wouldn't have to talk to them changed everything. Not risking to have my communication disorder exposed today was an immense peace of mind. So I took a deep breath and began my walk toward this new experience.

One thing that helped me, I thought, was that I tried to pretend that I was the real Trixie. Acting like her provided me with confidence that I usually didn't have. I remembered that Trixie always walked like a little soldier, with her legs and arms straight, which made her look adorable. Doing the same thing made me giggle internally. The other pets probably knew what I was doing and certainly would make fun of me later.

I arrived next to the couple who was sitting in the booth.

"Trixix! Come here, you, cutie-bunny!"

They looked friendly. I sat next to them, as I would normally do as a human.

"Haha... What are you doing? You don't want to hug me?"

Did I just commit my first mistake as a petgirl? That didn't take long. I wasn't used to being the one initiating cuddles.

As I was trying not to freak out about what I did, I received a soft slap behind the head, and before I could even turn around to see who did that, Asha circled me and jumped on the man, which made them react positively.

"Aaaah! Noooo! It's Ashaaa! She is invading us!"

The snow leopard turned to her back and laid down all crooked over both of them. I was pretty sure she just wanted to show me how it was done. There was no right or wrong way to go about it, but I had to find this heart-desire to be playful.

I decided to fall softly on the girl and see what would happen; that was a start.

"Awww... Trixie is all quiet today. Maybe she is a bit tired."

She wrapped her arm around me, pulling me closer. Well, that felt good; she was handling me so gently. As I was trying to get as comfortable as I could in her arms, I tried to remember what the pets were doing around me when I visited the café.

A bunch of random souvenirs crossed my mind, and I picked a random one to replicate.

I decided to go for it... I climbed on top of the girl to face her before wrapping my arms around her neck and pressing her face into my chest... Trixie had playfully done this to me more than once, so I hoped my client would appreciate it.

"Aaaah! Trixie's boobs are in my face."

"Hahaha! It's the first time she does that... It's hilarious."

First time? Was this my second mistake already? Trixie was my good friend, so maybe she treated me differently than her other clients. It was too late to reconsider now. The girl was so happy that she held me there for a very long time, just enjoying the moment and the comfort of my little chest.

"Jed, I want to take her home again! It was so fun last time."

"Hehe. It was... I guess you'll have to ask Lucy."

The girl finally released me from her grip and placed her two hands on my waist. Using her nose, she rubbed mine and whispered a little question.

"Trixie? It's a very special day for Jed and me today. We decided to get married. We are so happy. He said it was okay if I wanted to borrow a pet so we can celebrate a bit more tonight. Since you are my ultimate favorite, would you like to come back to our place for the night?"

Oh, shoot! Lucy didn't prepare me for this... Well, she didn't prepare me for anything. I didn't want to follow some strangers to their home. Maybe Trixie knew them well, but I didn't. The way she was talking, it happened before, so I guess it was possibly true, but I wasn't ready for this.

I just stared at her from behind my black bunny eyes, not daring to give her an answer, and started to tremble a little. As if someone kept an eye on me, the lounge door opened, and Lucy walked in, saving me from my dire situation.

"Jed! Eve! Having fun already with the pets?"

"Yes... They are as sweet as ever!"

"What can I bring you today?"

"Well, it's a special occasion, so we will take the triple-chocolate cake and two laté."

"Oh? What is the special occasion?"

"Jed and I are getting married!"

Lucy lost her shit again.

"WHAT!?! Seriously!?"

"Yes... We decided yesterday! Is it not great?"

"It's AMAZING! Congratulations, guys!"

"Hehe, thanks... So... We also wanted to ask... Could we bring Trixie home tonight? We would bring her back tomorrow morning."

"Ah, sorry. No can do. Trixie has to stay here tonight. She is not feeling like herself today, so I want her to have a good night of sleep."

"Awww... Really?"

Wow... Lucy really had my back. She just protected me from an experience that would have been traumatic. I was not even officially working here, so expecting me to go sleep at a stranger's place would have been way too much to ask. I wore Trixie's skin, but I was not the fearless bunny.

"Sorry, another time, maybe. It's just bad timing. We are short on pets too and they all need to rest."

"... It's... It's okay... I was just looking forward to playing with her a bit more. I like Trixie a lot."

"She would have loved it... But hey, if you are okay with doing something special here, I can arrange a little entertainment."

"... a little entertainment?"

"Yeah... Give me a moment. I'll be back. I got the perfect idea."

Well, I didn't know what Lucy had in mind, but I knew her brain was wired differently than normal people, so it was fair to assume that she would throw a nice curveball at one of us... and by one of us, I meant me.

Without realizing it, I was squeezing my client just a bit harder, searching for reassurance.

It only took a few minutes before Lucy came back, her arms full of random items, and wearing a smile that announced trouble.

"Alright, first, a nice table cloth... It might get messy..."

Messy? Why messy? Lucy? What are you going to do to me this time? As she unfolded a thick and transparent plastic table cloth, I grew suspicious. With the puzzled clients' help, she neatly spread it over the table, and once that was done, she grabbed my wrist.

"Alright, Trixie, lay down on the table..."

"..."

"Don't look at me like that... We are giving your friends a special wedding gift... Don't you want to do something nice for them? Come on, bunny-girl. Up! Get on the table!"

I've seen petgirls lying on top of tables before, but it was not something I was personally used to. It was not very natural for me to do that... particularly while knowing that Lucy was hiding her plan from us.

I hesitantly sat on the table, and they helped me lay down on it. My white latex skin was sticking a bit on the clear plastic, but I still ended up comfortably on my back. It was a funny position to be in; my legs, dangling from the table's edge, were pointing toward the wall where Asha was sitting; on my right side was Jed and Eve, sitting side by side and giggling at the vulnerable me.

Because we were sitting in the corner booth, the other clients in the lounge couldn't see what was going on over here; they would see my two long rabbit ears at best. Depending on what they planned to do to me, this sort of privacy was possibly not the best thing.

Lucy placed a spray bottle on the table, along with a few soft cloths.

"Okay, that is perfect... Give Trixie a good cleaning. I'll be right back."

"..."

The plan was starting to take shape a bit too quickly... What did I get myself into again?

Eve didn't waste any time, too happy about this turn of events. She grabbed the bottle and began spraying me with the cleaning solution.

"Raise your paws, Trixie."

Disobeying was not even an option anymore; I was too far in. I raised my hands to the side of my head, undoubtedly making me look even more adorable and, therefore, more desirable. Asha, her, wasn't phased out by this and pushed on my knees to open my legs.

Eve sensually rubbed the soft cloth on me... everywhere... preparing me for what was coming next. As nervous as I was, this didn't feel bad at all. It reminded me of the massage Trixie and I received when we went to the spa; Eve just spent a lot more time massaging my chest.

It was evident that she knew Trixie loved a good breast rub, but she had no idea I wasn't her. She meticulously wiped my arms, torso, belly, upper legs... and crotch, which couldn't do anything else than turn me on. Good thing I was all protected inside my thick rubber skin; it was easier to accept that kind of attention.

"Aaaah, Trixie loves this... She is so cute when she gets excited."

"Yeah... Too bad we can't take her home tonight."

"No, Jed... It's fine... I think this is going to be really fun."

Lucy came back not long after, carrying some more items that she placed around me. She then put her hands around my neck and massaged me gently.

"Ooooh, shiny rabbit. You are so cute. Alright, guys. Trixie will be your cake today. Use those squeeze bottles to decorate her. It's chocolate syrup. You can do whatever you want... draw

something, write words, let your imagination flow. And then, I sliced your triple-chocolate cake in bite pieces... just stick them everywhere on her body. And when you are all done... well... bon appetit!"

"Aaaah! Lucy! That is so awesome! Thanks so much! Mmmm... Trixie-cake! Come on, Jed... take this bottle! You take care of her lower body, and I take care of the top."

"Haha! Okay!"

"Enjoy, guys!"

Just like that, Lucy turned heels after converting me into a food whiteboard. There was obviously nothing I could have done to stop this from happening, but I didn't want to. Seeing those people so happy to play with me made me feel good about myself. I was providing them with something joyful that they needed.

As they were squeezing cold chocolate syrup all over me, I couldn't do anything but smile because it tickled. I couldn't see what they were doing in my current position, but guessing was fun.

It took a few minutes of laughter and awws for them to turn me into a pet artwork. Eve stood up and snapped a picture from above with her cellphone and showed it to me.

I couldn't do anything else but melt when I saw what they had done to me ... Not only they had covered me well with tons of zigzags and stars, but on my chest, I had a big heart, and inside it, she wrote, "I love you." On my belly, she wrote "sexy bunny," and on my legs I think Jed had written "cutie" and "cuddly." Clearly, he was not the artist in the couple. The color contrast of the chocolate cake pieces covering my ultra-white skin made everything stand out.

"Oh, my God. Trixie! You look so delicious. I have no other choices but to eat you alive!"

"..."

I had almost forgotten that part... I was a bunny-cake, and bunny-cake needed to be eaten. Eve dug in first. She slid her warm tongue slowly along my rib cage, almost making my heart explode.

This was SO erotic!

My hips lifted on the table, betraying the fact that I was hardly in control of my brain anymore.

"Haaa! Trixie is so tasty! And she loves it too... Oh! I want this piece of cake there..."

Her slippery tongue slid up one of my boobs, and her soft lips engulfed my now erected nipple... and her teeth even caught it a little bit, sending even more sexual pleasure down my spine. That was insane.

I'm not sure what Jed was doing, but I felt some licking on my thighs as well. But I think he was leaving most of me to Eve on purpose, or maybe he was too scared to be too forward in front of his future wife. Chocolate bunnies seemed to be her thing more than his.

But the one I forgot about was Asha, who kept my legs open and facing my exposed crotch. I should have known... Pets are playful and somewhat evil at times... She shamelessly pressed her cushy paw on my rubber covered pussy and massaged it slowly. That time, they must have heard me moan. ASHA! What were you doing to me?

"Aaaah... Good Asha! I'm not sure Lucy would agree with this, but since it's you doing it, I guess that's okay. We won't tell her."

No kidding... Was masturbating me in public even allowed? If Asha knew the rules, she broke them on purpose.

For many long minutes, Eve had a blast licking and nibbling me all over. The nipples, neck, and lower belly area felt extra good to me, and I tried to let her know what I liked by twisting around when it was a good spot. Under normal circumstances, I wouldn't have allowed a stranger to lick me, but that layer of latex and this mask turned me into something much more approachable.

Lucy came back after a while to check on us.

"So... How is your cake, Eve?"

"She is DELICIOUS! Can I have some more?"

"Haha... Yes... Here, I brought you some more cake... Enjoy yourself! Hey!... Asha... What are you doing? Were you...?"

Asha shook her head and withdrew her paw from my crotch. Now I had my answer... Crotch rubbing in the lounge was not allowed. Sadly, I didn't want her to stop.

Asha knew that... so as soon as Lucy left us alone, she returned her paw to my pussy and rubbed it more energetically as if there were a sense of emergency... Now that she knew Lucy would keep a close eye on her, she had to act quickly.

I was in heaven and close to the edge. Eve added some more syrup on me along with a couple of cake pieces... but then she did something unexpected.

She pinned my wrist on the table above my head and slid her warm tongue over my exposed latex armpit... That move, combined with Asha's relentless crotch rubbing, sent me to a very happy place. Nobody ever touched me there before... but it was so erogenous. How come I never knew about this? Worrying if I were clean and shaved was pointless in this case, so all that was left was the good sensation... and Eve noticed my great reaction to her experiment.

"Oooh... I think I found Trixie's favorite spot... Alright then..."

She plunged her face in my armpit again, eating it slowly with her lips, teeth, and tongue... all at once...

That was too much to endure... I had no idea this was one of my weak spots. It was not tickling, it almost felt as if I had a second clitoris somewhere in my armpit. But it didn't matter anymore...

I started thrashing on top of the table, overwhelmed by an intense orgasm. As I was cumming hard, they all tried to hold me still on the table not to attract Lucy's attention. Eve even tried to plug my breathing holes with her finger to muffle my faint moans, which made it even worse for me... it just made my orgasm stronger.

Stars... Many stars were floating around in front of me, and I didn't even know where I was anymore... My body was drained of all its energy, and I was still lying flat on my back while Eve finished licking my body and chewing on her cake pieces. I might have blacked out for a moment here... I was the happiest pet in the world.

A bit later, Lucy came back with some more towels and asked Eve and Jed to clean me up. After that, for another hour, Asha and I cuddled with them, and then they had to go. I may have understood why the pets loved interacting with clients so much. It was certainly not the most unpleasant job in the city... as long as we were allowed to bend the rules a little bit.

As soon as they left, Asha went to Lucy, pointed at me with one paw, and pointed at her neck with the other.

"Oh? You think Clara needs a break?"

Asha nodded.

"And you, Asha?"

Asha shrugged.

"Why don't you both go upstairs to a capsule room to relax then? There are not a lot of clients right now. And I saw what you did to Clara earlier, by the way... I'm not blind, you know. At least upstairs, you won't cause any more trouble."

Asha looked down for a second... and then walked to me and wrapped her arms around mine.

"Right! Follow me, you two. I'll open the door. Go rest!"

Lucy let us out of the lounge, and we headed right to the room where the capsules were. Asha and I entered the bottom one and slid the door close behind us... forgetting that we were both pets and that we wouldn't be able to open it from the inside because of our cushy rubber paws.

Ah well... Asha laid down on top of me, and we started cuddling...

That was way more important.

Chapter 13 - For the love of pets

"But... That's a lot."

"56\$ more, yes... It's because of all the renovation we had to do on the building."

"You... You didn't do any!"

"Listen, Clara. You are a good tenant, but you have no choice here. You either accept the raise, or you'll have to find a new place. I'm sorry. You have until next Thursday to give me your decision."

"..."

It was ALWAYS the same; it was my curse. Every single time something good happened in my life, something worse followed to dampen my happiness. I was already struggling to pay my rent with my miserable salary, but they still increased it by 56\$ per month, pretending they had done major renovations to justify a raise above than allowed by the law. It was a dirty tactic they used in the past to push people out so they could ask even more money from a new tenant. I wasn't good at talking, but I was not stupid.

I closed the door, and one of my tears dropped on my new lease agreement. Every month I had less money to spend, and the only place I could cut at this point was my phone or my food. Simply put, this was the last blow. I would have to move out and find a cheaper apartment, which also meant that I would have to live much farther and roughly double my commute time to work.

If it were only that... The worst part was that I would have to live so far away from my new friends.

A small pair of rubber arms wrapped around me from behind.

"Asha... What am I going to do? It's not fair!"

The small snow leopard petgirl spent the night at my place. While I was answering the door, she hid in the closet and heard my conversation with the landlord. She tried to comfort me with a hug, but this time I would need much more than that. My world was burning to ashes, and I didn't have enough water left to control the damage.

I dragged my feet back to my room and let myself fall on the bed. Asha followed me and kneeled next to me to rub my back with her paw.

"I... won't be able to go to Cakes & Pets nearly as often. I won't be able to bring you back home for the night. What am I gonna do, Asha? It's not fair!"

The petgirl probably wished she could talk right now, but her adorable mask prevented it. I could have released her, but it was unlikely that she would have found the words to make me feel better; rubbing my back was undoubtedly the best thing she could do.

It made me feel sick to think that because of a small 56\$, a greedy landlord managed to destroy my entire life. My communication disorder was improving so much around my new friends; I was more comfortable around people every time Lucy forced me to experience new things. This feeling that someone cared about me was new and essential in my life. How come he had the right to take all of this away from me?

I spent the next thirty minutes cuddling and crying with Asha before we had to head out. We would drop by the café, and then another dull workday awaited me around the corner.



"A raise!? Absolutely not!"

"But... My rent... It went up."

"Ours too! Welcome to the continuously-increasing cost of living in the big city. I can't help you with that, Clara."

"If I can't pay... I'll have to move far away."

"That's a sad reality. Many of your co-workers have to commute for over an hour to get here. You'd not be the first to have to do that."

"... I... could find a new job, then."

As soon as I said that, a torrent of regrets filled up my head. Was I desperate enough to threaten my boss? I knew very well that I was expendable and had no special qualifications to do anything else. He stared at me and then shook his head in disappointment.

"Don't go there, Clara. I have a huge pile of candidates that are ready to do your job without complaining."

"S... Sorry."

"Keep in mind that you are not THAT good at what you do. And don't make yourself believe that you can do something other than packing boxes. You might end up living in the street before you know it. Now go back to your post. Your fifteen minutes break is almost over."

"..."

I turned heels and exited his office, scared and defeated. What did I think? They didn't care about me! I knew that! Why did I even think they would even listen to me? He could have fired me on the spot. And maybe that was what would happen now that they knew I was disgruntled; it was unlikely that they would keep a problematic employee around the place.

I returned to my working spot next to the conveyor. In a minute, the robots will bring me an endless number of stupid items to pack, and it would be like that, uninterrupted, for the next two hours until the end of my shift.

Today, more than ever, I just felt like a cow standing on her anti-fatigue mat, used as a tool to make a profit.

This was not a life.



"Clara! I hoped you would come. I need your help!"

"..."

It was a pattern with Lucy. Every time I showed up at the café and wanted to discuss something specific, she went ballistic and needed me to do something for her, nullifying my intentions in the process. When it was not an out of the blue pet sitting, she wanted me to act as an emergency pet.

I had no idea what she wanted from me this time around, but I knew I would have to put my problems aside for a moment and listen to her more pressing needs.

"So, do you remember where the pethouse is?"

"Yes."

"Good! Would you do me a HUGE favor? Misti and Trixie are still recovering from their cold over there. The thing is that Misti usually is my go to girl who runs all my errands, but since she is out of commission, could you bring this box to them? Do you have time?"

"... Yes. What is it?"

"It's a surprise for them. Oh, and since you are going there, can you give this letter to the commissionaires at the front desk for me. You must NOT open that letter, though. It's very private."

Lucy looked under her small reception desk, pulled out an unmarked sealed white envelope, and handed it over to me.

Since she mentioned the mysterious pethouse, which was, in fact, a luxurious penthouse located at the top of a big building hosting an insurance company, I thought I could risk asking some questions about it; not to be intrigued was downright impossible.

"Lucy... About the pethouse..."

"Oh... I thought you said you remembered where it was. I'm sorry, I can text you the address. Let me go grab my cell phone,"

"... No... no... I know where it is... I just..."

"Oh, good then! Hurry! They need this box asap. Thanks so much for doing this. Maybe next time you come, I'll let you take three pets home!"

"... Wait! No... That's not it!"

She turned me around and pushed me toward the door as she was obviously avoiding the topic. Before I knew it, I was standing in front of the Cakes & Pets café with a small box in my hands and a white envelope between my teeth, which was another technique Lucy employed to prevent me from asking questions.

The door slammed close behind my back, leaving me alone with my mission.

"But.... I wanted to know about the pethouse... Aww!"

This matter would have to wait a bit longer. At least this little task would distract me from my horrible day a bit longer. Seeing Trixie again would be nice, and maybe I would get to see Misti out of costume as well; that could be fun.

I headed toward downtown, chuckling a bit to myself. Not so long ago, I would have been terrified to meet a new pet out of costume, but now I was almost looking forward to it. All the time that I spent with Trixie as a human changed my perspective. It had not broken my relationship with the pets in any way; if one thing, it had improved it.

Improved it... By how much? That was another question. During my date with Trixie, which was not exactly a date, I ended up kissing her romantically in the spa's locker room. I knew it

didn't mean that we were a couple or anything like that. I think it was just something we did instinctively to defuse a situation and show that we cared for each other. But it wasn't clear whether or not Trixie would expect more out of this.

The rabbit girl was not easy to read. When she wore her bunny costume, it was undeniable that she loved being around me, but she had other clients that she loved to play with as well. When she was a human, she wanted to spend time with me and go on "dates," but was it something she did with the other pets too? I didn't have this piece of the puzzle.

Seeing her acting around Vix showed me that Trixie loved cuddling anything that had a pulse. Also, I should not forget that she had transmitted her cold virus to Misti after getting it from Vix; there was some serious fluid exchange right there directly linked to that kinky bunny, which made me chuckle a bit more. Only spending more time with Trixie would help me get to know her better.

I quickly reached the insurance building. Before going in, I tried to keep my anxiety at bay. Not only this place was intimidating, but on top of that, I would have to talk to the commissionaires. It was time to check if all that speech practice I had with the pets would yield dividends. I could do this.

That big glass door was heavy, and I was tiny; it was a bad combination. After managing to squeeze through the crack without getting stuck, I headed to the front desk, not too sure how to approach them.

"Deliveries are at the back of the building."

"But... I'm..."

"You have to exit and go around, sorry."

"..."

That didn't go well. Not very good for me, who had thought I had made progress in discussing with others. This man, wearing a white shirt, overpowered me effortlessly.

My first reflex was to lower my head and head back outside. I wasn't too sure what to do, so I called Lucy.

"Clara? Is everything alright?"

"... No... They didn't want to speak to me... They want me to go to delivery instead."

"Delivery? Why would they want you to... Oh, right, the box."

"What... What do I do?"

"Did you give them the letter?"

"N—No... They didn't want to listen to me."

"Hahaha. Okay. Listen. You go back inside... No matter what they tell you, give them the letter. Everything will be alright. Trust me."

"O—Okay... I'll... try again."

Once more, I battled the heavy door and walked back in the lobby, even more nervous than the first time. It only took two seconds before they rudely asked me to leave again.

"I said, the deliveries are at the back, are you deaf?"

"... I... I..."

"You what? You want me to throw you out?"

"Please... I have this letter... for you."

"A letter? What letter?"

"This... this one..."

While looking at the floor, I managed to raise my trembling arm high enough to hand the envelope, white as my face, to the commissionnaire. I waited in silence, while he examined it, and then...

"Holy mother of... I'm SO sorry... I'm so sorry... please. I assure you, Miss, it... it won't happen again. Please, follow me. We will take care of this right away."

"...uh?"

What now? With my arm still in the air, I lifted my chin to see what was happening. Why was he so apologetic and scared of me all of a sudden? He started walking while asking me to follow him. Follow him where? Lucy didn't say squat about any of this.

"Please, Miss... Follow me, and I will arrange everything... un... unless you prefer another agent? I... I would understand."

"..."

I couldn't talk anymore, but at least I managed to get my legs moving to push my body in his general direction, still carrying my small box between my shaky hands.

The commissioner led me to a small office not too far from the front desk. Once inside, he made me sit on a chair and continued with his strangeness.

"It will only take a minute. I apologize again."

"..."

He was still freaking out about something I knew nothing about. He pulled a sheet of paper from the envelope and started transcribing the content to his computer. Shortly after...

"Please, look at the red light."

"..."

FLASH!

"Gah!"

"I'm very sorry about that... We are almost done. Just place your hand on this plate."

"..."

The device on which I rested my little hand flashed green for a second, and then, with some unsteady fingers, he placed a white plastic card in what seemed to be a small printer. The card dropped in, the machine vibrated a bit, before spitting out the card that now had my terrified face on it.

"There... The building is yours, Miss. Let us know if you experience any issues. I'm so sorry again about the misunderstanding."

"... T... Thank you?"

There was no way for me to know what to do next. I first thought I was detained or something, but that didn't seem to be the case anymore.

I stood up slowly, but I was still not convinced if I would be allowed to leave, so I kind of stared at him, hoping to get some signal. But then, he abruptly bounced out of his seat, making me jump, and he rushed to open the door for me...

"I'm sorry... I'm so sorry again... I'll get the door for you."

"..."

He freaked me out so much that I carefully exited the small room, longing the door frame to keep as much distance as I could from him. As soon as I was out, I jogged back to the lobby. I looked at the other commissionaire sitting at the front desk, and he quickly lowered his head as soon as we made eye contact.

"What is going on here!?"

On top of my box, there was my shiny new ID card, still warm from the press. I quickly grabbed my cell phone and tried to call Lucy... but she was not answering this time.

"Mmm... I wonder..."

Still trying to stay as far away from the front desk, I circled it, tried to merge with the decorative plants, and headed toward the elevators. Like the last time when I was here with Trixie, there were random people wearing business suits, which made me feel like an outsider.

The elevator bell rang, and I swiftly engulfed myself in it. After swiping my new card on the reader, I hesitantly pressed the P button, all the way at the top of the panel. The elevator moved in a way to make me gain some weight, and all I had to do was to enjoy the ride since it seemed to work. I was on my way to the pethouse.

Shortly after the elevator door split open, I faced another set separating me from my friends; it was as intimidating as before. Swiping the card in front of the reader to access the pethouse was not easy. What if they were not home? Was it okay for me to get in without their permission? Lucy had not explained anything to me as usual.

Gathering my courage, I pushed the door open, as quietly as possible, and stepped in. Trixie and Misti were my friends; they probably would be okay with me being here after all.

A quick visual scan revealed no signs of life. Nobody was in the kitchen, nobody in the living room, the window wall was as impressive as ever, and the staircase was still enormous.

But then I heard a faint noise... An erotic noise...

"Mmm... aah!"

"..."

One of the big couches had its back facing me... and those sounds turning my face beet red were seemingly coming from it. I silently approached it, trying to look over the backrest. The saliva noises were evident at that point.

Once close enough, I looked over the backrest, and my heart skipped a beat. Two small naked girls, both blonde with short hair, were lying down naked on top of each other with their arms and legs entwined randomly. They were very focused on making out and had no idea I was even observing them.

Obviously, that was not something I had expected when entering the pethouse. My paralysis prevented me from opening my mouth or fleeing, but my brain filled my body with efficient sexual hormones.

From my angle, I couldn't tell which one was Trixie, but seeing two perfect bodies, white as snow, rubbing on each other like this, it was not something I could stop watching. The female on top was also clearly humping her friend's thigh sensually.

There was something so attractive in seeing those small girly hands sliding gently on the soft skin. It was probably the wrong thing to think, but I desired the same thing. I wanted to be one of those girls, being taken care of by an equally attractive one.

"Mmm! Aaaah!"

"M... Misti... I'm... I'm close. Kiss me deeper."

Okay... Now I knew who Trixie was... The one on top, and what she just said, made me feel even more awkward. I couldn't believe I had been more scared to enter an empty apartment than the possibility of bumping into a sex scene, which had been way more likely to happen with Trixie around.

Then another surge of sexual emotion washed over me when the girl under Trixie ran her fingers in her short blonde hair. When I saw Trixie out of her suit for the first time, I jealously wanted her hair. It was a color I loved, and I remembered how soft it was to the touch.

I could sense the overheating coming from that couch and could still not move a finger. Seeing Trixie's hips moving faster and faster while kissing more intensely was nothing short than mesmerizing. I was so envious.

And then...

"Mmm.. nng! Aaah! Aaah AAAH! AAAHH! Misti! Misti... AAAAAH"

"MMmm!"

Misti firmly gripped Trixie's hair to keep making out with her while she was cumming.

Seeing the small body convulsing mixed with Misti's dominant attitude turned my legs into jello. What did I walk into this time? I didn't know what to do anymore.

A high pitch scream sliced the erotic scenario like a razor blade.

"EEEEEEK!"

And another...

"EEEEEEEEAAAAH!"

Then mine...

"AAAAAAAAAH!"

Trixie tumbled down to the carpet, Misti crunched herself up, trying to hide her chest, and I stepped back as far as I could until I hit the wall.

"Cla... CLARA!?"

"... Misti?"

"..."

What could I say? Sorry, I saw you making love by accident but kept watching? I didn't think it would fly. I shouldn't even be here.

But then, Trixie, naked like a worm, bounced over the couch like the bunny she was and leaped in my direction as if her recent orgasm overcharged her.

"CLARAAAA! What are you doing here!? How did you get in!? AWWWW! I MISSED YOU!"

Even bracing for the impact was not sufficient. I ended up on my back on the floor, losing grip of my box, and Trixie gave me a deep kiss.

"Mmm!"

"Mmm!"

It was as stupid as inappropriate, but it felt good, particularly since my body was still turned on by what I had witnessed only a moment ago.

"Alright, Trixie... We know who your favorite is, now."

"Heeey! I mean... You are my favorite, Misti... and Clara is too... Aaah! Don't ask me to choose!"

"Hehe, just teasing you, bunny. Get off Clara. You are scaring her."

"Oh... Am I?"

"Mmm..."

"No... Look! I think she liked our little show."

"Get off her, Trix... Let her breathe."

"Okay, okay... But still... Look at her face."

Trixie got off me and trotted back to the couch before wrapping her arms around Misti's naked body. I couldn't believe how much alike they looked. They were the same size, same pale skin tone, same short blond haircut, and blue eyes. I could still tell them apart, but it would probably be more challenging in a low light environment.

"You... You look alike..."

"See... I told you! We turn her on."

"Stop it, Trixie! Clara, what are you doing here? How did you get in?"

"I... I don't know. Lucy asked me to deliver this box... But when I got here, it went all crazy, and they gave me this ID card."

"Aaaah! It's our work money."

Misti got rid of Trixie's arms around her and stepped off the couch to pick up my box that had tumbled nearby.

"Thank youuu!"

She then went to the small dresser in the corner of the living room and opened the box. After pulling a bunch of small brown envelopes from it, she began distributing them. Each petgirl had a personal drawer, so Misti opened them one at a time and emptied the small envelopes' content in each of them.

"Oooh, the café is doing better, I think... That's good."

"Clara! Can you show me your access card?"

"... Yes..."

I approached Trixie, who was still bouncing on the leather couch, and handed her my weird new card. She took a peek at it, and her face distorted.

"MISTI! LOOK!"

"What?... You are too far, what's on it?"

"GOLD!"

"... No way! You serious?"

"YES! AAAAH! I'M SO EXCITED!"

"..."

Gold? What did that even mean? Trixie stared at me, waiting for some sort of reaction from my part, but I was beyond clueless.

"Trixie... What does... Gold means?"

"WHAT!? You mean, you don't know!?"

"... I don't."

"YOU ARE MOVING IN WITH US!"

"..."

"Aaaah! I bet Lucy didn't even tell you! She can be sneaky like that. This is going to be so amazing!"

Misti was as happy as Trixie because she jogged back to me, which caused her little breasts to bounce around, and gave me a huge hug! Being naked around me didn't seem to bug them the slightest.

"Welcome home, Clara! Trixie is right! It's going to be so much fun with you around! Unless you try to make us do another pet pyramid."

"..."

Trixie jumped off the couch again, skipped toward me, and grabbed my hand.

"Come upstairs! We are going to celebrate this news in a comfy bed."

I resisted a little bit.

"Trixie... wait... I..."

This time I couldn't play the traumatized girl's card; the bunny girl knew a bit too much about me and my arousal state, and Misti too apparently because she grabbed my other hand.

"I agree with Trixie... Let's go to the bedroom! We will have a bit of fun, and then we will tell you all about it, Clara. Just enjoy our welcome gift."

"... but... eep!"

The two naked blonde girls dragged me upstairs, and before I knew it, my clothes were gone, and I was lying down in the middle of a big bed. Of course, as if my earlier thought was a prediction, I didn't know who was who anymore; they were too similar to tell them apart in the darkness.

I knew very well what they were doing to me, though. While one of them deep kissed me and played with my breasts, the other rubbed my thighs and licked my belly.

Everything moved way too fast for me to process anything, but somehow, I wasn't unhappy. My two friends were determined to take my mind off things by offering me a steamy sex session that they knew I desired.

If they were right and Lucy had given me an option to live here... Would it be that bad?

"Aaaaah!"

When that little wet tongue hit my crotch, it was some sort of an answer.

Chapter 14 - The Ups and Downs of Pets

"Mmmm..."

Was it morning already? Last night Trixie and Misti made love to me until very late at night, so much that we didn't even have time to talk about any of this storm of events that happened to me yesterday. It was okay because I got to play with their blonde hair to my heart content, but I still didn't have any answers to my questions.

Why did Lucy give me a key to the pethouse? Did she really want me to move in with her petgirls? Why were the commissionaires so scared of me? Would it cost me money to live here?

Still half asleep, I felt a warm presence next to me in the bed. I rolled to my side and got very close to her. I didn't want to open my eyes just yet to savor the moment. I gently dragged my finger on her face and tried to guess if it was my cute bunny or my adorable cat. Trixie and Misti looked alike out of costume, so I knew my odds to figure it out were low.

My other best option without opening my eyes was to kiss her, and see if I could find out that way. I slid an arm under her neck, brought my face closer and pressed my lips against hers. Her mouth was so soft; I quickly learned to like it.

As she slowly awoke, her tongue met mine, and we began making each other feel incredible. We quickly found a more comfortable position to make out. I guessed it could be Trixie because her thigh quickly reached my crotch to make me feel extra good; Trixie knew how to temper with my feelings that way.

For many long minutes, we made out tenderly. It was so good, but perhaps I could try to take the lead a little bit for once. Trixie had always been the one taking control and getting what she wanted out of me.

I sneakily slid under the blankets and reached her breasts with my mouth, and her reaction was immediate.

"Mmmm! Mmm!"

So far, my favorite thing when sleeping with a girl was to lick her breasts. It was so soft and comfy, and the sensitivity of the nipples made it very fun for the receiver.

She played in my hair while I had fun pleasuring her, but her impatience grew up rapidly. She carefully pushed me down, which made me smile. Trixie, the sexual bunny, always wanted more, so I wasn't surprised by her silent request.

The belly was also an incredible area of the body. It was always so warm, and if I pressed my ear on it, I could hear all the gurgles that were going on it there. Somehow, it found that very cute. My lack of physical contact in the past was likely to blame for those weird discoveries.

But she kept pushing me down because she needed something very specific this morning. Being well hidden in the dark under the blanket gave me some courage, and it was easier to keep my shyness at bay.

After raising her knees and opening her legs, I slowly visited her crotch with my tongue. I quickly understood why she was in a hurry; she was quite wet already. Her engorged clitoris was not hard to locate this time, and it felt right to suck on it.

"MMmm! Aaaah!"

Of course, she liked that. I was convinced by now that cumming was her favorite thing in the world. Because I didn't have an opportunity to have sex with people until recently, I'm sure my inexperience showed, but I thought I was doing a decent job. She squeezed my head with her legs, though; perhaps she was scared that I would pull away after getting her to the edge, something I had no intention of doing.

Still half asleep, the next few moments felt a bit like a dream to me. A lot of the questioning I usually had about doing this kind of intimate activity with another girl was absent. I didn't care if it was right or wrong, if this would impact my relationship with the petgirls, or if my family would approve of such behavior. No, I was happy and loved what I was doing. Making Trixie cum hard was something so joyful.

"Aaaaah! Mmmm! AAAAH! AAAAH! AAAAANH! NNGG! AAAH!"

And that was a powerful orgasm, which meant I succeeded in my early morning mission. But then the bedroom door opened and somebody walked in, undoubtedly attracted by the call of the wild; Misti was probably getting jealous and wanted her share of the fun.

"Geez, Asha! Could you be louder?"

'Aaah! Aaah! S... Sorry! It's... It's Clara... she.... aaah!"

"..."

Those voices... They were not... Misti or Trixie...

I rapidly crawled up on top of the body I had just pleased and ended up face to face with Asha, the beautiful Indian looking girl.

"Mmm! Clara! That was sooo good. Thanks so much! You are a bold one!"

"..."

Before I could even react, Asha wrapped her arms around my neck and pulled me into a deep, wonderful kiss.

"Mmm!"

Then the other person quickly climbed on the bed and laid down next to us. I didn't know that person, like, at all. She was also naked, holding a piece of toast between her lips.

Finally, Asha broke the kiss, allowing me to sit back on her hips.

"A... Asha? You... You are not Trixie!"

"Hee... No... Not quite. What? Don't tell me you thought I was Trixie!?"

"... Y...Yes..."

"Hahaha! Ah, well, I'm glad you made that mistake. That was amazing!"

My face turned beet red, as it too often did. It wasn't Asha's fault, she visibly knew who I was when I woke her up, but I didn't even notice the difference because I thought it was a brilliant idea to keep my eyes closed not to break the dream.

Next to her was a super pretty Asian girl, and she looked at me with a smile.

"Hi Clara..."

"... Hi."

"Hehe, you do know who I am, do you?"

"..."

A quick calculation in my head was necessary at this point. I knew what Trixie, Vix, Misti, and Asha looked like, so I counted on my fingers the remaining pets. She could only be Meeka, Oreo, or Accalia. It was so hard... I had no idea which pet she could be.

"Aaah, so cute. She counted on her fingers. That's adorable. Come on, Clara. Try to guess!"

"... Oreo?"

"God, no!"

I wished I had looked at the pet schedule at the café earlier this week.

"Meeka?"

"Nope!"

"Accalia?"

"Nope!"

Now I was confused... There could only be another option left that I could think of.

"... Apricot?"

"Nope!"

"..."

"Hahaha... I'm just pulling your leg. I'm Accalia. Here, take a bite."

Accalia placed her half-eaten toast in my open mouth, asking me to chew on it. It was so weird; the mental image I had of Accalia was so different from who was in front of me. I never thought she would be a cute Asian girl with a North American accent.

Asha wrapped her soft hands around my waist and brought up a good topic.

"So, Clara, I take it that Trixie and Misti didn't tell you they were going back to work early this morning? Accalia and I finished our shift when they showed up at the café."

"No... we... were busy."

"Haha... We know what that means. So, anyway, when we got here, Acky and I found you deep asleep on the bed, so I decided to nap with you... Best decision ever!"

"..."

"Did they tell you what your Gold ID card means?"

"They said Lucy allowed me to move here."

"Yeah, that's right. It's my fault, actually. When I was at your place, you were pretty distressed about your rent increase. So I talked to Lucy about it, and she decided to do this for you. Of course, instead of telling you directly, she put you in a weird situation. That's Lucy for you!"

"But... What does it mean? I don't understand the pethouse. How... How can you live here? It's so luxurious."

Visibly, I was upset by all those secrets, so Asha and Accalia made me sit in a pile of pillows between them. Perhaps, this time, I could get some answers. This mystery was getting a bit too intense for me to handle.

"The short answer is that we don't know. Trixie and Vix apparently know all about it, but not us. That said, we've been around for a while, and there is no trickery or anything like that. Lucy just doesn't want us to know the full story, and that is her choice."

"But... Why was the commissionaire so scared of me?"

"Haha. Well, I don't know what you did to them. Usually, they are plainly ignoring us. We suspect someone told them to leave us alone. Lucy is asking us not to bug them either."

"Do... Do you... pay a rent?"

"Nope... All free. I think you should accept Lucy's offer and move here. You are lucky that she likes you that much. Usually, only her pets are allowed to live here."

"Does... Does Lucy want me to become her pet?"

"Mmm... Good question. Honestly, I doubt it. I think she just appreciates your help with the café and trusts you to take care of us. It's a lot of work for a person alone, you know. From what I saw so far, she is using you as a swiss army knife. But anyway, she would never ask you to do something you don't want to do. She is not like that."

This wasn't answering all my questions, but what Asha explained calmed down my worry monster. She made it sound as though there were no evil plans behind all of this, only a secret around this place that needed to be respected. Overall, it felt more like Lucy didn't want us to worry about anything.

"So, do you want to move in with us? You'll save all that rent money, plus you'll be very close to the Cakes & Pets. What do you say?"

"I... I can't pay my rent anymore. I don't want to move away from the café. You are my friends... You are very important to me."

"Aaww... So? Is that a yes?"

"..."

"Aaah, come on, Clara! Say yes!"

Both Asha and Accalia got closer to my face, surrounding me with their naked bodies. They looked so friendly out of suit, I really didn't think they were trying to trick me. So...

"Yes... I'll move in."

"YAAAY! CLARA!"

"SUPER! It's going to be so fun!"

I got hugged from both sides at the same time and even received some free kisses too.

Unfortunately, it was time for me to head to work before it was too late. They showed me where the shower was, and Asha let me borrow a fresh pair underwear. Shortly after that, I was sitting on the bus, heading to work.

Even though I wasn't looking forward to packing random items all day long, I was actually happy today. I couldn't stop thinking about what it would be like to live without rent.



"No, Vix... The other box. Not that one."

After work, I briefly dropped by the café to tell Lucy about my decision. No matter what, I had to move out of my apartment. So what did I have to lose? Nothing! If everything went according to plan, I would be allowed to live with all my friends in a big luxurious penthouse. And if something went wrong for whatever reason, I would just have to find a place to stay out of town and be very sad. The first option was worth a try.

I had accepted what the petgirls had asked from me, not to bug Lucy about the pethouse or whatever mystery that surrounded it. The right thing to do after she offered me such an amazing lifeline was to respect her privacy. What would be the point of antagonizing her about something she was not willing to share. Perhaps one day I would get some answers, but at the moment, it was just better to own my decision and prepare my move.

I stayed only for a short time to have a coffee and a cake and confirm with Lucy that all was good. She seemed happy for me and even allowed me to bring a pet back home for the night. Of course, I picked Vix.

The small fox and I walked arm in arm back to my place and I decided to start packing right away.

"Viiix! It's a book... You can't put it in this box."

The poor rubber fox had a novel between her two cushy paws and looked at me, probably feeling useless. I didn't know if she ever moved before, but she had no organization skills whatsoever.

Lucy had asked me to follow a few rules if I wanted to live in the pethouse. First, I wouldn't be allowed to bring any furniture. She said there was enough there already for everybody to be comfortable. I liked that because all mines were second hand and in pretty rough shape; I wouldn't miss that flimsy bookshelf or my old squeaky bed frame.

Another rule was that I needed to leave behind all utility items, like dishes, glasses, cutlery, pots, and pans. Again, I was more than happy to oblige because everything at the pethouse was way better than what I had; I wasn't even sure I had two forks of the same shape.

Overall, I would simply bring my clothes, toiletries, and some of my books if I wanted to. Lucy said that, for now, I could store everything else in the basement at the Café. She told me that I shouldn't get rid of anything in case I changed my mind. Her intention was not to strip me of everything I owned, it was merely to keep the penthouse in order.

Not having a lot of stuff made is easy to pack. Tonight I would spend the night with Vix, and tomorrow morning, we would go to the café to drop a few things. Next week, I would rent a small van for the furniture; Lucy said Misti would help me with that because she was the only pet with a driving license; no wonder Lucy picked her to run her errands all the time.

"Okay, Vix. That's enough for today. Let's go to bed. I'm drained."

The small fox girl trotted to me and wrapped her arms around my waist.

"Aww. You are always so cute. Are you happy that I'm moving to your place?"

Vix nodded.

"... Am... Am I going to regret it?"

Vix shook her head, no.

"It... It is a bit scary... I never lived with other people before."

The small fox pulled me to the bedroom and tried to take off my clothes. Her paws were useless, but she still pretended to help while I was doing all the work. Soon enough, I was naked and flipped the light switch off.

Vix and I crawled under the blanket for some cuddling time. As much as I had appreciated my non-latex evening with Trixie and Misti and my unexpected morning with Asha and Accalia, it would never be enough for me to walk away from my cute rubber animals.

The feeling of having a warm latex covered petgirl near me was just the best. Vix nuzzled my neck, and I could faintly hear her breathing through her ear holes.

One of the main reasons why I decided to visit the café in the first place was that latex suits had always attracted me. It was some sort of dream that I had caressed secretly, but considering buying one had never come close to be a thought because of my meager income.

I was so lucky that Lucy trusted me enough to let me wear a pet suit from time to time. Okay, it was not as if I had a word to say about that, but still. She knew I liked it and was undoubtedly aware that it made me very happy.

Being naked in bed with a rubber pet was a constant moment of bliss, particularly with Vix. Trixie seriously made me discover how sex could be enjoyable, but it was not something I was in a hurry to do with every single pets. The fox girl was so adorable and cuddly as is, and I didn't need to go farther than this with her to appreciate the moment.

Since I saw her out of her suit at the pethouse, it was clear that she became one of my best friends and that she was a bit different from the others; we seemed to have similar personalities. I didn't know how old the pets were, but I felt that Vix might have been a bit younger, and perhaps she was carrying a heavier past. The way she was trying to hide her face scars around me might have had something to do with it.

But tonight, she was here with me, in my arms as a pet, seeking affection before falling asleep, not having to hide her scars from me. Her latex suit provided her with these few millimeters separating her from the harsh reality of real life.

"I love you so much, Vix!"

Vix rolled over me and hugged me tightly.



"Is it too heavy?"

Vix shook her head, no.

"We are almost there. Hang on, Vix."

In the morning, Vix and I headed back to the café, transporting some of my things for storage. I strapped a small backpack to her back and made her carry a box that was not too heavy. On my side, I was pulling a suitcase on wheels and a couple of grocery bags containing random items.

As usual, walking down the street with a cute rubber petgirl at my side attracted attention, but I didn't care anymore. Before, I was always freaking out, worried about what people would think of me, but that was the old me. First, the attention was on THEM and not on me. Second, I kind of understood that people were like fish, and after thirty seconds of excitement, they forgot what they had seen and resumed their business.

This time, the only reason I wanted to get to the café quicker was because my suitcase was too heavy.

Despite my tired arm and my worries about overtaxing the small fox, we made it in one piece. Lucy held the café's door open while we walked in.

"Good morning, Clara! Is that all you are bringing today?"

"Yes... But it's heavy."

"I see that... you are struggling. Alright, go put that in the basement, then maybe you can help me feed the pets?"

"Yes... I have time."

One item at the time, I made small trips to the unfinished basement and stacked my belongings in a corner. There was nothing special down here; a big furnace, a water heater, and an electric panel. There were some spare tables for the lounge and some extra seats as well. It still gave me the creeps a little bit; it was definitely not a place where Lucy would keep a secret pet; at least, I hoped not.

I hurried and climbed back up the stairs, hoping that not too many spiders would colonize my stuff while it sat down here.

"Clara, come here. I'm in the kitchen."

"Yes!"

Lucy prepared me a tray with some squeeze bottles of food and water. I looked at the labels to figure out which pets I would have to feed; Misti and Trixie. Lucy was going to feed Oreo, Vix, and Meeka.

We grabbed our respective trays and headed to the lounge. Lucy entered first but quickly stropped in her tracks, causing me to bump into her and almost drop my bottles.

"MISTI!? WHAT HAVE YOU DONE!?"

"..."

Uh oh, that didn't sound good. I didn't know what was going on, but for Lucy to raise her voice like that, it must have been very bad.

I walked around Lucy; she had a hand over her mouth with a fixated stare on Misti... And then I understood.

Misti, the black cat petgirl, was standing in front of us, staring at us with her big black eyes, and between her cushy paws, her tail, detached from her body and dangling as if she was holding a dead snake.

"Okay! That is NOT funny! Do you know how MUCH those suits cost?"

She turned around and tried to point at Trixie, who was hiding behind a booth, clearly feeling guilty about something, but Lucy didn't buy it.

"Stop it, Misti! YOU are responsible for your suit! How many times have I repeated to you that you had to make sure your tail was not caught in something before running around?"

"..."

"Don't try to blame your friends, young one. Clara, put your tray over there. Go upstairs and help Misti out of her suit. I can't believe it. I'm already short on pets, and now that they are back, I'm losing one again. I'm really not happy!"

Misti lowered her head and slowly walked to me until her forehead bumped onto my chest. I wrapped my arms around her shoulders to console her.

"It's... it's okay, Misti..."

"CLARA! Stop that right now. It's NOT okay! Go take her suit off. I'll feed the pets and meet you upstairs after. I can't believe this!"

"... S... Sorry. Come, Misti."

Lucy was very angry, and I thought she had the right to be. Beautiful costumes like these were precious and probably very costly. If Misti had indeed been warned to be careful repeatedly, and that she kept ignoring the advice, I could understand why this incident had infuriated Lucy.

I grabbed Misti's wrist and led her out of the lounge. We slowly went up the stairs and to the changing room. I retrieved the black cat keychain from the keyholder and approached Misti with it.

"Turn around, Misti. If I don't take your costume off, Lucy will be even angrier."

The small cat sighed and spun on herself, presenting her neck to me. With one turn of the key, the little metal lock came off. I grabbed a few wet towels and began to unzip her suit, exposing her ghostly white skin that was contrasting with the black latex; it was almost blinding.

Then I unzipped behind her head and pushed her mask forward. The first thing to come out was her nose tube, which was why I had to be quick with the wet towel, and finally, the mouthpiece popped out, allowing her to cry out loud her misery for the first time.

"Waaaah!"

"... M... Misti... don't... don't cry!"

"Bwaaah! I didn't mean to break it! Lucy hates me now!"

"Nooo... She... She is just angry. She doesn't hate you."

I turned her around and pulled her to me. I had never seen a pet so distressed since I visited the café. Misti felt very guilty, and the thought of Lucy hating her was unbearable.

"She... She will kick me out now! Bwaaah!"

"... I'm sure she won't."

"She will make me pay for the suit. But... But I can't pay!"

"... I... I don't know."

"I... I don't want to leave the café! They are my only friends."

Now that she said that, I fully understood why she was so scared. My only friends were here at the café too. When my landlord increased my rent, it was exactly how I felt. I thought my world burned to ashes; it was so painful.

When this happened to me, Lucy saved me by offering me to move in the pethouse; it was a very generous gesture. In my opinion, Misti had nothing to fear; Lucy wouldn't kick her out on a

whim just because she ripped her tail off. It would be inconceivable. So I placed my two hands on Misti's shoulders as she was sobbing.

"Misti! She won't ask you to leave!"

"... You... you really think so?"

"Yes... She loves you. All your friends love you."

"... aaah! Clara! You are so nice. I... I'm sorry... I just feel so bad."

"It's okay... It's going to be fine. Give me your paws. We need to take your suit off. We better listen to Lucy, okay?"

A few minutes later, I wrapped Misti in a warm blanket and cleaned her face some more before combing her short blonde hair. All we had to do was to wait for Lucy to show up and then, who knows.

Misti wouldn't get evicted, that was my conviction, but Lucy would certainly be capable of finding a twisted punishment fitting the crime. The question was...

What would it be?

Chapter 15 - The Creation of Pets

Just as Misti finished dressing up as a human, Lucy entered the changing room, not looking too happy. Immediately, Misti restarted sobbing of terror. No matter how reassuring I tried to be, it was useless; the poor girl had convinced herself that Lucy would make her pay for the broken costume and kick her out of the pethouse. It was irrational at best, but I understood why she was reacting this way; similar to me, her friends were her whole universe.

Lucy didn't say a word at first. She grabbed the damaged black cat costume, folded it carefully, and placed it in a box along with the detached tail. We watched her going to her desk to write something on a piece of paper. After folding the note in half and placing it into the box, she sealed it using some clear tape.

She then retrieved one of her Cakes & Pets business cards and wrote something on its back before handing it over to Misti.

"I want you to go to this address and explain what you have done to the person who lives there. Bring the box with you."

"..."

"Don't make that face, Misti. You didn't want to listen to me when I asked you to act responsibly while wearing the costume, well, now you don't have a choice. Go now. I have to take care of the café."

"But... Lucy..."

"No buts. You come back here after. End of discussion."

Lucy turned heels and went back to her business, leaving Misti in a distressed state.

"Bwaaah! She hates meee!"

"Misti! No! She is just a bit angry."

"But... I don't know that place! I don't know who lives there!"

"..."

I really didn't know what to tell her. She was scared and very sad. Not only having made Lucy angry felt awful, but on top of that, an onerous burden landed on her shoulders; going to a stranger's place to possibly have her costume repaired.

My hugs were not powerful enough to stop her from sobbing.

"Misti... I'll go... with you."

"... What? No, Clara... You have to go to work."

"I... I'll take a day off."

"But, you won't get paid if you do that."

"I know. But I won't have rent anymore. I'll be okay."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes. I want to help you."

"Haaa! Clara! Why are you always so nice!?"

What I hoped happened; her cries stopped, and her smile came back, at least for now. When something terrible happened to me, I always went to the café to feel better. Being supported by Lucy and the pets had always been the only thing that cheered me up. Not feeling alone while facing a distressing event was priceless, and this is why I made up my mind; I would risk angering my boss to help my friend.

Misti and I exited the café, and then I called work to leave a message; at least I didn't have to explain myself to anybody directly, but the boss sure wouldn't be impressed. I still hoped it wouldn't get me too much in trouble. That was not something I would have tried if I had not already told my landlord that I was moving out; my leash didn't feel as tight anymore.

While Misti carried her box, I looked up the address Lucy gave her.

"Oh... That's very far."

"How far?"

"Close to an hour and a half. Look."

I showed Misti my phone, and she whined at the incredibly long bus ride awaiting us.

"That is at the other end of town in the suburbs... It's so faaar!"

"It's okay, Misti. We can make it."

"Yeah, at least you are coming with me. Thanks so much again!"

Misti didn't have a bus pass like I did, so we dropped by the convenience store to buy her some tickets; of course, I had to buy them for her because she did not need money while working at the café; her pockets were empty. Right after that, we headed to the nearest bus stop.

Our first ride was not fun, it was crowded and smelly. Protecting the most precious object in her life, Misti had her arms tightly wrapped around her box, pressing it to her chest. If someone were to take it away from her, she would probably die of despair.

Thirty minutes later, we transferred to another line. This time we were able to sit and chat a little.

"So, Clara, I wanted to ask... When you came to the pethouse, and you saw me having fun with Trixie. How did you feel?"

"I... I don't know."

"Were you jealous?"

"Jealous?"

"Yes. I know you like Trixie a lot. And, well... I was kind of having sex with her."

"I don't know. I don't think so. I like Trixie, but I know she likes you too."

"So, what did you think, then, when you saw us on the couch?"

My face turned all red at that point. Misti was asking me questions about things I usually didn't discuss, and it was definitely embarrassing. I wanted to answer the truth but needed to find the right way to describe my feelings to her.

"Poor Clara. Why are you so shy? Tell me!"

"I... I liked it."

"What?"

"When... you played in her hair. It made me feel good."

"Haha. What do you mean? When I was playing in Trixie's hair, it turned you on?"

"... Yes."

"Really? That's hilarious. How come?"

"I don't know... Trixie's hair is so soft... yours too. Mine isn't like that."

"Trixie and I have the exact same hair type. It's a coincidence, but we decided to get the same haircut for fun last month. That's why we look so alike. Hey, why don't we dye your hair at some point? Let's die it blonde like ours and get you the same haircut. I think it would look great on you. And Trixie would lose her shit."

"..."

That was an odd proposition. Trixie and Misti got the same haircut for fun, and now she wanted me to do the same. I couldn't help it but feel fuzzy inside at the thought of changing my hair. I never had the money to do such a crazy thing but always wanted to. If I had no rent to pay, perhaps it was something I could entertain.

"Maybe... I'll think about it."

"Yay! We are going to turn you into a cute blonde!"

"... I didn't... say yes."

"You didn't say no either! So, where are we now?"

"Another ten minutes, and then we will transfer again."

As I looked at my map on my phone, Misti leaned her head against mine. She didn't do it on purpose, but her soft hair brushed on my cheek, sending a little shiver down my spine. Why did her hair turn me on so much?



It took another forty-five minutes for us to arrive at our final destination. I was not familiar with this kind of rich suburban area. It felt all weird to see those big houses that so many people could afford. My tiny apartment downtown felt even smaller all of a sudden; perhaps I had been insane for living in it for so long.

As the bus moved away from behind us, Misti and I stood side by side on the walkway, her holding the box and me tapping on my phone.

"So, where are we going now?"

"It's a five minutes walk... It's this street over there."

"Okay, let's go then."

I knew something was wrong with Misti. She played it cool until now, but knowing that she would have to do what Lucy had asked her earlier, explaining to a stranger what she had done to her costume, it was scaring her to death. If she had not been carrying that box, her hand would probably have held mine.

The more we approached our destination, the bigger the houses were getting, and the more intimidated we got.

"Misti... It's this one on the corner. 379."

"Of course, it had to be the biggest one with the giant garage."

"I don't know. Maybe it's going to be... fun?"

"Clara! You are not very good at cheering me up."

"S... sorry."

"... but, thank you!"

Misti kissed me on the cheek before heading to the front door. Not wanting to be on the front line, I stayed a few steps behind her. Holding the box on top of her knee, Misti reached the bell with her small finger. And then the excruciating wait began.

The door cracked open. I was in the wrong angle to see who had answered, but a feminine voice greeted Misti.

"Yes?"

"Hi... Hum... I... I was told to come here and..."

"Misti?"

"... How... How do you know my name?"

"Lucy called me earlier. She said you'd drop by. Please, come in."

"Oh... okay. But, I brought a friend with me. Is it okay if she comes in too?"

"Of course."

Her voice sounded so lovely, and it was such a relief to know that Lucy had at least warned her about our arrival; it was a load of pressure off our shoulders.

But then the door swung open fully, revealing who owned the voice. The lady must have been the most naturally beautiful person I had ever seen. The petgirls at the café were a bunch of cuties so far, but this was something else. However, I wasn't sure if that was the most shocking thing about our host. She was wearing this incredible green maid uniform, which was pretty much the last thing Misti and I could have expected, yet, it started to make sense.

We stepped inside the house, and she led us to the kitchen area before finally introducing herself.

"My name is Elizabeth. So I know you are Misti, but you are...?"

"Clara."

"Nice meeting you. So, what can I do for you?"

"Oh? Lucy didn't tell you?"

"No, but I have an idea of what it could be."

And that was the embarrassing part for Misti.

"Well... I have this... box. It's... It's my costume. I... I think I have to... give it to you."

"Okay? And..."

Now Misti was really looking at the floor while twisting her foot left and right.

"Well... So, I was... I was playing with a friend... and... I... I ripped the tail off... And... Lucy was furious. It... It was an accident."

Once more, Misti's lower lip started to shake uncontrollably, so I rushed to rub her back.

"Oh, that's too bad. Can I take a look?"

"Y... yes. Here."

Elizabeth, not disturbed the slightest by the pet tale she had heard, grabbed the box and placed it on the kitchen island. She pulled a pair of scissors from one of the drawers and cut the tape that sealed the brown box. After opening the flaps, she reached in to pick up the note that Lucy had put in it before we left the café.

Her beautiful blue eyes moved side to side quickly. Elizabeth also had short blonde hair, which felt a bit too coincidental after the discussion I had with Misti on the bus. Perhaps it was the universe that tried to send me a message.

"Alright. I will go to my workshop to inspect the damage. You can stay here in the living room, or you can relax outside next to the pool. I'll get back to you in a moment.

"Okay. T... Thank you."

The maid left the kitchen, carrying the box under her arm, leaving me alone with Misti in this luxurious house. I smiled at her.

"See, Misti. Everything is good."

"I don't know... She didn't say much but... SHE IS SO PRETTY!"

"Shhh! Shhh! Don't say that out loud!"

"But, Clara. She is so beautiful."

"... I know... But now is not the time. Let's go sit in the living room and wait."

We turned around toward the living room, and we both had the same reaction when we saw what was in the corner. Misti voiced her thoughts first.

"Why is there a big pink crate in the living room?"

"I... I don't know. Maybe Elizabeth owns a big dog?"

"Oh, no! Clara... I'm terrified of dogs."

"Mmm... Dogs don't scare me."

"Is... is there one inside?"

"I don't know... I'll go check."

"Clara! No! What if it bites you?"

That was news to me. It was kind of funny that Misty the cat was scared of dogs, but I would not make that joke here. I just wanted to see if there actually was one in it.

I carefully approached the pink wooden crate. Only the top half of the door was made of bars, so it was quite dark inside, preventing me from seeing well if there was an occupant or not.

"So, Clara... Is there a big dog in it?"

"I don't know... I don't see anything. If there is a dog, it's a quiet one. I'll open it."

"NO! Clara! Please! I'm scared!"

"I just want to take a quick look..."

There were two metal latches that I flipped open, and then I slowly pulled on the door.

It was empty... but... I could recognize this smell anywhere. There was no doubt in my mind that the crate smelled like my petgirls from the café. Rubber... And more caught my attention... The floor was cushioned, and there was a heart-shaped pillow in the far corner.

"Claraaa..."

"There is no dog in it."

"Aaaah... Feeew!"

"Come see this, Misti..."

"Uh? See what? I don't think we should be nosing around."

Reassured that she wouldn't get feasted on by a large canine, Misti approached and crouched next to me to look inside the crate. I couldn't help but share my twisted theory.

"Misti... Do... Do you think this box is for..."

"Hey, I thought I heard something weird!"

"AAAH!"

"Eeeeaah!"

Just as I was going to explain my idea, a tiny voice from behind caught us snooping. Misti tumbled down on the floor, and I tried to close the crate door at the same time that I was stepping away from it.

"Haha! Relax! Who're you?"

"I'm... I'm..."

Having a communication disorder didn't mix well with panic. I couldn't utter a word. In front of us was a small Asian girl with long black hair. She was smiling from ear to ear, but it was clear that I was trespassing and that I got caught in the act. My body couldn't take it; good thing Misti was more social than I was and took the relay.

"This is Clara, I'm Misti... We are sorry. We thought there was a dog in the crate."

"Haha. No, there is no dog here. Are you Syr's friends?"

"Syr? No, we were here to give a cos... a... something to Elizabeth."

"Oh, okay. I see. Where is she?"

"In her workshop, she said. She told us to wait here."

"Okay, thanks!"

Without another word, the unknown Asian girl turned around and trotted away happily, leaving Misti and I perplex.

Not pushing our luck anymore, we rushed to the couch, sat on it, and stayed still. The last thing we wanted was to cause more trouble than we were already in. Yet, Misti leaned toward me and whispered in my ears.

"I think that crate is for a human. Not a dog."

"... It... It smelled like... latex."

"Really!? Do... do you think this small Asian girl is Elizabeth's pet?"

"I... I don't know, Misti. I think we shouldn't think about that right now."

"Oh, I can't do that! Imagining this small Asian girl having sex with Elizabeth! It's so hot!"

Why was I not surprised? Trixie and Misti were two pervs, so, of course, she would think about things like that, and it was contagious. Her warm breathe brushing on my ear, combined with the erotic scenario she had described, made me feel funny in my lower belly. And she added oil to the fire...

"Clara... I'm a bit turned on right now."

"Mistiii! Stop! This is not the time..."

"Mmm... Maybe if you kiss me, it will calm me down..."

"Nooo! Stop!"

"They are not around... just a little kiss... Please..."

"Mistiii!"

I had no backbone; Misti moved even closer and grabbed my wrist to make sure I wouldn't interfere, and her lips touched mine... oil to the fire.

Whenever I kissed a girl, I couldn't think straight anymore, and time slowed to a crawl. Misti got me. Before I knew it, her tongue caressed mine, and I was as helpless as a bird soothed by its cage cover.

And then, her hand crawled up to my breast and started massaging it. I may have moaned a little when she did that.

"Hey, are you having sex?"

"AAAAH!"

"Eeaaah!"

It was a nightmare! The Asian girl was back, so soon, and startled us. We didn't even hear her coming back. It was so ridiculous that my throat clamped shut, so, once more, the onus was on Misti to explain what we were doing just now.

"N... No... we... we are just friends."

"Uh? Friends are fondling each other's breasts?"

I wanted to die. Misti was just making it worse.

"No... No... I mean... yes. We... we are just co-workers. Okay?"

"Oh? Where are you working?"

Misti was just making it worse.

"Mmm... I... I don't know..."

"You don't know where you work?"

"I mean, yes... We work at a... café..."

Misti was just making it worse.

"A café? That sounds cool? Maybe I could go check it out one day?"

"NO! I mean...yes...I mean...maybe..."

Misti was just making it worse.

"You two are so strange. So, Elizabeth said I couldn't get in her workshop right now. She also said I couldn't offer you drinks or snacks because it's bad for her business."

"It's... It's okay... We are good."

Then a familiar voice saved us from this strange girl. Elizabeth showed up as she needed Misti for something.

"Aaah, Kitty! Leave them alone, would you! Misti, would you come with me to the workshop for a moment. I need you for something."

"Oh... Sure. You want to come, Clara?"

"No, just you, Misti. My workshop is rather private."

"Okay. Sorry, Clara. I'll be back in a sec."

"..."

Nooo! She couldn't leave me behind with the inquisitive Asian woman. And did Elizabeth just call her Kitty? There was no way I could survive this encounter without Misti at my side.

I was now alone in the living room with that stranger who restarted probing me.

"So, you work at a café?"

"... I... don't..."

"What? But your friend said you were co-workers?"

"..."

"What do you do, then?"

"I'm... packing items."

"Packing items?"

On the verge of hyperventilating, I had to navigate through the lies that Misti had weaved before abandoning me. I wanted this girl to stop asking questions and walk away, but it was not something I could possibly ask her to do; it wasn't her fault, and I couldn't be that rude.

Facing my inability to answer, she bounced from her couch to mine, and before I could even react, she was sitting at my side, trying to read my mind.

"You don't like to talk... Right?"

"... I... I have... a communication... disorder..."

"... Really?"

"... Yes..."

"No. I don't think you do."

"..."

What was that about? She didn't even know me and she was trying to assess my condition already?

"I heard you talking to your friend earlier. You were talking just fine. I just think something is bugging you and that's why talking is not easy for you. It's okay. I was pretty much like you before. Things weren't going very well for me, but then recently, I made some new friends, and it gave me tons of confidence. Now I'm talking all the time!"

"O... okay."

Could she be right?

"So, are you here to get uniforms for your café? Elizabeth makes costumes for a living, but she doesn't want me to know what you guys are here for?"

"Y... yes... uniforms."

At this moment, I thought it was a good idea to run with her flawed suggestion. In restaurants and coffee shops, waitresses often had work uniforms, and there was nothing weird about that. Perhaps if I were making it sound like it was a boring place, she wouldn't dig deeper and find out that they were latex pet costumes.

"Are they cute?"

"...Yes."

"Are they maid uniforms?"

"...No!"

"Hehe. Okay. Because Elizabeth LOVES maid uniforms. She always wears one. So, what kind of café is it then?"

Why did she have to ask that? If I didn't answer, it would look suspicious, and telling her the truth would be too embarrassing. I was stuck. Perhaps the best way to survive this would be to tell her a truth devoid of meanings.

"It's... an animal café..."

"AN ANIMAL CAFÉ? Sooo cool! Nobody told me there was one around here."

"It's... It's very far from here."

"What kind of animals are there?"

Oh crap!

"Mmm... Cats..."

"Meow! I looove cats! What else?"

Now I've done it. Misti wasn't the only one who could make it worse.

"..."

"Come on! I want to know!"

"We... we have a raccoon..."

"No way! Seriously?"

"Yes... and a bunny."

"Nice! And we can pet them?"

"Yes... they are... very cute."

Please! Please! Misti, come back and save me!

"Do they climb on you to cuddle while you are eating?"

"Yes... all the time."

"That's so awesome. I MUST go there! What is the name of your café?"

Oh no! Dead. Just dead. Contrary to my belief that I was sneakily zigzagging my way out of trouble, I had cornered myself nicely instead.

"..."

"... You don't want to tell me?"

Just as I was about to start crying, Misti and Elizabeth entered the living room, rescuing me from this nightmare.

"Kitty, I said not to bug my clients. Go put your swimsuit on, instead. It's time for your swimming lesson."

"Aaaah! Fiiine!"

Without insisting any longer, Kitty walked away and headed to the basement, which allowed my heart rate to go down a bit.

Elizabeth gave Misti a box along with some instructions.

"Sorry about her. She can be a bit intense. So, as I said, I cannot fix your costume today. It's going to take a bit of time. This box contains the new costume Lucy had ordered a while ago. I finished it earlier this week. It's your size, so maybe she will let you use it until then. Please don't open it. Lucy needs to inspect it first. Once it is worn, the sale is final."

"We won't. Thank you."

"Misti, it's not my place to say this, but I would appreciate it if you were more careful about your costumes from now on. It's not because I sell them that I don't care about them anymore. I spend countless hours on these, and it makes me feel sad when they get damaged."

"Sorry... Yes... I understand. I will be extra careful from now on. I learned my lesson."

"Thank you. At least it is nothing I can't repair. Your costume will be like new in a week or so. "

It had been such a strange day so far, but it ended on a somewhat good note. Misti had realized how important those costumes were for more people than just Lucy and her, so she would be more careful in the future. It was probably the lesson Lucy had hoped to teach her by sending her over here.

In my case, I got to spend a long day with my new friend and learned a bit more about her out of costume personality.

Sure, our unexpected encounter with Kitty had not been very easy, and I hoped that I had not sent her on a path of further investigation. If she were to show up at the café expecting to see small furry critters, she would be in for quite a shock...or not; there was still this latex-smelling crate mystery that we were not sure what to think of.

As we walked out of the house and headed to the bus stop, Misti seemed happy. Squeezing her precious box in her arms, I could tell she was curious about what it could contain.

"What do you think it is, Clara?"

"In the box? I don't know."

"Do you think it's another cat?"

"Lucy already has three cats."

"I know... but I think it would be nice to have one more. Maybe it will be yours, Clara?"

"..."

"Yeah... I'm sure it will be yours..."

I stopped walking, but Misti just continued... Was she serious, or was she just teasing me?

"Hey!... Wait up, Misti!... Don't say things like that!"

“Haha! Claraaa will be a cuuute caaat!”

Looking back at me with her big smile and her short blond hair hiding one of her eyes, she jogged away, giggling.

"Mistiii! Stop teasing me!... Wait for me!"

Chapter 16 - The Pain of Pets

I was sitting on the floor, my back against the wall while holding Oreo in my arms, both of us waiting to see what her best friend, Misti, would look like.

After our round trip to the suburbs and meeting Elizabeth, the artist who had created all the pet costumes, we returned to the café. As soon as we gave the box containing the new mystery suit to Lucy, she had asked me to keep an eye on her pets while she went upstairs with Misti. There was no doubt about it; not only these two had to discuss the lessons learned, and Misti would wear the brand new costume that none of us knew nothing about.

I explained what was going on to Oreo, Trixie, Meeka, and Vix, and now we were all looking forward to finding out what kind of animal would cross the lounge door in an instant. Asha and Accalia, who were not at the café today, would undoubtedly be pissed for having missed that reveal.

My understanding was that Misti would only wear this new costume temporarily until Elizabeth repaired her black catsuit. From what we've been told, it would take at least a week. So this situation was inclined toward a good question.

Once Misti got her black cat costume back, who was supposed to wear the new one? Me? I didn't think so. As Asha had told me, Lucy liked to use me as a swiss army knife. I didn't think she had any interest in turning me into a permanent pet, and on top of that, I didn't think I wanted to be one full time either. It was occasionally fun to help out, but I didn't have the profile to be a pet as good as the others.

I squeezed Oreo in my arms some more due to my febrility. For some reason, I never spent a lot of time with her in the past. She was an adorable black and white cat, and her black eye patch was just sweet. Outside her latex color, her mask was identical to Misti's.

Oreo was often the one ending up with a red collar around her neck, which meant she was either punished or needed rest. For some reason, she seemed the troublemaker of the group. Trixie also caused a lot of trouble, but she always seemed to find ways to get away with it.

But right now, Oreo was cuddly and calm even though she certainly would want to play with Misti as soon as she got back. Meanwhile, Vix was lying on top of Asha and Trixie, who quietly petted her.

And then, it happened. The loud door handle's noise startled all the pets, showing how alert they all were despite how quiet they were only a moment ago.

Oreo jumped off me and rushed to Lucy, and so did the three other pets. That was the meaning of my earlier thought when I said I didn't have the profile to be a good pet; I wasn't as spontaneous and naturally excited as them. Maybe if I were wearing a giant sloth costume it would fit my personality better... but still.

Right off the bat, Lucy scolded her pets, telling them to stand back before she let Misti in.

"Shoo! Shoo! Don't stand so close else you won't even be able to see anything. Come on, all of you, step back!"

Only half-listening, the petgirls walked back a bit, but they were still jumping in place.

"Alright, everybody. Let me introduce you to the new Misti!"

A small animal that we had never seen before shyly walked around Lucy and stepped in the lounge for us to admire. This must have been the loudest I ever been in my life, but I just had to let it out.

"... A CHEETAH! Awww..."

How incredibly adorable. It was another big cat like Asha. Her latex skin was of a beautiful tan color fading on a white chest and under-chin. A million little black spots covered her, and her face markings were just incredible. If she had been walking on her four, she would have looked like a real one; it was mind-blowing.

The other petgirls were probably in awe in the face of this new pet portrayed by Misti. Under normal circumstances, they would have jumped on her like a bunch of savages, but instead, they approached her slowly, carefully touching her with their paws. I could tell that they were in total admiration with the new costume, and for a solid reason, Elizabeth had created the most beautiful pet girl costume so far.

The next half hour has been really fun; Lucy and I helped Misti find the most cheetah-like poses, and she was very good at it. Her cat experience showed, but she was doing some new things that I had never seen her do before. We compared her sitting posture with cheetah pictures from the internet, and once corrected, we made Oreo the cat sit next to her to compare. I couldn't get over how real she looked.

After our fun, Lucy and I let Misti play with her friends while we were having a coffee. They all knew she was the same girl inside, but there was a sense of attractive novelty in the air.

"Lucy, I love the cheetah costume."

"It's amazing, yes. It's so much better than the picture Elizabeth had sent me. She is so talented."

"Why... Why did you... buy a new costume?"

"Hehe... Oh? Do you want to know if it was for you?"

"..."

"No, Clara. Don't worry. It's not for you. As you know, Apricot left not long ago, so I can't really use more than five pets at a time while two are resting. It's a bit too much to my liking. I know you can help from time to time, but I don't think you'd have something to gain in doing that full time as they do. You are more MY backup than theirs. Because of you, I'm able to take some time off without worrying about them. You are so good with the pets, Clara."

"So, you are going to hire someone else?"

"Possibly, yes... But it's hard... It took me over two years to put this little group together. Most of them came to me. It's an extraordinary job, you know. It's a lifestyle more than a job, and I would not hire someone who doesn't need to be a pet."

"Need?"

Her use of the word need surprised me. I knew Vix liked being a pet because she wanted to hide her scars. Trixie also said that she was a pet for a reason without going into details. But everybody had problems, so I never associated the fact that they were playing pets directly with their problems.

"Yes. Take Apricot for example. She was just a very nice client, but one day, her parents told her that they were moving to another city for work and that they would leave her behind until she finished her college degree. She must have been very close to them because she took it very badly and felt abandoned even though she was a grown adult."

"Awww..."

"No, Clara. It was not supposed to be a sad moment. Parents are just people, and they have to make the best decision for themselves. I think your parents are out of town too?"

"Yes, they moved out a while ago... It was too expensive here. But I decided to stay."

"See, you took it the right way, but Apricot didn't. So I decided to let her try to be a pet so she could escape her sadness for a while, but it was also a way to force her to spend time with people and listen to them. Apricot was incapable of listening. That was her main problem. While being a pet, she couldn't talk anymore, and listening was all she could do. It gave her an opportunity to understand that life is not all black or white just by hearing what people had to say without interrupting them."

"So... Apricot... Did she reconcile with her parents?"

"Yes. At some point, she restarted to call them and talked it over. And then, as you know, she decided to move back near them. She enjoyed her time as a pet with us, but she needed to move on. Her parents are just too important to her."

It was very rare that Lucy and I had an opportunity to talk like this. I had never really interacted with Apricot the doggy, but I was still sad when I heard about her departure from the café. Now that I had heard the full story, it made me understand how Lucy selected her pets and why I was probably not a good candidate to be a permanent one.

My life was not that great, but a lot of it was due to my communication disorder; it was the reason why I had a shit job and why my landlord had easily abused me with his incessant rent raises. But I was slowly improving, thanks to my rubber friends.

That said, Lucy was right. If I were to wear a pet costume all the time, it would take away my ability to talk, and then I wouldn't be able to work on my speech. It was preferable for me to stay out of costume and use the café as a safe zone to grow as a person.

Lost in my train of thoughts, I didn't see her coming...

"Aaaah! Misti!"

Our little rubber cheetah was getting tired of being touched and inspected by all the other pets, so she jumped on me to seek refuge. But of course, that didn't work, and all the other pets climbed on Lucy and me.

"Girls! GIRLS! Stop! Why do you always have to do this? Aaah! You are crushing me!"

I guess this marked the end of my quiet time with Lucy.



This fantastic day had drained me. As soon as I got in my small apartment, I let myself fall on top of the bed and recalled everything I went through today.

I had a quiet morning with Vix, and then we delivered some of my belongings to the Cakes & Pets where Misti ripped the tail off her butt, causing Lucy to rage. I had to console my friend before Lucy sent her on an impossible errand, and I called off work not to leave her alone with that task. And then we met the creator of pets, Elizabeth, and also that scary girl named Kitty. We came back to the café and witnessed the birth of a brand new amazing cheetah costume. Following that has been my inspiring chat with Lucy before we got swarmed by the pets. When did my life get this adventure-packed? Before I met them, I stayed home reading books most of the time while avoiding the world.

There was no one with me tonight. Lucy offered to let me bring a pet home, mainly because I went an extra length to help Misti today, but I didn't feel like it. I had more items to pack in anticipation of my move, and the pets were not good at that.

But it was not the truth...

My earlier conversation with Lucy made me think hard, and now I wanted to do something that I had not done in too long.

No... I NEEDED to do something...

It was something I had not done since the day I went to the café for the first time, months ago. Why was this burden on my shoulders only? I was not sure, but it didn't matter anymore. I could do this.

I instinctively dreaded this moment, and I wasn't entirely sure why. I felt that all the massive life progress I had made because of the animal café would help me go through this. I would finally be able to show that I was as good as everybody else, that I could make friends, that I could be useful, and that I could love and be loved... and that I deserved all of it.

I had convinced myself that what I was about to do, this time, would be different... better... I was certain of it.

After pulling out my smartphone from my pocket, I dialed one of the rare numbers saved in my favorites. It didn't take long before a familiar voice answered.

"Hello?"

"... Mom? It's Clara!"

"Claraaaa! You didn't call in a long time."

It started as it always did; with a reprimand and a spike of anxiety. But this time, I could do this...

I could make things better... show her...

"... I'm... I'm calling now."

"I see that. Is there something wrong?"

"... N... No, mom... nothing is wrong, I just..."

"Oh, okay. So how are you doing? Are you still wasting your time working for that awful company?"

"... No... I mean... yes... but... Listen, I..."

"I told you Clara! You have to listen to me. You have to find something else. What will you do when you are older and want kids? You need to find a place that at least offers a pension plan. It's important."

"... I... Mom... I..."

"You know I'm right, of course. Oh, unless you started dating a rich boy?"

"... N... no... mom... listen..."

"Of course, you didn't. A mom can dream, right? But you know that you have to find someone eventually, right? You cannot spend your whole life alone. I told you a million times. You have to stop being this shy around people. You have to go out more and practice what the doctors told you, else you'll never have a normal life."

My throat clamped shut... My lungs shrank... my anxiety skyrocketed... I wanted to talk... I wanted to talk to my mom. Why would she not listen to me? Why?

"..."

"Just take a deep breath, then smile, then listen to what people are saying, then think before saying something... You remember that, right?"

"..."

"See, if you don't talk, it makes you look awkward, and nobody will want to be around you. You have to start acting like an adult at some point, Clara, or else you're going to end up alone and miserable for the rest of your life. If you were putting some efforts into it, your father and I would have something to be proud of, but if you keep locking yourself up in your tiny apartment, you are never going to be able to talk like a normal person. What you are doing is not normal, Clara. You know that."

"..."

What was I thinking?

What did I expect from this call?

There was nothing else I could do about it now. My vocal chords lost all strength, my eyes welled up, my hands were shaking, I couldn't breathe. I called because I wanted to tell my mom about me. Good things. But I was, once again, easily overpowered by her who plowed through me using the power of words; a power I didn't possess. Why did I even think I was better at talking? Why did I think I had made progress? My heart rate spiked, the blood rammed into my eardrums, my lungs shrank even more. I was taking damages during this call as it was so often the case.

More than ever before, I regretted not having brought back a pet home with me tonight. I wanted to hold one right now; hold it so tight to feel safe, to feel better...

To feel loved...

My mother took my whole life apart and criticized every piece of it, leaving me with a feeling of worthlessness. She reminded me of how fucked up I was and how hopeless my future was. At first, I almost thought she was wrong about me, but her endless stream of arguments shattered the perception I had constructed of my new life.

The café... The pets... The progress I had made...

No... The progress I thought I had made.

All of this was just an illusion.

This phone call was proof. I wasn't any better at talking... I couldn't even communicate with my own mother or make her believe I was normal.

What did I think? WHAT DID I THINK?

A twenty-four years old girl calling her mom to tell her that she finally made a friend? How ridiculous. Telling her that I was working part-time at a café where girls liked dressing up as pets? How disconnected from reality could I have been? Telling her that I was good at talking with people who couldn't respond to me? Talk about a weak accomplishment.

The world around me was filled with normal people. People who could get friends with a snap of a finger. People who could date other people whenever they felt like it. People who could sleep with each other without wondering if the other person actually cared about them. People who could jump in and out of conversations as they pleased. People who didn't have self-confidence issues. Successful people wearing suits and ties who understood how human interactions worked.

I was none of that. I was the mere residue at the bottom of a cup of coffee poorly filtered. There was a very good reason why I had been alone all my life.

It was better that way.

When I was isolated, there was no illusion. My only obligation was to accept it.

After my mother ended this relentless reality check about my real worth or lack of, I looked around me... half of my stuff was already gone... I had told my landlord I was leaving... and I didn't want to move to the penthouse anymore with the pet. I had made a huge mistake thinking it was right to accept it.

I would no longer feed this illusion that my life could get better. With this communication disorder impeding my life, preventing me from having a normal relationship with my own mother, I knew my future would just be a neverending uphill battle that I would never win. Dreaming of good things would only end up hurting me more.

Getting closer to the pets would eventually come back and demolish me. Their love would demolish me the same way my mother's love demolished me.

This feeling wasn't something I was equipped to handle.

I had been tricked into thinking that good things could happen to me... but all of this, the café, the pets, my friends, my speech improvement... It was now clear that all of it had just been a pleasant dream that had turned into a nightmare.

A lie!



"Clara? Oh my God! CLARA! Quick Misti! Call Lucy! Tell her to come here right away!"

"A... Asha! What... What is wrong with Clara? Why... why is she not moving?"
"I don't know! Call Lucy, HURRY!"



I was cold...

I was warm...

What happened to me? I felt so numb...

I wanted to wake up...

No...

I didn't want to wake up...

But...

This voice... Why was it calling me?

Nobody needed me... So why was it calling me?

This was abnormal... Nobody cared about me...

But this voice... I could hear it... Insisting...

I... I knew this voice...

I wanted to go toward it... I wanted to answer...



"Aaaah!"

"Hey, hey! Don't move... You are okay. You're okay. Shhh."

"..."

"Don't worry, Clara. You are safe here. We are at the hospital."

My head hurt, my whole body felt poisoned, and I was nauseous. The room was all white, so was the bed on which my body rested. Sitting next to me, Lucy applied a cold compress to my forehead.

I tried to open my mouth, not too sure why since I had nothing to say...

"Shhh... Don't try speaking. It is unnecessary."

"..."

"That's right... It's just you and me here. No pets, no friends, no parents, no boss... Just you and me. And we are going to have a long chat about what happened to you."

Rolling my head to the side to look away from her, I knew exactly what had happened to me. How could she know? I messed up big time, and it was on me and on me alone. She probably just wanted to tell me how I ended up at the hospital; I didn't remember that part.

"It's okay, Clara. You don't have to look at me. Just listen to what I have to say. That's all you have to do. Then you can decide what you want to do after, because you can."

"..."

"Where to start? So, you didn't show up at the café for five days in a row. Knowing that you had to move out soon and still had stuff to bring to the café, we were getting pretty worried. You weren't answering your phone either. So I sent Asha and Misti to check on you after their shift. Asha still had the key to your apartment from that time you had to rush out to work.

Since you weren't opening your door, they let themselves in and found you in a very weakened state on your bed. In a panic, they called me, and I checked on you. It didn't take me long to find out that you had not been eating or drinking for the past few days. You were white as an aspirin. We called the ambulance to bring you here.

I was curious about this. It reminded me of something I had experienced myself a long while ago. So I investigated your case. We went into your phone, good things many of the pets had memorized your pin, and I found all the answers I needed.

I'm not going to pretend that you still have a job. Your boss fired you after two days, not showing up to work or answering your phone. Don't worry, I called him back and made sure he would pay you the balance of what he owes you, and I'll help you fill up your unemployment forms. I don't want you to go back there, ever.

But then it got more interesting, Clara. On the evening of your last visit at the café, you didn't want to take a pet home, which was unlike you. That got me curious. So I checked your call logs, and on the same night, you called your mother. An hour-long call."

No! No! No! I didn't want to hear about that! I wanted Lucy to stop talking! I didn't want to talk about relationships anymore. I didn't want anything else. I just wanted to isolate myself; hide from everybody and forever.

"Stop, Clara... Stay down! I'm going to talk about this, whether you want it or not. Don't make it more difficult than it is. It's already painful enough as it is."

"..."

"I know you can't talk right now, Clara... and you know what? It's not your fault. I understand why it's so hard for you to talk."

"..."

"There... calm... calm! Don't fight me, okay? Just listen to what I have to say."

"..."

"Clara, I called your mother. I just said you put her name as a reference for a job you applied to, and she was overjoyed to tell me all about you, long and large. But it only took me thirty seconds to realize what kind of character she was.

So, you know what I think happened, Clara? I think you love your mother more than anything else in this world. But when I talked to her, I realized that she doesn't love you at all. She doesn't care one single bit about you, or at the very least, she doesn't know how. She went on and on and on about who you were and what your dreams and ambitions were... But not a single word of what she said about you was accurate. I know you, Clara, and the pets know you very well too, and what your mother had described to me was the child she would have liked to have... not the one she actually had. There was no love in her voice, just disappointment because you didn't fit what she wanted you to be. Yet, you wanted to love her as much as you could. And more importantly, you wanted her to love you back a thousand times more."

"... Bwaaaah! Baaaah! Moooom! Moooom!"

"It's okay, Clara... You have a million reasons to cry right now. Let it all out... I bet you'll cry for weeks to come. She broke you badly, so badly, and it's very sad.

Do you know why it hurt so much this time? Why, when you called her, your world crumbled down to dust, and there was nothing you could do to stop this from happening? I'm going to tell you, Clara, and you will believe every word I'm going to say because you will know deep down into your heart that I'm right.

One day, you showed up at the café. What brought you there? It was that little voice inside of you, wishing to do something for yourself for the first time. Not just what your mother had told you to do. You and only you decided to visit us.

And when you got in, you were terrified. Terrified that everything your mother had told you about this world would be true. Terrified that you were making a big mistake. Yet, when I pulled you inside and forced you to interact with the pets, you fell in love. Vix, Meeka, Misti, Oreo, Trixie, Asha, Apricot, Accalia. You fell madly in love with them all, Clara. And guess what? They genuinely returned as much love to you. They became your real friends. And you felt it so

intensely inside your little heart. You felt true love for the first time. A love you had never received before.

From that point on, your life skyrocketed toward something amazing. Everything was possible. You believed in something greater than yourself. You trusted people like never before. For once, you were not wrong about anything. Everything was right."

"BWAAAAH AAHH! BAAHAAAAH!"

"That's okay, Clara. Cry... Cry as much as you can. You HAVE to... Do it for yourself and for your friends.

I checked your call logs, Clara... I saw that you hadn't called your mother a single time since you started visiting the café months ago and she didn't call you once either. You knew what was going to happen if you did call her. You knew it, didn't you? You knew your mom would smash your happiness to pieces because you are not who she wants you to be. You feared that moment.

And the other day, when you finally decided to call her to share how much better your life got... How much happier you were... She shot you down. You were flying higher than ever before in your whole life... and she just shot you down so that she could keep pushing her twisted vision of the world on you again. Instead of flying with you as a loving parent, she shot you down like a duck.

You were flying so high that the fall was long, and the fall was way too hard to break. It demolished you. It demolished your mind.

Clara, you had a major mental breakdown... because you understood for the first time in your life... Your mother doesn't love you, and probably never will, no matter how hard you try to make it happen."

"BWAAAAAH! BHHAAAAH! LUCY! LUCYYYYY!"

"Come here, Clara. Come here and let me take you in your arms. I love you. I love you so much, Clara. Choose me over your mother. Choose all the petgirls over your mother. We will help you. We will support you. We will love you as hard as you let us. You didn't dream any of it. The animal café is real, and it is where you belong. We are all here for you. We need you to be the real Clara. The one who has a huge heart and who would do anything for her friends. Our love for you is real. Choose love, Clara. For your sake, you have to!"

I heavily threw my whole body into Lucy's arms and gripped her shirt as hard as I could. With my face pressed in her chest, I screamed as much as my lungs allowed me to. The pain was unbearable. Every single word she spoke was true. She nailed it. Using brute force and hurtful words, she extracted the truth from my guts and put it in front of my eyes for me to see.

It hurt so much. Why did my mother have to be like this? Why couldn't she love me? What have I ever done to her to deserve this rejection? What did I do that was so terrible not to deserve her love?

It hurt! It hurt so much!

Chapter 17 - Christmas pets

"LUUUCY! LUUUCY! Baaaah!"

"Sshhh... I'm here... I'm here, Clara."

"Luuucy!"

"You had another nightmare? It's okay. I'm here now. Just calm down. Everything will be okay."

It has been two days since my shameful trip to the hospital. Lucy had brought me back to her small apartment near the Cakes & Pets. She said that for the time being, I wouldn't go anywhere else. Getting better would have to be my only priority, and everything else had to be put to the back burner.

This wasn't fun. After my mental breakdown, all I could do was cry and sleep. I couldn't talk anymore either, as if something inside me had broken. The outside world was the realm of confusion, and I didn't know how to think anymore.

Lucy nursed me and repeated a thousand times a day that I would need a lot of time to get back on my feet, but that eventually, I would, even though I couldn't see it at the moment. At the present time, I just had too many difficult things to reconcile with.

My unhealthy relationship with my mother had finally snapped as if a thin string had linked us and failed when we got too far apart. After this traumatic event, I had rejected everything else; the café, the petgirls, my move to the pethouse, even Lucy; I didn't want to have anything to do with any of them anymore. Being taken care of by Lucy and this deep desire to be alone was a major moral conflict, and it made me feel so awfully guilty for abusing her comforting presence.

I didn't want her to take care of me, yet she was the first person I called over when I had those nightmares. For the past two days, her life had been disrupted by my childish behavior, but no matter what, she was still there to console me. I didn't understand why she bothered doing this because my mind was no longer powerful enough to process feelings and emotions other than pain.

There was a battle raging in my soul between my demons who wanted to destroy me and the angels who were trying to protect me from them, shielding me with their lives.

"That's it, Clara, calm down. It's still early. Close your eyes and try to sleep a bit more."



The sun shone through the window, brightening the small room I occupied and causing me to crack my eyelids open. There wasn't much around; hung on the wall, a nice painting of a flower field with a mountain in the background, a small dresser with a few small picture frames on it, and a closet. The simplicity of this environment probably meant this was the guest bedroom.

Since my brain wasn't fully awake yet, I appreciated the warmth of the soft blanket and the cushiness of my pillow for a short moment. It was a comfortable place to be, and I let out a long sigh, knowing that my pain would imminently come back to haunt me.

"C... Clara? Are... are you awake?"

"..."

This voice coming from next to me didn't even startle me. Slowly letting my head fall to the side to see who it was, I noticed a small girl wearing a hoodie and who had her hands stuffed inside its kangaroo pocket. Her big watery brown eyes betraying her sadness stared at me intently.

She stood up and stepped forward, extending an arm to touch mine. She paused for a moment before retracting her move, as if what she had wanted to do had been prohibited. Her butt returned to the sofa and her hands to her kangaroo pocket; she lowered her head.

"Lucy said you would need time. She said you were hurt badly and that we would have to be patient. She said you probably wouldn't talk to me, but that it was okay."

"..."

"She had to go take care of the café and asked me to stay here today to keep an eye on you. She said, "Vix, you will spend the day with Clara." I... I want to... but I don't know what to do..."

It was inevitable. Even though I was doing nothing but sleeping, I kept hurting people. Vix was the sweetest person I knew, and her heart was bleeding because of me. Fortunately, I didn't have enough energy left to feel as awful as I should have been, but I didn't want to push my luck, so I just turned my head away to look elsewhere.

"Aww... Sorry... Maybe I shouldn't talk. Lucy said I have to make sure you eat. So I will go make you breakfast. I... I'll be back, okay?"

Vix hesitantly got off her seat again and trotted out of the room. I was not too sure if it was to avoid crying in front of me or if she was in a hurry to complete her task, not to leave me alone.

The world around me seemed so unreal. My soul had left my body before they found me, and it was not fully back in yet. I had trouble understanding what Vix was doing here and what she expected from me. Something was wrong. I remembered those moments where I had cuddled with her, either at the pethouse or the café, but it didn't trigger any desire to do it again.

For the next few minutes, I heard pans and cutlery rattling from the nearby kitchen. Was Vix really making me food? Why would she do that? Lucy had done the same thing, and she didn't explain to me why. I didn't want her to do anything for me. I didn't deserve this kind of attention.

Yet, shortly after, Vix entered the room with a small tray in her hands.

"Can... Can you... sit up... I think it would make things easier... if you did."

Void of energy, I managed to push myself up, slowly, to reach the position Lucy put me into when she wanted me to eat something. With my back now resting on the pillows, Vix lowered her tray and placed it on my legs.

She shyly sat on the edge of the bed.

"So... Those are eggs and... well... you know what eggs are... Stupid me. What am I saying? I made you a coffee too because I know you like coffee. Right?"

"..."

"Take your time... Well... Not too much... because Lucy said you have to eat."

I looked down at my plate. There was one scrambled egg, one peanut butter toast, a sliced apple, and a coffee.

Coffee...

The heat of the cup radiated almost painfully on my palm when I cupped it with my hand. Vix was right... I liked coffee. This beverage had always been so comforting. I could remember the first time I had coffee when I was a teenager. It was at a coffee shop in a big mall; I had

found enough courage to walk up to the cashier but couldn't utter a word. The lady had said something, and I remembered just nodding a couple of times. Perhaps she had thought I was mute because I ended up with a cup in my hand, like the one I was holding right now.

I had sat down at an empty table and, and for the first time, I had all the time in the world to inhale the vapors rising from the hot liquid. It had been pleasurable in the pure sense of the term, and when I had taken my first sip, I had decided that it was good. It had been the first time in my entire life that I had decided to drink something without having someone else telling me what was good or not. My mother had always decided everything for me before.

Without being conscious of it, my first coffee had been my first step toward building a life of my own.

"Is... Is it good? You... You are just staring at your coffee cup. You always put milk and sugar in it when you get one at the café... so I thought it was okay like that..."

I looked at Vix and nodded, to at least let her know that it was fine. Smiling wasn't something I knew how to do anymore, but I was grateful for the trouble she went through to prepare this meal.

My eyes returned to my coffee, and it reminded me of something else Vix had mentioned... The animal café.

During my first visit at the Cakes & Pets, that was what I had ordered... a coffee.

I remember having stood like a leek in front of the shop for a long time, unable to decide if walking in was what I wanted to do, to the point where the manager of the place, Lucy, had walked outside to invite me in, leaving me no other choice but to accept.

When she had asked me for my name and age, my words wouldn't come out, so I had given her my ID card instead. Curiously, she had not been offended by it and had understood right away that talking wasn't my forte.

And then, another milestone in my life. I had to face a bunch of rubber petgirls who were way more real than anything else I could have imagined. And, of course, Vix had been the first one to really draw my attention.

Her fiery red suit with her white belly, long fox ears and puffy tail, her deep black eyes, it was all very intimidating, but I admired her so much. I remembered when she had grabbed my

hand to place it on her warm belly. That had been a life-changing moment. It was the first time I had been allowed to touch someone else for no other reason than to make myself feel good.

And now she was here, sitting on the edge of my bed, out of costume and worried that I was not too fond of the food she had prepared for me.

I wasn't hungry, but I still grabbed my fork and dug in the eggs, perhaps to honor her efforts.

"Good... You... you seem to like them... I will let you eat. And then... I dunno... I'll be back... okay?"

Taking a lot of time, I finished eating everything in my tray and then placed it on the nightstand. I rolled to my side and closed my eyes again as the tiredness hit me again.



She was still there, sitting on the small sofa, hugging her knees, playing on her smartphone, hoodie down to the middle of her face as usual. She was always hiding her scars.

"Oh... Clara. Did... did I wake you up?"

I shook my head, no.

"Oh... Good... So... You... you don't want to talk? I mean... Lucy said you can't... But I'm not sure why..."

"..."

"Well... maybe I know why. I mean... When I had my accident, it was pretty much like that too. I was so scared. I had nightmares all the time about that big dog that had attacked me. After that, that was the only thing people around me wanted to talk about, so I didn't want to talk to them anymore. I guess that's how you feel, right?"

I nodded.

What she said was exactly it. I had endured enough pain for a lifetime, and I cowardly didn't want to take the risk to trigger it back. That was why I didn't want to talk or do anything that could have brought back any suffering. I couldn't get close to anybody ever again, or else the pain would come back.

"Do... Do you prefer to be alone?... I want to stay... but... if you don't want me here... I... I can go..."

I shook my head no.

"... Okay... then I'll stay here... It's okay if you don't talk... Lucy said it was okay."

The day dragged slowly, very slowly. In between two naps, Vix fixed me some snacks and kept mostly to herself while staying at my side. More than once, the thought that she would have loved to sit on the bed next to me had crossed my mind, but it wouldn't have been a good idea. I asked myself the question over and over, would I like to cuddle with her again, and the answer was no. I didn't have this attraction inside of me anymore. I had pushed it down, very deep.

At the end of the afternoon, Lucy came back, and Vix left without a word.

"So, Clara? How was your day?"

"..."

"That good, uh? Were you happy to see Vix?"

Why? Why did this question about Vix cause me to start crying? My swollen throat hurt, and my tears just wouldn't stop running down my cheeks no matter how much I wiped them off. What was that all about?

Lucy sat on the bed next to me, and I threw myself in her arms like a child. She was the only person I was willing to touch. She was the motherly presence I didn't have.

"It's okay, Clara. I told you. It will take you a long time to cry it out. Let it all out. You'll feel better soon."

"Baaah! Aaahaaa!"

"Hehe. Poor Clara. You are sad because Vix was here, and it was not the same as before, right? Don't worry about it. The pets will understand. None of them will be mad at you if you take your time. Just don't push them away, okay? They will still be your friends when you feel better. If it takes a week, it will take a week, and if it takes a year, it will take a year. They won't let you down."

Why was I so messed up? There was no one sweeter than Vix; I knew that! So why was I not feeling anything for her anymore? Had I really convinced myself that being around people would bring me nothing but sorrows?

For the next three days, Lucy worked at the café, and Vix kept an eye on me in Lucy's apartment. During those three days, she did her best to feed me, she stayed around while I was taking many naps, and we watched some TV shows together, none of them triggering any emotions. She didn't attempt to touch me, which was visibly making her very sad, but she pushed through and tried to brighten up the atmosphere by telling me what was happening at the café.

Misti got back her black cat costume from Elizabeth and was proudly wearing it around and asked to do as many shifts as possible. Vix also said that all the pets were worried about me but that Lucy didn't want them to visit me yet, which I appreciated.

"Clara, tomorrow I'm starting a new shift. So I won't get to see you for a bit. But Lucy said Asha would be the one keeping you company for the next few days. Meeka is off too, but Lucy doesn't want more than one of us here at a time."

As she explained the schedule, Lucy got back home.

"Hey, you two. How is it going?"

"Good. I think Clara is feeling a bit better. She ate all my food, and she didn't sleep as much."

"Great. Thanks for your help, Vix. Asha is waiting for you downstairs."

"... Can... Can I stay with Clara tonight? We can share the bed and..."

"Vix... No. You have to be patient with her."

"Aww... Okay. Well... Goodbye, Clara... I'll see you next week."

"..."

The small foxgirl lowered her hidden head and stuffed her hands back in her kangaroo pocket. She was struggling; I could hear it in her voice. She turned around and dragged her feet toward the exit.

What was I doing? She spent the past three days watching over me, feeding me, keeping me company while I was trying to figure out what was happening with my life. What did she get in return? Nothing. I didn't say a single word to her. I couldn't talk anymore. Only now, as she was about to leave, I understood the extent of my ungratefulness. Only now, as she had resigned herself not to receive any love from me, I felt something.

It was as if my heart had restarted beating for the first time in days, powered by guilt. But this guilt had awoken a desire to try something that could potentially diminish this awful emotion I had.

"V... Vix!"

"... Uh? Clara?"

I got off the couch and looked at the floor, tears flowing down my cheeks uncontrollably. I managed to raise my arms, just enough to signal her what I wanted to do, but my feet couldn't move. I had reached my physical limit... I didn't have more willpower than this.

Vix looked at Lucy, who gave her a little nod. After another few seconds of hesitation, she walked to me and buried herself in my arms to get the hug she had been craving for the past three days. I was crying, I was in pain, but now that she was in my arms, I felt that I had done at least one thing right.

After a short moment, it was Lucy who put an end to this strange scene.

"Vix, that's enough for today. Please let her go."

"O... okay... I'll see you next week, Clara! Take care of yourself."

One more squeeze, and then she unwrapped her arms from me and walked out the door.

When I had Vix in my arms for this brief moment, I had felt something unclogging inside of me. Something had restarted to flow even though I wasn't sure what it was.



Another morning. The same room, the same quietness, the same morning light that tried to find any weaknesses in the blinds to illuminate the room.

What happened yesterday with Vix was already a blur, but I didn't feel as bad as I did during the past few days. The fog clouding my mind had slightly lifted, allowing me to be a bit more aware of my situation, and it was not necessarily a good thing.

The devastating conversation I had with my mother still haunted me, and Lucy's speech was competing with it. It was as if I wanted to believe every negative word I was told all my life just to get some sort of acceptance from my mom, but there was no way to rule out that it had been a deception all along. Every time I consciously thought about this internal dilemma, I couldn't do anything else but cry.

"Clara? Why are you crying?"

Startled by the voice, all my muscles contracted, making me jerk under my bed sheets. My eyes were too wet to see who was that blurry person over there, in the corner.

"Hey! Sorry... It's just me, Asha. I didn't mean to scare you."

She approached me and tried to grab my shoulders, but not being in a good mental state, I pushed her away while trying to move my body out of reach, pushing myself with my heels.

"C... Clara? What... what's wrong?"

I just couldn't stop crying. Why? Why was I reacting this way... All I wanted was Lucy so I could hide in her arms.

Asha stood there, staring at me, not too sure what to do next. How come I had rejected the girl with whom I had spent so much time cuddling? What was wrong with me? Was it this internal battle that had not yet determined a winner? This could go both ways. If I were to believe my mother, I would need to stay far away from everybody forever, and if I were to believe Lucy, I would have to abandon who I wanted to be loved by the most and open myself to others. I had not made that choice yet.

"It's... It's okay, Clara. I won't touch you. I'm sorry. I should have waited outside the bedroom. But I missed you too much. I had to watch over you while you were sleeping."

"..."

"You... you can stop crying now. Lucy insisted that I prepare you breakfast as soon as you wake up. Vix told me what you liked to eat, so I'll prepare the same thing. Is that okay?"

"..."

"Okay... I'll be back in a few minutes... Just rest, okay?"

As soon as she left the room, I turned around and cried on my pillow. The pain was relentless, and I didn't know what to do to make it stop. Asha was my friend. Why couldn't I speak to her anymore? Something was burning inside my chest; I wished I could crack open my ribcage to let it out. I felt so ashamed for treating her the way I did, but I couldn't do otherwise.

Being left alone for a bit helped, though. I heard Asha calling someone, probably Lucy, asking for advice on how to handle me. The smell of toasts and eggs reaching my nose was somewhat comforting. Using the remaining clarity I had left in my mind, I managed to focus on something other than misery and tried to prepare myself emotionally for Asha's return.

A few minutes later, she entered the bedroom, holding a small tray. Curiously, she placed it on the nightstand and sat on the bed next to me.

"Alright... Come closer. I'm not going to touch you."

"..."

"Don't worry, Clara... It's okay. Lucy said that I should try this. Don't make a fuss, okay? It's her idea... She wants me to feed you."

"..."

"I know it's weird. Well, she said you fed me often while I was a helpless pet and that it was my turn to feed you. We can just try, right? I love it when you feed me at the café... Maybe you'll love it too... Let me try, okay?"

Her proposition was so odd, so unusual that it pulled me out of my head for an instant. This was a reality and no longer a nightmare. Asha was there, slightly embarrassed by what Lucy had asked her to do, and waiting for some sort of approval from me.

I nodded.

"Great! Just come a bit closer. Lucy wouldn't like me to drop scrambled eggs in her bed. Here... You can hold your coffee for now. Vix said coffee made you feel good."

"..."

I moved closer to Asha, still afraid that she would get hurt by another one of my harsh rejection. I didn't want her to think things would be better from now on because, myself, I didn't know how this would end up. For now, I would just cooperate and let her do what Lucy had asked. Perhaps it could help.

"Here, take a bite in your toast. Haha... It reminds me of when you met Accalia for the first time. She did that too, remember? She put her toast in your mouth, and you were so confused about it. She is a bit odd, sometimes. Did you know she is asking about you all the time? I'm sure in a few years, she will be like Lucy, all motherly. She loves taking care of people."

"..."

"Ah, by the way. I don't know if Lucy told you already, but Misti finished moving all your things from your apartment yesterday. Don't worry. She didn't work too hard as Lucy hired two movers to take care of the heavy items. Everything is in the basement at the café now. You didn't lose anything."

As Asha was feeding me eggs and bread, she was chit-chatting about many random things. There were no real questions or expectations in her monologue as she was aware that it would be a one-way conversation, but she seemed okay with that.

It was a relief to hear that my apartment situation had been resolved. It felt good to know that my few belongings were in a safe place, but it was a bit frightening to be officially homeless. Lucy kept me in her apartment for now, but it was not my home, and I couldn't see myself moving to the pethouse anymore. Yes, I was truly homeless, jobless, lifeless...

"Clara... You know... When Lucy asked me to go check on you because you went missing in action... when I got in your apartment and I found you... well... I was very scared. But Misti was with me, and she had nightmares since then. I think she thought you had died. So, Lucy doesn't want her to come to see you yet. She thinks Misti will freak out. She probably will."

"..."

"I mean, it's not your fault, right? I hope you know that. It's just that Misti... well... She lost someone very close to her before... and she thought it had happened again. You understand?"

I nodded.

The girls at the café were pets for a reason; that was what Lucy had told me. I didn't know if she had done it on purpose, but Asha had perhaps exposed Misti's dark secret. Did she really lose someone she cared a lot about? A parent? A sister? I couldn't ask, but a feeling of empathy rose within me as I imagined those possibilities.

I didn't like it. I didn't want Misti to be sad because of me. Asha said that it was not my fault, but it certainly was. With Misti, it was all about her friends. A few days ago, when she broke her costume and Lucy got angry at her, she irrationally thought she would get separated from her friend. It was clear that she would quickly jump to extreme scenarios when placed in a challenging situation, which I had unfortunately provided.

Why did I feel so bad? I put an end to my breakfast and rolled to my side, not wanting to impose my sad face on Asha anymore.

"Oh? You... you are done?"

"..."

"It's okay... You ate enough... I... I'll go do the dishes.... Just try to rest, okay?"

Closing my eyes didn't help. A torrent of images rage-flowed through my brain, not allowing me to make sense of anything.

If I were indeed ready to abandon all my friends to isolate myself from society, why was I feeling so bad about it? Thinking about them being sad just got to me so badly. I had thought they would have been happier if I were not in their life, but what Asha had said was the opposite. It wasn't fair. I was sowing chaos even when I wasn't around people. I didn't want that. They didn't deserve that. I was the one who was supposed to suffer, not them.

Unable to stop crying, it was a miracle that I managed to fall asleep.

A while later, when I cracked my eyes open, I stopped breathing. I was still on my side, but next to me was Asha. She had laid down on my bed, her back towards me, and her head rested comfortably on the other pillow. Perhaps she needed a nap as well.

I remembered the first time I had shared a bed with someone. It was with Vix while she was a rubber pet. Lucy had forgotten us in the capsule room, and I got to spend all night cuddling with the small fox.

Then there was that time when I slept with a real girl for the first time. Trixie had invited herself to my place for the night, and we had shared a bed like this together. It was the first time I got to touch a naked girl too. Trixie's hair... it was so soft...

Asha's hair... it was soft too...

I carefully extended my arm until my fingertips reached her jet black hair. This was so wrong. Just this morning, I had prevented her from touching me, and now, I was the one who reached her while she was unaware. This was such a hypocritical move from my part... so selfish...

But... I was attracted to it...

Gently combing her delicate hair with my fingertips made me feel fuzzy inside. I had not done this enough so far to really understand why I loved hair so much. It was too new to make sense...

"I like when you do this, Clara..."

"..."

I immediately withdrew my hand to my chest. Asha... She was not asleep, and she had felt what I did. Now she knew how hypocritical I was... That I was going left and right at the same time for obscure reasons.

"It's okay... I won't talk. Keep playing with my hair if you want. I won't say anything and won't look. It's okay."

"..."

Why? Why was she offering me that after what I had done earlier? Why would she give herself as a toy for me to play with? Was it because she was so used to being a pet most of the time and that it was just a job? Was I just a client in need of affection?

I didn't know... I didn't... care...

Her soft hair... It made me feel so good.

I slowly reached the back of her neck and let my fingers plow through her black hair once more. As promised, she didn't move or make a sound. She didn't turn around. Asha simply gave me this moment, just because. It felt as if it had lit a candle into a very dark room. It wasn't like daylight, but it somehow helped a bit to find where I was going.



I spent the next two days with Asha. Similar to what had happened with Vix, we spent most of the day not doing much. I listened to her telling me about random things between random tv shows or one of my multiple naps. Several times I tried to talk, but not a sound exited my throat, and every time I failed, I cried, I just cried.

Not being able to talk well all my life had been really hard for me, so this enormous set back was so painful. Knowing that not only I had returned to square one but even farther back in my speech inability was something tough to accept.

Yet, Asha didn't judge me. During those small meltdowns, she kept repeating that it was okay and that Lucy specifically told everybody not to put pressure on me. I was ashamed that this directive had to be applied, but perhaps it was better that way. I was so fragile that it was not hard to imagine that I could break easily.

Back in bed after dinner, I tried to relax as Asha was washing the dishes. Lucy was supposed to show up a moment ago but was a bit late. Every night so far, she had joined me in the bedroom and let me cry in her arms, talked to me, and convinced me slowly that only time could bring clarity back in my life. Coming from the person I trusted the most, my subconscious gradually acquired that line of thought.

I didn't know if it was a good thing or a bad thing, but I didn't overthink this situation despite her lateness tonight. She had a life too, and I was sucking time out of her busy schedule. Being demanding would not be right, and being messed up didn't mean I had no morality.

And thinking about Lucy, her apartment door slammed open and banged on the wall with way more energy than usual. This was different since, in an attempt not to startle me or wake me up, she had always been very delicate when opening the door.

A powerful little voice explained everything.

"Aaah! Asha! Where do I put those grocery bags?"

"Tone it down, Trixie. Clara is resting! What are you doing here, anyway?"

"Aww, sorry! Lucy asked me to go grocery shopping with her. Can I go see Clara?"

"No! Lucy said not yet."

Trixie. The girl who gave me my first real kiss. She was right there in the kitchen, so close. Insisting on seeing me caused Asha to raise her voice to make her point clearer to the rabbit girl. How could Trixie be this desperate to see me after I had walked away from them all? Vix and Asha stayed with me because Lucy had tasked them to, but Trixie had no apparent reasons to do the same thing.

Then Lucy, who entered her apartment next, put an end to their bickering quickly enough.

"What are you two doing? Do you want to wake up all the neighborhood? Go back to the pethouse, Trixie. I'll take it from here."

"No! I want to see Clara!"

"Trixie, you'll see her when she feels better."

"Shut up, Asha! She is my friend too! I want to see her."

Lucy had to intervene again as there was some tension in the air, all because of me.

"Asha, go wait outside. I need to talk to Trixie."

"Bah! Hurry, rabbit face. I'm tired."

I heard Asha leaving, and the apartment door closed slowly. Then there were some whispers going on between Lucy and Trixie, I couldn't make out what they were saying. Was she going to allow Trixie in? The thought made me nervous.

Trixie was high energy and would probably jump on my bed and bounce around until she got what she wanted, and... and... and what I just thought about her was not fair. Sure, Trixie had always been happy and ready for action, but she was more than this. I remembered...

The first time I had brought back a pet home, it had been Trixie, and it felt like it was yesterday. Lucy had made me walk from the café to my home, holding a leash. At the other end of it was a white latex bunny wearing a fuzzy pink coat causing everybody to stare at us.

Sure, this had made me very nervous, but at that time, something else more important had been on my mind. Back then, I already had a clear knowledge that Trixie was very sexual. Neither the rubber bunny nor Lucy had hidden that fact. I remembered how terrorized I was about what was to come once we would reach home.

I had never had sex with anybody before, and I feared that it probably was what Trixie had in mind. It was going way too fast for me, and the closer we got from my place, the worse it got.

And then, once at home, while I was leaning over the skin, prisoner of my own worrying mind, her two small rubber arms had wrapped around my waist in a very delicate way. She pulled me back to the bedroom despite my attempt to push back on the intention I had given her.

But just when I had thought she was about to express the sexual side of her personality, she had seen through me already. She had pierced my fears with her cute black eyes and had understood everything about me. Instead of doing what I had expected from her, she had instead asked me to read her a book. At that time, she knew that listening to me talking while gently cuddling would be way more satisfying than any sexual activity. On that night, she had highlighted my irrational fears of people.

Here, in Lucy's apartment, after my mental breakdown, I believed that, perhaps, Trixie would be the one who could understand me.

Her little footstep approached, meaning that she probably had convinced Lucy to let her visit me.

I didn't know what got into me, but I closed my eyes as if to pretend I was asleep, too scared to face her. The footsteps approached some more, and then I felt a presence near me as the mattress softly reacted to the small woman who had climbed on it.

And then an emotional whisper... almost a crying.

"Clara... I miss you so much. I don't know if you are asleep, but it doesn't matter. I'm sure you can hear me anyway."

Her murmur was so close to my ear... a tone made not to scare me. It was the version of Trixie that could get to me.

"Lucy said things about you, but I don't understand them. My brain doesn't work like that. I'm stupid. I need to know from you what your problems are. That way, my body will just do its thing and help you. She said that you couldn't talk anymore, but I don't care. You never talked much before, and it never prevented us from becoming friends. Right?"

It was the truth. Trixie and I became friends without talking. Same with Vix and the other petgirls. We all got along well without having to build a relationship through voice. Some petting and light cuddles were all that had been needed to strengthen our bonds. Words had never been a significant part of the equation.

"Clara, I want you to show me what you need, or else I won't know what to do. Okay? Lucy only gave me a minute... so I have to be quick... but I'm a rabbit, right? I'm always quick. If you show me, I'll get it right away. I'm sure of it."

I wasn't sure what she had meant until I felt something on my lips. The sensation was the same as when we had kissed for the first time in the spa's locker room. Back then, we had a conflict and were upset at each other, and that kiss had healed us right away. It was the same kiss that she was offering to me right now.

Her lips gently pressed on mine while I pretended to be asleep. Lucy, Vix, and Asha had nursed me with love for the past week, well enough that my internal dilemma, even though not resolved, was easier to understand. Between listening to what an unloving mother had tried to convince me of versus a strange life surrounded by Lucy and the petgirls, this choice was now visible to me. Lucy had asked me to choose her love over my mother's love, choose the pets over my loneliness, and choose my friends over my unwillingness to trust that good things could happen to me.

And now, this kiss from Trixie, unsolicited, yet, not imposed, felt like a request to make this choice.

Show me.

She had asked me to show her what I wanted. Her body waited for my answer. Could her body really find a solution to my problems if I showed her what I wanted? Could Trixie have this power that no other people had?

What was I waiting for? She waited for my answer and Lucy had not given her much time. She was sacrificing those precious seconds that had been granted to her to see me just to allow me an opportunity to tell her what I wanted... what I needed. She gave me her precious time.

Show me.

I had to show her.

I had to at least try.

I opened my mouth, which was easier to do when I didn't do it for talking, and I stole more of her sweet kiss... and she did the same.

That was it...

That was my choice at this very moment.

My body had shown hers something, and I got a response back.

Her response was, "I understand."

"Okay, Trixie, that's enou... Oh..."

Relatively unconscious about my surroundings, I had not seen that Lucy had arrived to pull Trixie away from the room after her allocated time was up. When the kiss ended, I slowly opened my eyes. A few inches in front of me was the pretty blonde girl, not smiling, but her deep blue eyes communicated all the emotions I needed to feel.

Lucy gently recalled her.

"Come, Trixie. That's enough for now. I'll let you see her again later."

"No."

"Trixie, don't make it harder than it is..."

"I'm not. Clara wants me to stay with her tonight. That's what she wants. I know it is! She just told me."

"Trixie, Clara didn't say a word. Come now, please."

Reluctantly, Trixie slowly got off the bed, her eyes begging me to tell Lucy what I had just said in a silent voice. Lucy had grabbed her wrist and supportively led her toward the exit.

"W... Wait!"

"..."

"Lucy, wait!"

"Clara?"

"Can... Can Trixie sleep with me... tonight?"

"... Sleep with you? Are you sure?"

"Yes. I need Trixie. Please."

With those words, the first ones since my breakdown, I had restarted to choose for myself.

I wanted to spend time with my friend.



So warm.

I slept on my back with Trixie wrapped around me. It was the first time that I felt somewhat normal in the morning, not fearing the rest of the day. What happened last night had somehow lifted an enormous weight off my shoulders and, in some ways, made me feel like an idiot.

That selfish desire I had to sleep with Trixie, spontaneous, and inappropriate, made me realize that I didn't want to walk away from her. This desire was too strong not to see.

It had to be her. It had to be Trixie, the girl I might have been attracted to the most. A girl who had hidden problems but who wouldn't let them stop her. If there was one thing I could learn from her, she knew what she loved and wanted it all. She had a real crush on all her pet friends and played with them all and didn't want to be forced to choose.

Perhaps it had been the reason why she had managed to get through me. She had an immense heart available for everyone to hug, so it was not as intimidating to steal a small chunk from it for myself.

I ran my fingers through her delicate blonde hair while she drooled on my shoulder, still deeply asleep. The morning sun flooded the bedroom with an orange light for the first time in a very long time as we forgot to close the curtains last night. Was this a sign that this day would be different? Was this brightness the reason why I didn't feel as miserable this morning?

Trixie and I did nothing special after our kiss. She went to take a shower and met me under the blanket, and we just drifted to sleep while holding each other. We healed together.

The bedroom door opened slowly, and Lucy peeked into the room, and when she saw I was awake, she whispered to me.

"Oh, you are awake already? Can I come in?"

I nodded.

Lucy, holding a cup of coffee, tiptoed to the bed and carefully sat next to me. Surprisingly, she didn't check on me first despite this considerable development in my sick life. Instead, she did the same thing I did a moment ago and brushed her fingers in Trixie's hair before resting them on her sleepy cheek as if to check on her.

"Trixie is such a cutie, don't you think?"

"Yes."

"She hadn't slept well since your visit to the hospital. She is always reacting like that when her friends are sad. She must be the most empathic person I have ever met. Just by looking at people, she can tell if they are sad, and then she is driven to make them feel happy again. She is such an innocent girl."

"Yes. Trixie is nice."

"So, what changed? Do you understand what I mean now, when I said you should choose us over your mother?"

"Yes... I like you and your pets. I don't want to lose them. But I still want my mother."

"Yes. Over time, you'll learn to have a different relationship with her. You'll understand that she is a person with problems, probably sick, and it won't affect you as much. Perhaps you can even help her one day. It's too bad she hurt you that much, a sweet little thing like you."

She kept petting Trixie as if there was something therapeutic about it. Lucy probably had a good reason for having surrounded herself with all those sweet petgirls. Sure they could drive her nuts, but I think she liked it a lot. Having all that energy in her life and tons of opportunities to take care of those pets and teach them how to behave was something she needed to feel whole. In return, they gave her back a lot of love.

The more I thought about it, the more I came to realize that we all needed each other. There was nothing easy for anybody, and without our friends' love, it was more difficult to advance in life. Problems felt bigger, loneliness was too heavy, and responsibilities were overwhelming.

"Did you notice?"

"Notice what?"

"Your speech. It's very good this morning."

"..."

"You are not scared anymore... It's good. Now that I'm thinking about it, you probably don't have a speech disorder, at least not the way you thought. You just grew up in a toxic environment where you couldn't say a word, and when you did, you were crushed under a never-ending flow of reprimands."

What Lucy theorized reminded me awfully of the words that came out from the mouth of a certain intimidating Asian girl that I had met at Elizabeth's place, Kitty. She had not used such complex words to say it, but her quick and convincing assessment had been the same.

"Someone else said the same to me. It feels odd."

"Hehe. I bet. It's excellent news, though. But I think you'll be fragile for a while, so don't push yourself too hard, okay? Oh, and I spoke to a friend of mine the other day. When you are ready, I want you to go see her from time to time. She is a good therapist who had helped me in the past, and she is going to see you for free as you need it."

"O... okay."

"Don't worry. It will do you some good. All she wants in exchange is some cakes from the café. It's a fair trade because our cakes are the best in the world and so are you."

"Awww..."

I turned my head, blushing, but then a third voice entered the conversation... A certain blonde girl was awake.

"No, she is not going! I am! I want to see a therapist too."

"Haha. No, Trixie. You'd drive her nuts!"

"Not true! Everybody loves me!"

"Haha... Alright, you two. Take it easy today. I have to go to the café. I'll let the pets know that you are feeling much better, Clara. They will be happy, but I'll tell them to be patient. I'll see you tonight."

Trixie returned her head to my shoulder and squeezed me in her arms as Lucy kissed her on the forehead before leaving; she really loved her pets.

Yes, this day was definitely a brighter one.



Ups and downs. That was pretty much how I could describe the past few weeks. Some days I couldn't stop crying, and I felt like I was going somewhere on others. Since Lucy saw that Trixie had a lot of success lifting my mood, she asked her to spend a lot of time with me, which was a very good thing. I knew she was not my girlfriend per se, but it sure felt like it on some days.

The rabbit girl could talk a lot, but somehow it was easier to keep up with her than before. It was as if the realization that I may not have had a communication disorder made me more confident. Being blind about my past and saying that there was no room for improvement would be too much of a lie, but understanding what had happened to me had unlocked my skills. For the first time in my life, I could envision a future where I could talk to someone without them noticing my difficulties. This was a hopeful feeling.

Today, I returned to the café for the first time. Lucy said that I could try to play with the rubber pets for a few minutes and see how it went, but I ended up staying all day. It felt as if I had never left.

During the past few weeks, I had spent time with each girl in Lucy's apartment, but they were always out of costume, which was the best thing to do. I got to apologize to Vix and Asha for how I had treated them while they had tried to help me, which was not easy to do since they wouldn't let me. They kept saying they understood and that it was not my fault, but I still felt as if it was the right thing to do, whether or not it was my fault.

While socializing with them all, a curious feeling had grown inside my heart regarding something I was missing more and more, my cute rubber pets. And this was why I came to the Cakes & Pets with Trixie today. I was ready.

It was bizarre when I entered the lounge. It reminded me so much of the first time I had visited the café. The pets had formed a row for me to choose from. How could I not go for Vix? Since Trixie was out of her suit, she, of course, went straight to Misti, who had traded back the new cheetah costume for her black cat one.

Resting on my lap, the cute fox girl was what I needed. I traced her facial feature with my finger as my other hand was unconsciously rubbing her white belly. A long sigh from her made me understand how much she had missed cuddling with me. Her happiness transpired through her big black eyes that I had learned to interpret over time.

Lucy eventually brought me my coffee and a small cheesecake. I appreciated that everybody acted as if nothing had happened. Many of the pets came to give me hugs, but outside that, it seemed to be business as usual. It was good to know that the world had not stopped because I got sick. They were just happy to have me back.

Since Trixie and I were around, Lucy offloaded the feeding task to us. A series of squeeze bottles full of food lined up on our table, and one by one, we fed the rubber pets. Since we had Vix and Misti on us already, we started with them.

I plugged Vix's bottle in her under chin hole and gradually pressed the mixture to her mouth, keeping water nearby just in case she needed it. This activity had always been so relaxing and deepened my bond with the latex animals. Feeding someone else was a gesture of love.

Trixie, in front of me, had more trouble with Misti, who wouldn't stay still. I swore I could see the black cat telling her, "you are doing it all wrong," which made me smile. There was never a dull moment when those two were around.

"Don't laugh, Clara! She is giving me grief just because you are here today."

"I'm not. But I'm glad I'm feeding Vix."

"Vix never struggles. You are lucky. So, I wanted to ask you a question. But Lucy said it might be a sensitive topic. So let me know if you don't want to answer right away, okay?"

"I'm fine. What do you want to ask?"

"Well, it's about Christmas. On Christmas night, ALL the pets are suiting up, and we collect donations for the city children's hospital in front of the café. People can buy cakes for twice the price, but they can also pay to have their photo taken with us."

"Oooh. This is great! I like it."

"Yeah... but... It's on Christmas night... and... I don't know if you wanted to go see your family... even though... you know... they were a bunch of... Owwww!"

Trixie didn't have time to finish her insult before Misti slapped her hard in the face with her cushy paws.

"Aaaah, what was that for, you dumb cat!?"

Misti placed her paw on Trixie's mouth and pointed at me with her other one. I knew why she was doing it, and it was a nice gesture. She didn't want me to get hurt again, and when Trixie almost insulted my family, she had feared that it would trigger my trauma.

But it was all good. I spent a lot of time with Trixie in the last couple of weeks, and I knew what her opinion of my mother was. Misti was right, though; it wasn't nice to say bad things about people, no matter who they were.

"It's okay, Misti. I'm fine. Trixie always acts silly."

"Ah! You are siding with Misti, now? Fiiine. I talk too much as usual. I'm sorry."

"It's okay. I'm not going to visit my family this year."

"No? Are you sure?"

"Yes. I prefer being with Lucy and you this year. You are my family too."

"Awwwww! Did you hear that, Misti? I'm Clara's family."

The black cat slapped her in the face again.

"Aaaah! Okay okay... You are her family too! But I'm her favorite anyway."

"You are... all equal. You all helped me a lot to get better."

Yes, I wouldn't go home this year. I wasn't ready for it. I had a couple of visits to the therapist recently, and she made me decide some important things. Thinking for myself wasn't something I was used to, so it was very hard.

The first thing I had decided was that I didn't want to cut bridges with my parents. Even if it was excruciating, I now understood that their behavior was not normal, and they had problems of their own. The pets didn't abandon me when I was sick, so I'd not abandon my parents because they had issues. But another thing I had decided was to do what was right for myself, which included doing things the way I wanted. I felt good around the pets, so that was what I wanted to do, be around them as much as possible. I couldn't see my life without them. I had chosen them and Lucy.

There was one more thing I wanted.

"Trixie? Do you want to sleep with me at the café tonight?"

"Sleep here? Sure, I'm in. But ask Lucy, first. I think she said that she wasn't sure that you should spend too much time at the café right away. She might say no."

"It's okay... I will ask."



"Here is your bunny, Clara. Don't go crazy, okay? I don't want any drama. And you don't go to the lounge, okay?"

"Yes."

"Good. I'm going home now, but call me if you need anything."

"Thank you, Lucy."

"Don't mention it. I can't wait until you feel good enough to pet sit them all again. These little devils are draining my life. I need a vacation."

Lucy hugged us and returned home, leaving me behind with Trixie. When I had asked Lucy if I could sleep at the café tonight, she had taken a long moment to think about it. She came back a bit later, saying yes, but also said I could only spend the night with Trixie in the capsule room and that she had to wear her bunny suit, or else she would talk too much. I think she wanted to put me in a situation where I would enjoy myself the most.

All the other pets would sleep in the lounge as usual, but I wasn't allowed to go see them. Lucy was too scared that the pets would lose control and overwhelm me; she knew her pets well.

I had missed Trixie the white latex rabbit a lot. She was my second favorite rubber pet after Vix. Her long bouncy ears were so cute, and she always acted funny. Now that I knew Trixie the girl intimately, it was even better, even if I sometimes forgot that they were the same person.

Trixie crawled into the bottom capsule room, and after undressing, I joined her inside. It was still early, so we would have time to cuddle a little before sleeping.



After I slid the door closed behind me, isolating myself in the small room with the rubber pet, I dimmed the light down as much as I could.

"Do you like blue, Trixie?"

She shook her head, no.

"Red?"

She shook her head, no.

"Purple then?"

She nodded.

I turned the light selector to purple; it was a romantic choice. The fun color made her white latex phenomenally glowing. Sitting in front of me, she waited for my next move.

During the past few weeks, as I was recovering, Trixie had slept with me regularly, but without going farther than some nice gentle cuddle. She was the most sexual pet, but she had not attempted anything that could have pressured me, which showed that she could restrain herself when required. Her friends were more important than her own desires.

She probably wasn't expecting much more when I offered her to sleep here at the café, and Lucy probably just thought I wanted to get used to cuddling the pets again. But there was more to this sleepover request that I had not shared with Trixie yet.

I wanted to make love to her.

After everything she had done for me, after all the support that she had offered, after all my cries that she had endured, it was time for me to start repaying my emotional debt. I also wanted to do this for myself.

My therapist had made me talk about how I felt around those girls, in and out of costume. It took a while, but she had managed to pull the truth out of me. I was so used to repressing my feelings that I had not realized how bottled up they were.

I was attracted to the pets, in and out of costume, some more than the others, and not just at a friendly level. She made me admit that I was sexually attracted to them.

When I had explained to my therapist how I had felt when I had caught Trixie and Misti making love on the couch, she laughed a little bit and told me there was nothing wrong with it. It was okay to desire girls if it was what felt right to me. And when I told her that I had liked

making love with them afterward, she said that it was important that I kept going in that direction. Refraining myself from doing so because of what people might think of me would mean going against my values and walking away from happiness.

In front of me was my rubber bunny, the one I loved so very much, and I was attracted to her like crazy; I adored the girl wearing the costume. I had the opportunity to do the right thing for myself, and it was something I knew Trixie would be more than happy to assist with. Tonight, cuddling would not be enough.

Trixie laid down on her back as I approached her, expecting that I would just rest next to her, but instead, I crawled on top of her and sat on her hips. After placing my hands on her shoulders to keep her down, I leaned forward and looked into her shiny black eyes.

"Trixie, I... I want to make love to you. Are... are you okay with it?"

After a few seconds of pause, she nodded energetically, as if I had denied her for so long that she wouldn't even consider taking a risk to discuss this, fearing I could change my mind.

"Just... just let me try things... okay?"

Trixie nodded again and brought her cushy paws to my waist.

In the past, when I had sex with the pets, they had always been the ones in charge. It was very pleasant to let them do all kinds of things to me, but today I would be the one who would try to give her pleasure, even if I had no idea how. I wanted to learn.

For a moment, I caressed her rubber mask, taking the time to admire how beautiful she was. I was subjugated by how talented the artist who had created her was. Those long springy ears, the little rubber fuzz at the base of them to hide her breathing holes, her amazing eyes in which I could see my reflection, her cute wiggly muzzle, and those tickling whiskers; I loved it all.

Her latex covered neck, and narrow shoulders made her look fragile. Her delicateness was one of the things that attracted me the most. I didn't feel overpowered by any pets because they were all as small as I was. Feeling that I could wrap my hands around her neck and sense her tiny muscles and throat through the rubber made me feel good. We were alike.

Then there was her chest, Trixie's favorite body part. As I ran my hands over it, feeling her soft and warm boobs, it made the latex covering them stretch and crackle quietly. I could feel her

nipples under my fingertips, but when I tried to grab them, the latex running away from my grip prevented me from doing so, which was perfect for making her feel good.

Trixie's body twisted under my attention, but there was nothing she could do as all my weight rested on her hips.

I ran my fingers along her delicate rib cage and could feel the row of bones. She squirmed under me as I made my fingers walk on them, tickling her in the process, but she wouldn't stop me.

Her waist was just fantastic. I had not realized how much it was one of the features that had attracted me the most. I inspected her sides and her belly for a long moment, enjoying how soft and smooth they were. I could even feel her cute belly button under the slippery latex. I had to move down a little because I wanted to kiss those soft abs.

It was so warm when I pressed my cheek against her belly. I took all the time in the world to lick her slowly from her navel to her sternum. Her body language begged me not to stop, which prevented me from feeling guilty for abusing this area of her body for so long. I wasn't in a hurry to move on.

My tongue sliding effortlessly on the shiny white latex encasing her was something I adored. It was like licking a delicious ice cream that would never melt. It was okay since Trixie had a low-calorie count. I could do this for hours without being scared of getting fat.

I continued exploring south and reached her inner thigh, avoiding her sealed crotch on purpose. I wanted to complete my visit before attacking the piece of resistance. Her inner thighs seemed so sensitive, though. Despite her mask robbing her of her voice, she managed to moan audibly.

She was losing it. I knew that much about Trixie. Sex was, by far, her favorite activity. She would sleep with all the other pets without ever saying no, and more than often, she was the initiator of the action. I didn't know if she was actually sleeping with them all, but it was not hard to imagine she did.

Even her kneecaps were cute and sensitive. When I bit it lightly, that made her jerk and twist. I didn't know if what I was doing was how we were supposed to have sex, but I was going with what I thought was right when I met a new body part.

Reaching her calf and ankle was another sexy moment. Something was fascinating about the sensuality of it. How could something so delicate support her entire body weight day after day? I followed her tibia with my fingers through the white rubber, and I massaged her warm tense calf too.

As I grabbed her foot, I forced her to raise her knee a little bit. I placed it on my naked lap and inspected it. Trixie threw her head left and right as I began massaging her sole with my thumb in between her cute pawprints. I had never seen her react this way, but she seemed to like it a lot. Five; that was the number of little toes I found inside the white sock, and they were so cute and wriggly... and desirable.

I had this feeling in me at the moment that I didn't want to suppress. Her toes... I wanted to nibble on them. I couldn't see them because of the white latex, but I knew they were there for me to taste. Walking away from this desire would have been a mistake even though I didn't know why I wanted to do this.

I lifted her foot to my chest and took my first bite at those cute toes. This time, it was obvious; Trixie loved it. She slammed her two paws on the mattress and lifted her hips as if something had exploded inside her vagina.

One after the other, I snacked on her little toes as an appetizer for what was to come. But nibbling was not enough. Sucking seemed a better idea, and the initiative almost came from Trixie herself when she inadvertently pushed her tiny foot deeper into my mouth.

I closed my eyes and tried to understand what I was feeling. Ignoring the right or wrong of things, my tongue sensed the hardened skin of her sole, and my mouth accepted the sensuality that engulfing her toes all at once provided. This was deliciously sexual.

For a moment, we continued this activity. I licked her soles, sucked her toes, nibbled her heels. My body responded very well to what we were doing. A powerful arousal installed itself in my small body, signaling that it was ready for more. As odd as it sounded, her latex covered foot made me react positively, and I did my best to accept that fact.

As I persevered on this discovery, I grabbed Trixie's other foot and gently placed it on my now very wet crotch. She immediately understood where I was going with this and moved it just the right way, making me know that there was no going back.

"Aaaah! Trix... Trixie... you... you are... rubbing my... Aaaanh!"

She totally got it and expertly did what she was good at; giving pleasure. If I had been in control of my mind, I would have bet that she had done this to someone else before, but it didn't matter. Her rubber toes carefully penetrated me, and once well lubricated, she massaged my clit in a way that I had never experienced before.

With her other latex foot still rubbing on my face and in my mouth, I was trapped in a new universe of fetishism. For many long minutes, I rubbed my pussy on her foot and welcomed a new level of perversion in my life. My attention was no longer on the bunny; it was selfishly focused on my own pleasure instead.

Until I came...

I came so hard... Harder than I had ever cum before. For the first time in my life, I had fully abandoned myself to pleasure. There was no questioning, no doubts, no judgment. I had chosen to do this, to let myself skydive and feel the wind, not listening to my fears. My body had rewarded me for allowing it to experience this unprecedented level of freedom.

I collapsed on my side, and Trixie immediately joined me to cuddle, to give me her warmth. Her paws tightly wrapped around me as tears of happiness started to run down my cheeks.

"Trixie! Trixie! Trixie!"

I never hugged someone so hard in my life, but I wanted to be closer to her. Closer to my beloved bunny. My girlfriend for the night.

For a long moment, we held each other. This was love.



"Okay, Trixe, let's try to sleep."

Trixie nodded.

She laid flat on her back, and I joined her after turning off the light in the capsule. I pulled the blanket over our bodies, not too much since Trixie was a little furnace, and I wrapped my arms around her.

This position was treacherous because my hand landed on her soft breast. Using her paw, she moved it off, sending me a clear message that she wouldn't be able to sleep if I were to do that. The problem was that my hand now rested on her upper belly, and I couldn't help myself but play with her adorable belly button. Again, her paws moved my hand elsewhere. Trixie had too many sensitive spots, so it made things more complicated at bedtime.

I could feel her belly rising and lowering quite rapidly. The only thing I could think of was that she was still turned on. After all, I was the one who had an earth-shattering orgasm, not her. I wasn't too sure how I could help while she wore her suit. Massaging her crotch would just frustrate her more.

So I decided to do exactly that, let my hand go down a bit more, and massage her crotch, voiding all prior logic. This time, instead of pushing my hand away, she arched her back and put her paw on top of her crotch, wanting to feel my fingers better.

But then, something caught my attention.

"Tri... Trixie? Where... where is your lock? Your crotch zipper isn't locked as usual."

Shocked, Trixie crunched up to look. Then turned to me with pleading eyes. I was pretty sure I knew what she wanted. She was Trixie, after all.

I forced her to lay back down on her back and placed my hand back on her latex crotch. After massaging it some more, the bunny was seriously pumping air, so something needed to be done about that. I found the small zipper tab and pulled it down, very slowly.

A few centimeters down, I could feel her engorged pussy lips along with some warm slippery liquid. Trixie tried to massage herself, but I didn't let her; it was my turn to make her feel good.

When Misti and Trixie had made love to me at the pethouse, I saw them doing something together that I had never seen before. They had not done it on me, but I was dying to try it because it seemed so pleasurable.

I moved around on the bed in a way to approach my naked crotch to her. Misti had called this scissoring or something, and Trixie had loved it so much. And I think the rabbit understood what I was trying to do since she helped me move in the proper position for it.

"Mmmm... Do you like this, Trixie."

She kind of nodded, probably too excited to focus on talking at the moment.

When our wet pussy lips connected, it was like an electric shock. Until they had demonstrated this to me, I would never have thought this was a thing women did. But now that I knew, it didn't take me too long to figure it out. We very slowly rubbed our pussy together, helped by our natural wetness, and it was ridiculously pleasurable. Our swollen and well-lubricated clitoris collided and procured a new sensation that was beyond ecstatic.

Trixie was mentally gone as well. I could see that she tried to rub my body with her soft paw, she wanted to take care of me, but her level of sexual pleasure was unmanageable. I was proud of being able to do this for her. She was my good friend, and I wanted her to feel as good as I was.

For a long moment, we kept doing this, even after Trixie had an intense orgasm. She wanted more, I wanted more, we were not ready to stop anytime soon. We took a few pauses, but she had learned something about me that she had the firm intention to exploit; her rubber feet kept going to my crotch or my face.

I had no regrets about having asked to sleep at the café with Trixie tonight.



"Oreo, come here. Your bow is falling again."

Many days later, on Christmas day. We had set up a little stand on the large walkway in front of the Cakes & Pets, and all the pets were suited up and ready to collect money for the city children's hospital.

The snow fell lightly, but it was not too cold. There were many people in the street enjoying their day off and walking around to absorb the ambiance of the holidays. Lucy and I kept an eye on the pets, so they didn't cause chaos or get in trouble, but everything was going well so far. Lucy sold a lot of overpriced cakes, and people weren't shy to pay money to get a hug and a picture with their favorite pet.

The bigger annoyance so far was that Oreo's red Christmas bow tied around her neck kept falling. It was the third time and probably not the last. Surprisingly, Oreo was the most popular pet tonight. By talking with people, we understood there was a new popular TV show that featured a cat who looked just like her. It was funny to see that the pets had been so jealous of Vix all those years, and now that the celebrity had shifted to someone else, it was not as fun

anymore. I think Oreo was tired of people calling her by the name of the cat from the TV show. Perhaps we should have asked her to wear the available cheetah costume instead. But all in all, it was good for our small charity fund.

Lucy smiled at me.

"So, Clara. How are you feeling lately?"

"Good. Very good. I'm like a new person."

"Hehe. I would say so. I'm so proud of you. You dealt with your family issues very well. Everybody is glad to have you back. To have an even better version of you back."

"Thanks. I still struggle sometimes, but the therapist said it would take time."

"I believe it's true. So, tomorrow you are moving to the pethouse for good?"

"Yes. Vix and Asha are off, and they will welcome me, they said."

"Good. I'm glad. And don't forget about what we talked about. Our little plan for your future. Start thinking about it, okay?."

"Hmmm... Yes, Lucy."

I lowered my head, knowing what she was referring to. I wasn't too sure how I felt about her idea, but I supposed it was the right thing to do. It made me nervous.

As I was about to discuss this topic further with her, I felt a pet pulling on my arm.

"Vix? What is it?"

She pointed at a man who was standing a good distance away from our stand; perhaps he was shy. I approached him, wanting to know if he wanted a hug and a picture, but he addressed me first without the shyness I had apprehended.

"Hi, how much for a picture with all the pets and a hug from the owner?"

"A... a hug from the owner?"

"Yes."

"... One... One moment, please."

Taken aback but this odd request, I went back to Lucy, who was busy fixing Oreo's bow for the fourth time.

"Lucy... A man wants a picture with all the pets, and a hug..."

"It's five dollars per pet... so 35\$..."

"But... He wants a hug... from you."

Lucy paused for a moment, and then let a long sigh out while closing her eyes. She then stood up straight, making a serious face that I had never seen before. From a distance, she severely looked at the man in silence for a long time before telling me the most preposterous amount ever.

"Ten thousand dollars!"

"... Ten... Ten thousand!? But... Lucy? Is it not... a bit much?"

"It's ten thousand, or he can get lost."

"O...o... okay."

With a now burning face, I looked down at my feet and went back to the man, ashamed.

"So... sorry, mister... She said... T...T...Ten thousand... dollars... I'm... sorry."

The man wasn't even looking at me. His eyes were riveted to Lucy's. There was such tension in the air, and I didn't know what to do. This was madness.

The same way Lucy had done, he let a long sigh out and then just smiled gently.

"Alright. Do you accept checks?"

"Y...yes."

What was happening? He took out his checkbook from the interior pocket of his long black coat and wrote me a check for ten thousand. Who had this kind of money to spend on a photo? Why was Lucy charging him such an unfair amount?

After detaching the check from the booklet, he placed it in my hands.

"Thank you, Clara. Come on, girls. Let's take a picture."

The check was so heavy that my hands were shaking. And how did he know my name? Did he hear Lucy saying it out loud while I wasn't listening? And how come he was organizing the photo with the pets all of a sudden?

The bouncy pets obeyed, though, and quickly surrounded him happily. The man looked at me, waiting for something.

"Oh, right! The photo!"

I rushed to grab my instant camera and put my head through the strap. I trotted in front of the group and got ready to take the photo. But then the man turned to Lucy and called her over.

"Wait! Lucy... aren't you joining us?"

"Really!?"

"Please?"

That was unreal. The strange man had just convinced Lucy to join him and the pets for the photo. Looking at that with my mouth wide open earned me a swift scolding from Lucy.

"Clara! Let's get over with this, will you?"

"Oh... Right!"

I placed the instant camera in front of my face and looked through the viewfinder...

"Smile!"

Click! Ffzzzzzz!

By the time the little square slid out of the camera, Lucy had already left the group and had returned to organizing her cakes. But the man recalled her right away. There was something else that was part of that ten thousand dollar deal. They were too far for me to understand what they were saying, but Lucy approached him and let him take her in his arms.

Her two hands rested immobile at her side, not participating in the hug he had asked for. He rubbed her back in a non-threatening manner and murmured something in her ear, and finally, after a bit, she wrapped her arms around him, as gently as he did.

I was mesmerized by the scene. Who could he be to her? How was he so generous, and how come he knew my name?

It didn't take too long before he let Lucy go. I was able to read his lips when he said, "thank you," but then he walked away, gently patting Accalia's head on his way out, just because she was there.

"Hey, wait, your photo!"

Vix snatched the picture from my hands by clamping it between her two paws and ran after him. After she gave him the expensive photo, she wrapped her arms around him. He returned her hug, crouched, and exchanged a few words for a moment while rubbing her arms.

After Vix gave him another hug and returned to her friends, I shyly went to see Lucy.

"Lucy, who was..."

"Alright, I'm going to bring that check inside. We don't want to lose it. I'll be back in a few minutes."

"..."

Clearly, she wasn't disposed to discuss him. She walked away and entered the animal café, leaving me alone with the pets.

The latex animals didn't seem to care too much about what had happened. Misti was trying to fix Oreo's neck bow that was crooked again, the other pets restarted to wave at random pedestrians, but Trixie turned to me for a moment, then walked in my direction.

She had sensed that I was missing a critical piece of information, and she wanted to help.

"Trixie? What is going on? What happened?"

She put her paw on my chest and shook her head as if to say, "Don't worry." Then she turned her head left and right, looking for something. The store next to the café had some big signs in their bay window. Trixie trotted to it and pointed at one of them with her cushy paw, trying to tell me something.

"A window?"

She shook her head, no.

"A sign?"

She shook her head, no, and pointed at different places on the sign.

"Oh... You are pointing at the letters?"

She nodded. All she wanted me to do was to read the letters she pointed at.

"H... U... S... B... A... N... D... Husband!?"

Trixie nodded.

Animal Café - Accalia

"You stay right there while I'm calling the police!"

"No! Please! Don't do this!"

"You are a thief, and you attacked one of my employees. You should have thought about it twice before doing something so idiotic."

"You... you can't keep me here by force!"

"I sure can. Have you ever heard about a citizen's arrest? You stay on that chair and don't move a muscle until the police show up. You can plead your case to them to your heart content."

"..."

How did it come down to this? What kind of twisted situation did I put myself in? It shouldn't have happened. I was trying very hard to think of a way out, but there was none. I had been caught in the act.

This woman was stronger and more intelligent than me, and she forced me to sit on a chair in the kitchen, making sure I had no easy way out. Even if I decided to run for it, I would have no chance of success.

Her smartphone was on speakerphone while she talked to the cops, proving that she wasn't bluffing. Simultaneously, she was pressing some tissues on her employee's nose to stop the bleeding.

An ocean of regrets washed over me, but there was nothing I could do about it now.

I was going down, and it made me feel extremely sad.



A week ago...

"Oh my God, guys! This is fucked up!"

"Whaaat!? No way! A café full of latex petgirls? Who would go to such a place? Perverts and losers!"

"Hahaha!"

I was sitting in a fast food restaurant with two friends when one of them showed us a news article on her phone, something about a new café that had recently opened downtown. There was a picture of a woman and three costumed girls; a fox, a raccoon, and a rabbit. The place was called Cakes & Pets, and it was absurd.

They said it was a place where people would relax and pet animals while eating delicious cakes. It was an excellent description to embellish the reason for the existence of a shop destined for porn addicts in need of making their fetish dreams come true.

Casey and Rachel started theorizing about the place.

"I wonder if they make a lot of money."

"Probably! It's porn, right. And the clients probably all pay cash too because those nasty nerds don't want their wives to find out about it."

"Hahaha! We should go for fun!"

"Ewww! No! I'm sure those girls stink of bodily fluids!"

"Grrooooooss!"

Feeling brave, I decided to jump into the conversation and challenge my friends.

"I'll go! I want to see what kind of guys go to a place like that."

"Common, Lian! You can't be serious."

"Why not. Just for the kick of it."

"Well, it's true that you are Asian, so you like those fucked up Japanese café!"

"Hey! I was born here, you know! And I'm not even from Japanese descent."

"Whatever... You still look Japanese enough."

It had nothing to do with anything, but they liked to make fun of me just because I was Asian. It was annoying, but I had to live with it since only white people surrounded me.

"Screw you, Rachel. At least I'm not a coward."

"Heeey! I'm not a coward!"

"Alright, prove it then. Let's go to the café on Saturday."

"... Fine! But if we get HIV, don't come whining!"

"I'm coming too, Lian. I want to witness that. At least they have cheesecakes. I love cheesecakes."

And just like that, we had a twisted plan for the weekend. On Saturday, we would go to the creepiest shop in town.



"I expected this place to be in the shitiest area of the city, but it's in the cleanest part instead."

"Well, at least we won't get raped."

"Bahaha!"

"Alright, you go in first, Lian... It was your idea."

"My idea... Well, you are the one who found this place first, Rachel."

"No way! Let's send Casey in, first!"

"WHAT? NO!"

Not leaving her any choice, I pushed Casey inside the shop while Rachel held the door open. It must have been the most chaotic entrance ever, and right off the bat, it got us scolded by the woman standing in the lobby.

"Hey! Hey! What the big deal, guys? Do you want to break my door or what? "

We couldn't stop giggling like idiots, but what she said brought us back to reality. We had entered the most perverted place in town.

"So, what can I do for you?"

"..."

I elbowed Casey in the ribs to make her talk.

"We... we found the news article about your shop."

"Oh, so you are here to see the pets?"

"Y... yes. And eat cheesecakes."

"Sounds good to me. Welcome. I'm Lucy, the owner. We have four pets that you can play with today. Can I see your IDs?"

"Our IDs? Why?"

"Because I made this place nineteen years old and over."

"Because... there is sex?"

"Sex? What are you talking about? I just didn't want this place to become a petting zoo for kids. It's not the objective. Were you coming here for sex?"

"..."

I decided to jump in since Casey ran out of words.

"No, no. We are just here for the cheesecake and visit the place."

"Alright then, show me your IDs, and I'll let you in. Our cakes are the best in town."

Luckily I had turned nineteen last month. Casey and Rachel were twenty and twenty-one, respectively, so we were good. Lucy opened the lounge door, and we stepped into it.

We all stopped breathing at the same time.

"..."

"..."

"..."

The place was not exactly what we had in mind. It had a soft relaxing ambiance and was not as creepy as it was supposed to be. The big windows allowed a lot of light in despite the privacy blinds preventing pedestrians from looking inside. The carpet was soft, and the booth and sofa had a cozy feel to them.

But what intimidated us were the four latex petgirls who had noticed our arrival. Two of them were busy with other clients, but the two others seemed to want something from us.

When the red fox approached Casey, she yelped and hid behind me. Rachel was even bolder and pushed the raccoon on the forehead to prevent her from coming closer, which made me uncomfortable.

"Aaah! No! Stay away from me!"

"Rachel! Don't do that! We will get kicked out! I'm sure you aren't allowed to rough them up."

"They are so creepy!"

"Ssshhh! Don't insult them. Let's go sit down."

We came here for shit and giggles, but what they were doing was rude. I didn't say it out loud because my friends would have made fun of me, but the petgirls were not creepy. They were pretty cute, in my opinion. The red fox was kneeling next to me and clung to my leg. But the raccoon seemed very offended by what Rachel had done and turned heels on us. That wasn't a good start.

After picking one of the booths, the fox girl sat next to me and wrapped her arms around mine, which caused my friends to make fun of me.

"Haha. You are turning into a lesbian!"

"Shut up, Casey! You are going to get us expelled. Why are you so mean?"

"Well, you never had a boyfriend, so it just makes sense that girls attract you."

"Haha! Lian is a lesbian!"

Rachel could be just as mean as Casey. Not only were they teasing me for being Asian, but now they had assigned me a sexual orientation without any good reason. It was true that I never had a boyfriend, but it didn't mean anything, I was just small and intimidated by guys; they were all so big.

But the most embarrassing was that they didn't seem to care about the girl sitting next to me. She may have been wearing an animal costume, but she could hear everything they were saying. I wondered what kind of emotions she hid behind those big black eyes.

It was mortifying. I didn't know my friends were going to be so openly disrespectful. All I wanted by coming here was to have a bit of innocent fun.

The next phase of their misbehavior was to comment on the physical appearance of the other clients. I had to admit that I participated in that, probably as a desire to fit in. But then I felt extra bad when the fox girl just shook her head and walked away from us. Inside my heart, I wanted her to come back. But she went back to her raccoon friend and gesticulated something, probably fed up by our nasty behavior.

Still, we ordered our cheesecakes, at least they were delicious, but the owner looked at us weird when we said that we preferred not having pets with us while we ate. Rachel wouldn't stop calling them creepy.

Shortly after our cakes, we were ready to leave. We had seen enough and I didn't want them to insult the pets further. Rachel announced our departure, but Casey had something else on her mind.

"Alright, let's go. It was fun but way too weird. I'm out of here."

"Wait! Did you see the cash register at the entrance? On the desk where she checked our IDs?"

"Yeaah? What about it?"

"I think the cash drawer wasn't closed."

"Oh, really? Interesting."

My eyes grew round as dish plates. What were they referring to? I understood what they were saying, but I didn't want to believe it.

"Woah, guys. What are you saying?"

"Well... If nobody keeps an eye on it, we could make a few easy dollars."

"WHAT!"

"Ssshhh! Keep it down, Lian! It's no big deal! Rachel and I have done this before."

"I didn't see any camera either... It would be easy to get away with it."

"Guuuuuys! We can't steal their money!"

"Well, why not? They will never know who did it. I'm sure they make plenty of cash here anyway."

That wasn't cool at all. I knew Casey and Rachel weren't angels and made me complicit in some dine and dash before, but stealing from a cash register was next level. They kept pressuring me.

"Come on, Lian! It's not a big deal, I tell you. If the drawer is closed, we forget about it, but it would take two seconds to grab what's in it if it's open. They probably won't even notice it's missing."

"... I... I don't know. It feels so wrong."

"Don't you always say you need money?"

"Yeah... but... I mean..."

Out of the blue, we heard a big splash coming from the table next to us. One of the clients tipped over his chocolate milkshake, and it spilled all over the table. The white rabbit who was sitting next to him received her fair share of the sugary drink.

Lucy, who was nearby, rushed to the table with napkins while the client apologized profusely.

"Haaa, Trixie! You are full of chocolate now. Did you do this?"

Trixie shook her head.

"Okay, well. We have to clean you up, don't we? Come with me upstairs. I'll take care of you."

After tossing a few more napkins over the mess, Lucy took Trixie by the wrist and exited the lounge.

Immediately, Casey smelled a perfect opportunity.

"Let's do this now! She said she was going upstairs to clean up the creepy rabbit!"

"..."

"Okay, Rachel and I will make sure nobody comes in, and you, Lian, you go grab the cash from the drawer if it's open. If it's not, at least we will get a free cake out of this."

"No, no! Wait! I..."

"Let's go!"

Rachel and Casey got off their seat real quick, and because of the intense pressure, I followed them. We exited the lounge, and they both headed to the front door to make sure there was nobody around.

"What are you waiting for, Lian! Do it now!"

"Shiiiiit! Hurry! I think someone's coming!"

"..."

Panicking, I didn't know how to react to what my friends asked me to do. Not thinking straight anymore, I went behind the desk and looked at the cash register.

The drawer was indeed not shut properly...

"Hurry! Lian! Hurry!"

"..."

I opened it with my finger, saw a pile of twenty dollars bills, and nervously grabbed it.

What was I doing? Why was I doing this?

DING DING DING DING DING DING!

Coming out of thin air, the raccoon girl had sneaked in the lobby and slammed her paw repeatedly on the call bell next to the cash register with the clear intention to alert the owner.

Panicked, I quickly ran around the desk, but the raccoon girl tackled me at the waist level, causing me to drop all the money I tried to steal. I heard Casey and Rachel in the background.

"SHIT! What an idiot! Let's ditch her! I'm not getting in trouble again because of her!"

"Yeah! Fuck her! She had one job to do!"

Fighting someone as big as me was not easy. I wished I had been a few inches taller, but I wasn't.

"LET ME GO! LET ME GO! I'M SORRY!"

Her strong arms around my waist prevented me from running away. She then pulled very hard to make me lose balance, and we both fell heavily on the floor.

"Oof!"

As I tried to regain my sense, a woman with an angry face towered over me.

"Don't you dare move a finger, thief!"

"..."

"Meeka? Are you okay?"

The raccoon shook her head, and pointed at her muzzle repeatedly.

"Coming here to steal my money is one thing, but the fact that you hurt my pet, that ENRAGES me!"



"Are you okay Meeka?"

"Yeah... I don't think my nose is broken. I just got her elbow in the face when we fell."

"Well, that's gonna go on the police report too."

"Lucy, I don't think she wanted to hurt me. She was just trying to run away. It was an accident."

"She is still responsible. It wouldn't have happened if she had not tried to steal our money."

I lowered my head in shame. What the girl named Meeka was saying was true. I never wanted to hurt anybody and didn't even want to steal the money. My friends were the ones who had dragged me into this, yet, I followed their stupid idea like a sheep.

When we got to the kitchen, Lucy had unzipped Meeka's costume and peeled her raccoon mask off to check on her. When I saw the blood running out of her nose, I felt super guilty and wanted to die. But the most unsettling was that Meeka was trying to protect me.

"Lucy, you know it was not her? It was her douchebag friends who forced her to do this. I heard everything. That's why I decided to hold the lounge door open when they left to see if they were actually going to do it."

"Meeka, I told you not to use dirty words like that. And it doesn't matter. She got caught red-handed. The police will deal with her as they see fit."

"Awww, but it wasn't her fault!"

"Meeka, that's enough. And keep your head slightly forward, else you are going to swallow your blood."

"Okaaaay!"

A bit later, the police showed up to pick me up. They talked to Lucy and Meeka separately to get the full story, and then, after cuffing me, they took me to the police station to file a case against me and take my fingerprints. It must have been the most humiliating day of my entire life.

Since I had no previous criminal record, they let me return home with a court date and a promise not to contact Rachel and Casey or go to any restaurant. I didn't want to go back to jail, so I was certainly not going to break those conditions.

A few weeks later, I appeared in front of a judge, and things didn't go at all as I had expected. First, the charge for having hurt Meeka was dropped; I wouldn't be surprised to learn that she had tweaked her story to get me out of trouble. And then, the robbery attempt charge was dropped as well since it was too severe for what I had done. So I ended up with a strange charge for having schemed to commit a crime. My lawyer used terms that I couldn't understand, and his discussion with the judge was just a blur.

All that to say that I ended up with two hundred hours of community service to do and a criminal record. I would only be able to request a pardon after five years.

After the hearing, my lawyer went one way, and I went the other, carrying a stack of papers in my hands. All of this had been very transactional and left me very confused. When I opened the door to exit the courthouse, I thought the entire population would throw rotten tomatoes at me and treat me like a criminal, but there was nobody. Nobody cared about what I had done, and more than ever before, I felt very lonely.

But then, a small voice coming out from behind me stopped me in my tracks.

"Hey! Lian! Wait!"

"..."

"Wait! It's me, Meeka! Recognize me?"

"Mee... Meeka? I... I don't think I'm allowed to talk to you."

"Yes, you are! I was in the courtroom when you talked to the judge. You have a lot of hours to do, but they lifted all your other restrictions. Weren't you listening?"

"You... you shouldn't talk to me. I... I need to go. I'm sorry for what I have done... I didn't mean to."

"I know that! I'm not dumb. I heard everything at the café. Stop walking! Hear me out, okay? I can't call your friends douchebags because Lucy said I shouldn't, well, I guess I just said it again, but that's what they are. Anyway, I explained what happened to the police, and that's why you got away with only a few community service hours."

"A few? That's two hundred! It's a lot."

"I want you to do them at the café! I already asked Lucy, and she is okay with it. I can't think of a better way for you to apologize to her."

"That's impossible... she must hate me so much. I tried to steal from her, and I hurt you."

"Yeaah... Well, she kind of still hates you and said no. But I asked her again... and again... and again... and then she said yes."

"... I don't know. It feels so wrong. What would I do at the café, anyway? I never worked in a place like this before."

"Oh, don't worry about that. Lucy will find you something to do. Alright, tell me the name of your probation officer. We will call him and set this up."

"Are... Are you sure it's a good idea?"

"Yep, you are small and cute, so it would be perfect."

"Small and cute?"

I had no idea what Meeka had meant by that, but she insisted so much that I had no other choice but to share my probation officer's contact.



A few days later, I was standing in front of the Cakes & Pets, traumatized. Why did I even accept to do my hours here? My eyes got all wet at the thought that I would have to face the owner again. Last time, she was far to be as understanding as Meeka had been.

The café's door opened, and my heart skipped a beat; it was Lucy.

"Don't just stand there, Lian. You'll be late for your first shift. You don't want me to call your probation officer, do you?"

"...n... no."

"Come on, then, follow me. You have nothing to fear."

Looking at the floor, I walked into the café and followed Lucy. She led me directly upstairs, probably to scold me for what I had done to her and ask for an apology.

We entered a small room, and she asked me to sit on a chair.

"Alright. To be honest, I didn't expect to see you ever again. You can thank Meeka for this. She can be convincing. Thinking about it, working here will be a good lesson for you."

"... I... I don't want to be punished again! I'm just here to work my hours. Meeka said it would be okay."

"I said, teach you a lesson. Not punish you. And yes, you are going to work, don't you worry about that."

"So, what do I have to do, then? I can serve drinks and do the dishes and clean the washrooms."

An evil grin appeared on Lucy's face as she retrieved a box from one of the shelves. She sliced the seal and pulled something out of it. When I understood what it was, I stopped breathing.

"You... you can't be serious?"

"Oh yes, I've been looking for a new pet for a while, and you are the perfect size."

"But... But... I don't want to be a pet."

"Why not? Didn't you find them cute. Vix told me you liked it when she cuddled with you on the bench."

"Vix?"

"The red fox."

"Oh... well... yeah... she was very cute... but..."

"Alright. Just try the costume, and if you don't like it, we will take it off, okay?"

"..."

"That would be the best way to apologize to me, okay? Just try. I swear, if you don't like it, we will take it off."

"O... okay."

Putting the animal suit on was quite an experience. Not only the rubber felt a million times better than I had expected, but on top of that, Lucy showed me a lot of kindness and support. She didn't seem angry at me anymore and was very encouraging while I was going through this new experience.

The mask part was the toughest, but she went very slowly and made sure to walk me through every step to avoid discomfort. Once I was all zipped in, she moved me in front of a mirror.

And my heart melted.

"So, do you like it? You are super cute."

I surprised myself nodding.



A few minutes later, Lucy opened the lounge door to let me in, rubbed my back gently, and called all her pets over.

"Come here, everybody. Let me introduce you to your new friend."

The petgirls all stopped whatever they were doing and came very close to me.

"This is Accalia! You have to be very gentle because she has never done this before, okay?"

As soon as she said that, a bunch of cushy rubber paws touched me everywhere.

They liked me much better as a small grey wolf.

Chapter 18 - Steamy Pets

"So, what do you want to do, Clara?"

"I don't know, Asha. Lucy didn't say anything about that."

"Hehe, you are funny. Lucy is not going to choose which bed you are going to sleep in."

Today was a huge day. I was officially moving to the pethouse, this luxurious penthouse perched atop a tall insurance building in the middle of the downtown business area. Asha and Vix were supposed to welcome me, but the small fox girl wasn't around. Apparently, Lucy had decided to keep her an extra day at the café, possibly because she didn't want to overwhelm me on my first day in my new home.

It was okay since Asha was my friend, and I didn't mind spending the day alone with her while she showed me around the place. I've been here before, so I was somewhat familiar with the apartment's layout, but there was one room I had not seen yet, the second bedroom, and it raised an unexpected issue.

From what Asha told me, whoever came back to the pethouse on any given day slept together in the same bed. As an example, if Trixie and Misti were to be off, they would share the same bed just because it was more fun that way. The other bedroom was only used when one of them was ill or desired to be alone for whatever reason, but that was relatively rare.

This arrangement was convenient for them due to their erratic work schedule and because they got to sleep with whoever was off at the same time. As far as I knew, all the petgirls were good friends and loved to cuddle with each other... and more. Asha said that spending intimate time with one of two different friends each week was something they all appreciated a lot.

That said, my presence would introduce a slightly different dynamic. Whenever a pet would be off work, it would come back to the pethouse, and I would always be there. This could become problematic for petgirls who liked the variety. Asha said it wouldn't be an issue, but my confidence level was not that high, I didn't want to feel like I was in the way, disrupting a lifestyle they loved.

So I had two options. I could sleep in the same bed with whatever pets would be at the pethouse on any given night, or I could use the second bedroom to make sure I didn't impose myself on them. It was not an easy choice.

Asha wrapped her arms around me. To her, there was only one right choice.

"I prefer that you sleep with us all the time."

"Are... are you sure?"

"Of course, I am."

"What if... you want to sleep with someone else... without me?"

"Oh, I don't think I want that, Clara! The way you licked my crotch a while ago, I want more of that."

Instantaneously, my face turned beet red, and some steam came out of my ears. Of course, Asha wasn't going to forget the time when I gave her a big orgasm thinking she was Trixie. I opened up a bit more about sex since seeing a therapist, but I was still not as comfortable as the other girls when it came the time to talk about it.

"Haha. Poor Clara. Sorry, I shouldn't tease you like this on your first day. Tonight it's just the two of us here. Vix will only come back tomorrow, so you have plenty of time to think about what you want to do. Come with me. I need to tell you about another rule of the pethouse."

"Okay."

So far, the rules Asha explained to me were just plain common sense; not to break anything because none of the furniture in the pethouse belonged to us, not communicate with the building staff unless necessary, going out for a few hours on Wednesday afternoon because people would come to clean the place and restock the fridge, and not ask Lucy questions about the pethouse, or at the very least not insist if she doesn't want to talk about it. There was nothing complicated about any of this.

As I followed Asha downstairs, I realized something funny that made me giggle.

"Pffhaha!"

"Hey, what!? What's funny?"

"You walk like... Asha the rubber snow leopard! Haha."

"I... I do?"

"Yes. It's like you still have a tail and cushy paws."

"Mmm... I guess I built a bad habit..."

"Haha... No. It's very cute."

"Awww! Stop it, Clara! Now I feel self-conscious!"

After she poked me in the stomach, we went to the living room with the big window wall. It was still as impressive as when I came here the first time. Our view of the city was as beautiful as it was dizzying. I still had a tough time believing I would live here with all my friends.

Asha wanted to show me the dresser in the corner, the one from which I saw the pets getting their money. She pulled out one of the unlabeled drawers and placed it on top of the desk.

"So, each of us has a drawer like this. That's where we keep our personal items like our keys, phone, and money. We don't need any of this when we go work at the café, so we just leave it here."

"Why... are you doing it like that? Aren't you scared that someone would... steal?"

'Steal!?' No! We all trust each other very much. The worst that ever happened was when Oreo forgot a half-eaten yogurt inside her drawer and went to work for five days."

"A yogurt?"

"Haha. Yes... It's a long story. Anyway, let's make you a personal drawer."

She pulled a stack of blank labels from another drawer and detached one of them. She then grabbed a bunch of markers of different colors and showed them to me.

"What color do you want for your name? I think blue suits you. It was the color of your face when you first showed up at the café."

"Ashaaa! That's mean!"

"Haha. Okay, let's just use black. It's easy to read."

I nodded.

After writing my name on the label, she slid it in the plastic sheath in front of the drawer and placed it back in the dresser.

"There. It's yours. You can put your stuff in it."

"Thank you."

I didn't have much on me; some keys, a few dollars, and a couple of ID cards. My unemployment was deposited in my bank account directly, so I had no cash on me.

"You don't use a bank, Asha?"

"Oh yeah, we all have a bank account. Lucy is trying to educate us because some of the pets are pretty bad with money."

"... Like Trixie?"

"Oh my God, yes. Trixie is the worst with money. Lucy said that we could only spend part of our income from the café, and the rest is going to our savings accounts for when we are ready to move on. When it's payday, a sum is deposited automatically in our bank, but she gives us a portion of it in cash to enjoy life outside the café. She also said that if we spent more than our cash amount, she would fire us."

"Hehe. She would not do that."

"I know, but it's better not to take the risk. You'll have to talk to her about this. You are not one of her pets, so I can't see her controlling your finances."

I scratched my head. Asha just said something that made me think. Now that I moved into the pethouse, I didn't need to pay rent anymore, and I didn't need to pay for food either, so money kind of lost its relevance.

"I... I don't need money."

"What? What do you mean?"

"I have no rent, and you said there is always food here."

"Yes, but don't you want to spend money on fun stuff?"

"... Fun stuff?"

"Clara! Don't you have hobbies or something?"

"I... don't. I like going to the café, but Lucy doesn't want me to give her money for my cakes."

"No, I meant things you like outside the café. Things that you spend money on for fun."

"Oh! I know. Remember when you saw me at the mall, Asha?"

"Yes. I can't forget that. You were too shy to look at me out of costume."

"So, when I was there, I bought a pair of shoes."

"... Clara, buying a pair of shoes is not a hobby. And that was months ago too."

"..."

It was not easy to come up with an answer to her question. Outside spending a few dollars on used books, I never had any money to spend on anything. I lowered my head in shame, realizing how uninteresting my life was.

Asha pulled me in her arms again.

"Awww, sorry. It's okay, Clara. I'm too hard on you on your first day here. I'm just a bit excited that you moved in with us. We will do fun activities together, and we will find things that you like to do."

"It's okay..."

"Come, I know what will cheer you up."

Asha held my hand and pulled me to the oversized leather couch, so big that we could both lay down side by side on it. It was the same couch where I saw Trixie and Misti make love during my first visit.

For the next little while, we cuddled quietly. Asha was right; it made me very happy. I remembered feeling guilty about wanting to pet her beautiful hair back when I was in crisis, but I no longer felt that way. She let me pet her as much as I wanted, causing me to almost abuse that privilege.

Thinking that, not that long ago, I had considered walking away from all the petgirls that I loved so much made me feel like a fool. I squeezed her in my arms and held her until we fell asleep for a little nap. She was not wearing her snow leopard costume, but it was almost as good.



A bit later, after we woke up, Asha made me a sandwich and explained the fridge system.

"See that touchscreen on the door?"

"I never had a fridge... with a screen."

"Hehe... The pethouse is kind of luxurious, isn't it? Don't worry. I never had a screen on my fridge either before moving here. So, if you want some specific food or item, you just add it to this list here, and if you enter it before Tuesday, you'll have it when they restock the fridge on Wednesday."

"Really?"

"Yes, but Lucy said not to abuse. She said that mostly because of Trixie, who would undoubtedly order the whole grocery store, but she also doesn't want us to act like spoiled brats when we return to the café."

"Hehe. Trixie is funny."

"Yes, she can be. So, we also receive those meal kits. Each one comes in a separate bag. So if you are hungry, you just grab one and cook it following the recipe card."

"Oh... That's nice."

I loved the pethouse so far. Lucy seemed to keep reasonable control of what was happening here. She didn't want her pets to develop bad habits outside the café, so she kept them on a tight leash even when they were not at work. It was definitely more a way to help them grow in life and teach them good values rather than just controlling them. Knowing that I would get to enjoy

the same motherly love that Lucy provided to her pets made me very happy and safe and made me feel part of the café family a bit more.

Asha used her two hands to pull the large fridge door open and leaned into it to see what kind of meal kit they had received this time around.

"AAAH!"

"Eep!"

"Oh, sorry. I scared you. But... LOOK!"

Asha pulled one of the food bags out and brought it up to my face, almost too close for me to read the label.

"Ch... Chicken... tikka... masala?"

"YES! YUM! Can we eat that tonight? Please, Clara!"

"... What... what is it?"

"WHAT!? Don't you know what chicken tikka masala is? CLARA! I must cook it for you then!"

I obviously didn't have extensive culinary knowledge.

"Okay, but what is it?"

"My favorite Indian food!"

"Asha... Are you Indian?"

"Yes, I am. But I moved here when I was two years old, so I don't know anything about India. I only know the food because I grew up on that delicious stuff. I know Vix is not a fan, so we must eat it tonight. Tomorrow she won't want to eat that."

"I can try it."

"YAAAY! Clara! I'm so happy you moved in!"

After agreeing to try Asha's Indian food and the neck-breaking hug that ensued, we went back upstairs to look at more things.

She assigned me a shelf in the giant walk-in closet along with a section to hang my clothes. I didn't have many clothes, and none of them looked better than the ones the petgirls possessed. She said that all the pets frequently borrowed clothes from each other since they were all roughly the same size, but I was pretty sure nobody would borrow mine; I didn't own any good looking ones.

Following that, we headed to the big bathroom. I had taken a quick shower in there once, but I was in a hurry because I had to run to work. Asha took the time to show me all the nice features this time.

"So, there is a big rain shower that can fit three people... and yes, we tried. Hehe. And here you have the closet with all our towels. Just grab any of them when you need it, but do NOT take the towel with the fox on it. It's Vix's, and she won't share it with anybody. When Accalia moved in, she didn't know and used it. There was a big drama."

"Okay. I don't want to make Vix sad. This big door over there... It's strange. Is it another closet?"

"Ha! WAY better than that... It's a steam room!"

"A steam room!?"

"Yes... A sauna full of steam!"

"I don't think I know what it is."

"Oh, hehe. Want to try it, Clara?"

"Like... now?"

"Yes. It's as simple as turning it on and taking off our clothes."

"..."

I had never tried a steam room before, so I didn't know what it felt like to be in one. But was this really the source of my hesitation? Asha stared at me, waiting for my answer. I've seen her naked before, so it wouldn't be a big deal to undress in front of her. So what was it?

Asha was very pretty. Her coffee-colored skin was just fascinating to me, and her jet black hair was so silky. I didn't feel anywhere near this level of cuteness. Everything about me seemed dull. Was that it? Was this why I was a bit scared? I would get to see a naked girl I was very attracted to, and in return, I had nothing to offer.

My eyes welled up a little as my stomach cramped due to my anxiety.

"Asha..."

"Clara? What is it? Are you okay?"

"You... You are very pretty."

"What!?! AWWW! Don't say things like that! You make me blush."

That was it. Asha didn't say it in return. She didn't say what I would have liked to hear. Lowering my head seemed to be the only thing to do.

"Do you really mean it, Clara?"

"Yes..."

"Well... What would you say if we get in the steam room, I'll let you explore my body as much as you want. You know... Since you like it that much."

"..."

"But there's one condition! You must let me explore your body too... because I... I always thought you were pretty too... but I didn't have the guts to say it out loud as you did. I'm not that brave."

"R... really?"

"Yeah... I really like your... your..."

"... my what?"

"Aaaah! Enough! I'll show you in the steam room! There is too much light here! Aaah! Why is it so much easier when I'm wearing my pet costume!?"

I didn't expect to see this shy side from Asha, but what she said cheered me up a little. Her comment about my prettiness came out of nowhere, and even if I was not sure I truly believed it, it made me feel warm and fuzzy anyway.

After pressing a few buttons on the control panel to turn on the steam room, Asha and I slowly stripped down, not looking at each other too much. It was easier to be naked in a bed or a capsule room, but standing in a bright bathroom like this made me feel very exposed.

Asha turned on some glowing red light in the dark steam room and entered it first.

"Come, Clara. It will get warmer quickly. Close the door behind you."

"Alright."

It was my turn to step into the small room, which was already very humid and hot. As requested, I closed the door behind me, sealing us inside this strange new world.

Right off the bat, it felt comfortable. The soft red light barely illuminated the place, and a veil of vapor made everything look blurry. All the walls were made of big glossy black tiles, promoting a very dark and intimate ambiance. A dark-skinned woman sitting on a small wooden bench extended her arms in my direction through the rising steam.

"Come sit with me, Clara! Hugging when it's hot... well... it's hot."

"Hehe."

I joined her on the bench, and it didn't take long for us to start touching each other. Something about this atmosphere made us stop questioning each other and turned us into two

romantic explorers. Asha grabbed my waist, and I rested my arms on top of her shoulders and pressed my forehead on hers. Being this close to her meant that she wouldn't be able to look at my naked body; it was a cheap strategy to keep my embarrassment in check.

"Asha? Did... Did you mean it?"

"Mean what? That you are cute?"

"Yes."

"Of course, I meant it, silly. Guess why all the pets were after you at the café when you showed up. Hehe. You have pretty eyes, a little nose, and lovely lips. The only thing I would change would be your hair. Why do you keep it like that? Look, if I put it sideways like this, it looks ten times better.

"I... I have never learned. Nobody ever helped me with my hair."

"Awww... Well, that's going to change. See, we just found the first thing we can do with your money. We can go for a haircut if you want."

"Misti said I should dye my hair blonde. And get the same haircut as her and Trixie."

"Don't be ridiculous... well... Wait a minute... Actually, even if I'm certain she said that because she wants a threesome with two hot blonde girls, that might not be a bad idea. Outside the hair color, you kind of look like them. Your face has the same shape. Yeah, let's do that. When Misti is off next, let her take you to the hairdresser. She knows what she is doing better than I do."

There was no reason not to be happy right now. I was with Asha in a hot steamy room, and she was amicably playing with my hair. It may have been a tiny detail, but it was what Lucy and the therapist had tried to explain to me. Life would be easier if I had friends surrounding me. At this very moment, even if I had not asked for anything, Asha was ready to take over my hairstyle, something I had always struggled with.

The heat was still rising, and the steam got denser. It was almost hard to breathe, but it also felt amazing. I couldn't tell my sweat apart from the moisture pearling on my skin.

"So, Clara... Do you remember when you wore Trixie's costume at the café?"

"Yes..."

"You know that time when we turned you into a delicious bunny cake?"

"..."

"Hehe... of course, you remember. It was a lot of fun. Lucy almost caught me playing with you. Good thing the clients said nothing. Haha."

"It... it was fun. Yes."

"But you know... I was jealous."

"Jealous? Why?"

"Because... Because I really wanted to do what the girl did to you back then. So I'm going to do it now!"

"..."

Asha gently lifted my arm, looking at me in the eyes to make sure I was okay with what she was doing. Then, she gave me a very long sensual lick from my lower ribs all the way up to my armpit, one of my most sensitive spots that she had discovered while I was helpless at the café.

"Aaashaaa! It... It tickles."

"Hehe. I waited for this moment for so long. I'll do it again!"

"Aaah!"

It was ridiculous. Defenseless, I couldn't do anything else other than letting Asha do whatever she wished to me. The irrelevance of my thoughts was incomprehensible; instead of fully appreciating what was happening to me, I wondered if this dizziness I felt was due to the hot steam or the very soft tongue that slowly dragged along my skin.

"I didn't tell anybody when I discovered that it was one of your favorite spots because I wanted to be the only one who knew about it. It's going to be our little secret, right?"

"Mmmph! Mmmph!"

"I'll take that as a yes. Hehe."

Thankfully, she didn't abuse her findings since I could have easily passed out in a room hot like this. She calmed me down with some sweet kisses instead. Her tongue definitely had a soothing effect when it delicately caressed mine.

I felt privileged to have a good friend like Asha, who took the time to get to know me.



Meanwhile, at the café...

"Vix, for the tenth time, get away from the door!"

Vix, the adorable rubber fox, gesticulated randomly at Lucy in a distressed manner.

"Because I have a tray full of food bottles in my hands, and you almost made me drop them. You wouldn't like your food to end up on the floor, would you?"

Vix gesticulated some more while blocking Lucy's path semi-voluntarily.

"I know you are upset because I didn't want you to go to the pethouse with Clara, but I told you why. I don't want to overwhelm her on her first day. You'll sleep here tonight, and tomorrow morning I will let you join Asha and her."

Vix shook her head, no. She wanted to go now, not tomorrow. She went to the door and tried to open it again, but her cushy paws prevented her from doing so.

"Vix, don't test my patience, okay? If you don't calm down, I won't let you see her all week. Is that what you want?"

Vix ignored Lucy and kept pulling uselessly on the door handle.

Trixie, the white bunny who was nearby, walked to Vix and wrapped her arm around her waist to pull her away from the door before Lucy truly lost her cool. Perhaps cuddling for a while with the agitated fox would calm her down. It was unlike Vix to be this restless.

"Careful, Trixie, don't rip her suit. It would just make things worse."

Trixie shook her head and kept pulling the angry fox girl backward as carefully as possible, but things quickly took an ugly turn. As soon as the fox girl got in range, the red fox high-kicked Lucy's tray off her hands, sending all the food bottles flying.

Oreo managed to catch one in her arms, but all the other soft plastic bottles crashed to the floor, exploded, and made a huge mess.

Lucy's face turned as red as Vix's latex suit.

"VIX! THAT'S IT! You've done it. I'm taking your costume away for a full week!"

Vix crossed her arms and looked sideways as if to say, "I don't care!" Receiving this expected punishment had been premeditated and would allow her to go see Clara early. But things didn't turn out the way she had anticipated.

"Oh, I'm not stupid, you know. I know what you think, Vix. But I have news for you, little devil. You are not allowed to go to the pethouse anymore until next week. You are going to stay in my apartment until your punishment is over."

Vix gesticulated frantically, disagreeing with the unexpected catastrophic sentence. Lucy had never done this before.

"I don't care. Look around you, foxy. Your friends were starving, but now they can't eat because of you. Do you think it was nice to do that to them? That's right! It was mean."

Vix looked around for the first time, just to see all the squeeze bottles with their cap popped and leaking food everywhere on the floor. Only then she realized that she had messed up big time. A rumbling noise sliced the lounge's awkward silence. She looked to her side and saw the white bunny holding her belly with her two paws; it was Trixie's stomach that had made that loud noise. Feeling sorry, Vix lowered her head in shame.

"Aaah! You get it now? Good. Go sit in the corner until I finish cleaning this mess, and then we will take you out of that suit. You'll help me cook their meals all over again. Did you hear me?"

Vix nodded.

"Are you sure?"

Vix nodded once more, turned around, and dragged her feet to the nearest booth, adopting a collapsed posture. Her punishment had not even begun that she had already learned her lesson. It would be a long miserable week, and she wouldn't get to see Clara.

"What a mess! Trixie, make sure nobody walks in this slosh."

Trixie nodded.

As Lucy was on her way out to fetch a mop, Oreo looked at the bottle she had caught in her arms during the incident. On the label, there was a name... hers. She couldn't believe that her meal was the only one that had survived this great food extinction.

Starving as much as the others, she ran to Lucy and pulled on her arm.

"Oreo! Now is not the time to play. I have to clean this and prepare your meals all over again."

Oreo shook her head. She just wanted to be fed quickly since her bottle was intact, so she pulled on Lucy's arm again and pointed in the direction of the table where her bottle was sitting.

"Okay, that's enough, Oreo! Bug me one more time tonight, and you'll join Vix. Is that what you want?"

Oreo shook her head, no, and returned to her seat. She was starving, and in front of her was her food bottle that Lucy hadn't noticed. There was nothing she could do about it. This was pure pet torture.

Animal Café - Oreo

It was one of those days that Oreo, the black and white cat, didn't like at all, the end of her work shift at the Cakes & Pets. Shortly, Lucy would grab her by the wrist and lead her to the costume room to take her pet suit off no matter how she would be fighting against it. This time around, she would be off for four days in a row, which made her sad.

Oreo was one of the pets who had quite a bit of difficulty outside the café, and being forced to live in this world that she didn't particularly like was difficult for her. At least Clara was going to be at the pethouse along with her friend Accalia.

But when she saw Lucy sending her two friends out somewhere else for the day, she quickly understood that she would have to spend most of today by herself. Begging Lucy to let her wear her cat costume a bit longer wouldn't work, and in a short moment, she would stand by herself on the walkway.

She observed Clara and Accalia walking out of the café, and right after, Lucy came to see her.

"Alright, little one. Give me your paw. It's your turn to get out of costume. Please, don't make this difficult this time, I don't have the energy to fight you, okay?"

Usually, Oreo made a fuss about it, but she didn't feel like it this morning. Obediently, she extended her arm and let Lucy lead her to her unavoidable faith.

The costume room upstairs was both a sad and happy place at the same time. When Oreo put on her costume, it was always thrilling, but it was never fun when she had to take it off.

Lucy unzipped the back of her head and pulled her cat mask forward, revealing her short black hair. As soon as the nose tubes and mouthpiece popped out, Lucy wiped her face with a wet towel. Perhaps that was the best part of the process since it was quite refreshing, and the wet wipes smelled kind of nice too.

"Oof... we will need to comb that hair of yours. You look like a stray cat."

"Meh."

"Hey, don't be sad. We talked about this often. I can't let you wear your costume forever. You need breaks here and there to work on your real life."

"I don't want to."

"You always say that, Oreo. You know I'm right. You made huge progress since you are working for me. Remember, you even decided to go visit your family last time. Alright, give me your little arm."

"Mmm..."

Oreo was a bit different from other pets. She was as small and thin as they were, but she had trouble expressing her emotions through facial expression. Her permanently angry eyebrows topping her deep black eyes mislead pretty much everybody at first. How many times did people ask her, "Are you angry?" when she was not. Hearing this over and over maybe was the reason for her lack of desire to share her feelings. What would be the point of telling them they were wrong if they would jump to conclusions anyway?

When she was a rubber cat, nobody made comments about her expressions. She could be herself without fearing to be teased or misinterpreted. At least Lucy was one of the rare persons who understood her real mood at any given time, costume or not. She had this sixth sense and was like a mother to her.

"Alright, give me your feet now. Aaah, what's wrong, Oreo? Why are you so sad? Cheer up a little."

"I'll be alone today."

"Ah, yes, you will. At least until Clara and Accalia come back from the college."

"Pfff... Why can't I go back to school too?"

"Aaah. I see what is bugging you now. You don't want your friend to finish school and leave you behind, right?"

"Mmmph!"

"You know, Oreo, it's up to you if you want to go back to school or not. I'll do all I can to help. But do you think you are ready? Are you ready to trade your pet time for studies?"

"... no."

"Listen, I'm not pushing you as much as I push the others because I don't think you are ready. I want you to succeed in life, and this is why I'm giving you four days off. I want you to find some balance outside the café first before we go father. Why don't you find something fun to do with Clara? You like Clara, right? Get out of the pethouse a little. You can't watch TV all day, you know."

"Mmm..."

"Trust me. I will keep working with you, and you'll get there. Don't worry too much about not being able to move faster as the others, okay? If it takes you years, then it takes you years. Come here and give me a big hug!"

Getting out of suit always felt a bit cold, so Lucy's motherly hug always felt good. It was something very special between the two of them. Lucy didn't hug the other pets in the costume room most of the time, but she always hugged Oreo as if she was her favorite daughter.

After dressing up back as a human, Oreo left the café.

"Bye, Oreo. See you in four days. Try to have fun with Clara, okay?"

"Mmhmm. Bye!"

The walk from the Cakes & Pets to the pethouse was a long one when all alone. The city was bustling with people going to work, but nobody looked like her. She felt way more like a cat than a human. Her friends said they felt the same, yet, they looked much more functional in the real world than she was. Her feeling of not being part of her own race was just weird. She often wondered how she would, one day, integrate their world as Lucy pushed her to do; it seemed so impossible.

A bright light brought hope to her life recently. Clara! When that girl visited the café at first, she reminded Oreo of herself to some extent. Okay, Clara had tried to wear Trixie's costume a while ago, but she was really bad at it, which was funny and confirmed that she would never be a pet, but the point was, she had very similar problems to hers. She couldn't talk, she couldn't smile, she couldn't laugh. It was nice to help her come out of her shell little by little and see her reach the point where she discovered her real problem and had to confront it head first. Fortunately, everybody was there to support her, and since then, she made giant leaps forward in her ability to fit in this seemingly inaccessible strange society.

So, Oreo wondered. Would she ever find the source of her own problems one day and finally be able to move forward in life? Would she, one day, find out a way to fit in? She wasn't too convinced it would happen.

"Mmmph!"

She opened the heavy glass door at the base of the big insurance building and squeezed her small body in. Why was that door always so heavy? Was it just because she was tiny? Trotting past the security guards who avoided eye contact was a formality before she engulfed herself inside the first available elevator, direction, the pethouse.

After her uninterrupted vertical trip, she swiped her access card and entered her home. She kicked her shoes off and went directly to her drawer to get rid of her card. She then pressed her nose and hands on the giant window wall to look at the rising sun over the city. It was a cold day, and all the small buildings produced some smoke or steam, whatever it was. She didn't know how heating systems worked, but it was an entertaining thing to watch during winter.

What her eyes saw was only the physical aspect of this world.

She didn't comprehend that hundreds of thousands of people were having a life while she felt like a prisoner of the pethouse. It didn't feel too good, but she was used to it and coped with it. At least she had many friends now and didn't feel too abandoned anymore. It was certainly a positive step forward in life.

Being away from the Cakes & Pets was always difficult, but Oreo had a special way to endure her off-café time. Her method was something Lucy had prohibited her from doing, fearing it would impede her ability to rejoin the real world one day, but she never obeyed that rule. All her pet friends knew she was deliberately going against Lucy's wish, but she trusted them not to say anything to anybody. Clara would probably not say anything either.

Oreo climbed the big stairs and headed straight to the main bedroom of the pethouse. Her small finger flicked the light switch on, and she entered the giant walk-in closet. Stepping on the little stool allowed her to reach her assigned shelf, the top one. She then pulled a black duffle bag from it that contained the secret that Lucy couldn't learn.

Hugging the bag, as if her pet experience had caused her to forget how to use her hands properly, she carried it back to the bed. She then took some of its content out. All the items she lined up on the blanket were as black as her hair and eyes. Oreo couldn't help but feel fuzzy in her lower stomach at the sight of these. Perhaps it was due to a mix of something she liked very much and the nervousness caused by willingly disobeying Lucy.

After returning the bag to the shelf, she stripped naked and dropped all her clothes in a big bamboo hamper, hoping that she wouldn't need them anytime soon; Accalia would probably do the laundry for her as usual. Using the full-length mirror attached to the wall, she quickly looked at herself. Like all her friends, except for Asha and Accalia, who had naturally darker skin, Oreo was white like a ghost due to her lack of exposure to sunlight. Winter didn't help either.

As she ran her little hands on her soft skin, she thought she was lucky to have such a small body. Her friends were pretty much all the same shape, and since she was attracted to them, there

were no obvious reasons to dislike having a similar body. On top of that, since she was working at the café, it was fitting. She thanked the Gods many times that she wasn't born bigger and taller. A good squeeze to her little boobs made her feel even happier. They were not as big as Trixie's, but nobody could mistake her as a boy.

However, something wasn't right. When Oreo stared at herself in the mirror, it felt like she was looking at a different person. It was a very odd sensation to like what she saw but not feeling that this body belonged to her. In her mind, she was more an animal than a human, a cat to be precise. So seeing this smooth skin left her puzzled. Fortunately, she had found the perfect remedy for dealing with this weird self-identification conflict.

Oreo sat on the bed and grabbed the first item she wanted to put on, her amazing black latex catsuit. It took her a long time to save up enough money to buy a good custom one, but Vix, who understood her troubled emotions very well, had chipped in considerably to help; Vix has always been so generous. Several of her friends also helped her acquire all her other items. As embarrassing as it was, she couldn't refuse the help, but at least, over time, she had found good ways to repay them.

When she inserted her first foot in the cold stretchy material, a sense of righteousness washed over her body. She didn't care about the importance of taking a break from wearing a catsuit; she just couldn't help it. Since her toes had entered their respective holes in the toe socks, there was no going back anyway.

This suit that now covered her legs, butt, and hips was not a pet suit, at least not like the one at the café; there was no tail, but some cute ears were mounted on top of the hood. It merely functioned as a way to take away the direct line of sight that people would have with her real skin or when she would look at herself. Not to say that the delicious feeling of rubber clinging to her limbs wasn't a nice perk.

Oreo's hands entered the long sleeves, and she guided her small fingers in the attached gloves, wriggling them to find the perfect fit. They were not too tight or too loose, and there was no wrinkle to be found. She rolled her shoulders to get the suit over them and was now ready to flip the hood over her head, the best part.

As the rubbery material touched her face, a sense of well-being invaded her heart. How could this be a bad thing, she thought. She quickly aligned the mouth and eye holes that were big enough to show her angry brows and zipped the back of the suit up using her flexible arms. The sensation of the latex wrapping snugly around her waist and soft neck has always been one of her favorite parts.

"Hmm... Lucy is wrong about this."

The black rubber cat girl grabbed a small spray bottle and coated herself here and there conservatively. Using her gloved hands, she rubbed the slippery substance all over her body, not forgetting in between her little rubber toes. Trixie had told her that Clara had a thing for feet, so she would surely like hers; she wasn't supposed to talk to her about it, though, it was a secret. The more she caressed her skin, the glossier it got. She wanted to look good for Accalia and Clara when they would come back home later today. Of course she didn't forget adding a little shine to her two little cat ears.

The next step was to put on her rubber harness. In the past, she had asked Lucy if she could get one to wear at the café, but Lucy had said, "no, Oreo, this is not a BDSM café!", so she had decided to get one for herself.

She really liked the one she had purchased. Actually, it was her friend Misti who had suggested it. The straps were running nicely around her breast, making them pop out a bit more, almost making her chest look like Trixie's. It was enhancing her waist quite a bit too, and it went all the way down around her thighs. There were not many buckles since it would get uncomfortable when cuddling with her friends, but everything was lockable; she wouldn't do that today, though, because she knew this would be new to Clara who was easily startled by new experiences.

With her harness hugging her little body, she then picked up the rubber cuffs and fastened them around her wrists and ankles. The shiny D-rings could be used to tie her up, of course, and those were lockable as well. The last thing to go on was the matching rubber collar. It was fairly wide, so she would never forget that it was on, even though it was not that restrictive.

Oreo sat back on the bed, where the two remaining items she had prepared were waiting for her. Those would help her kill time until her friends came back from college. The first one was a thin latex blindfold that followed every little curve of her face, not leaving a single crack through which the light could have found a way to reach her pretty eyes. Putting it on was always a special moment that meant, "you can now relax and be yourself."

The second item was a neat head harness with a small black ballgag attached. Oreo loved the way the rubber straps imprisoned her head and how the gag lodged itself comfortably behind her teeth. Her lower jaw was locked in place by the under chin strap, preventing her from expelling her gag.

For now, that would be it. Oreo finally felt whole again and relived the same happiness she had experienced as a pet girl at the café. It was not exactly the same, but this was her representation of what being human was about and good enough to survive the next few days until returning to work, where she would be allowed to be a real latex cat again. It was a reasonable in-between.

She crawled on the bed and comfortably laid on her back. Her hands sensually explored her slick latex skin, sending good sensations back to her brain. Of course, Oreo couldn't see how shiny and beautiful she was because of her blindfold, but she felt it and knew it was right. Yes, Lucy was wrong. She HAD to be wrong! What would Oreo have to gain by fighting what didn't feel right? She wasn't convinced that she could accept her real body one day as it was. It was so much easier just to give in and submerge herself in this little inoffensive latex world. Everything was right. The texture, the smell, the warmth. What could be so wrong with letting herself fall in this space filled up only with pleasure and happiness? The more she let herself go, the better it was. She could be what she was meant to be, a real cat.

As her fingers massaged her soft breasts, causing the latex to crackle discreetly, she thought that Clara would like her much better this way rather than if she had presented herself as a human. This was her true self, the only one that should be loved.

As the pleasure coursed through her veins, Oreo wondered if, perhaps, she should push it a bit farther. Maybe Clara and Accalia would like to find her all tied up too. She had a few more interesting items in her duffle bag, things that her friends had often used to play with her and always enjoyed so much. Clara would probably be less intimidated if there were no threat around. If Oreo were to be tied up, Clara would understand that she was in control of the situation and wouldn't worry as much as she usually did. She then could take all the time in the world to discover who Oreo was outside of her pet costume.

Yes, perhaps Oreo would tie herself up later... for Clara's sake. It seemed like a valid justification.

"Aaanh!"

If there were an advantage of not being a café pet today, it would be that those rubber fingers felt very good down there.

Chapter 19 - The hidden face of pets

"Come, Accalia. Your shift is over. Let's take you out of that costume."

As Lucy spoke those words, Accalia ran away from her, but she had nowhere to go. This useless protest was a repetitive scene at the Cakes & Pets when one of the cute animals reached the end of its work shift. Lucy asked for cooperation, but the pets always acted as if they didn't expect what she would do. To me, I found this theatrical performance rather cute, but to Lucy, it was draining, and sometimes, to make things easier, she had to resort to a carrot and stick approach to obtain some sort of obedience.

"Accalia, get out from behind the couch. I can see your big ears anyway. Today, I wanted you to spend the day with Clara. Don't you want to spend the day with Clara?"

The rubber wolf girl knew it was probably a trick, but at the same time, she didn't really want to take the risk not to spend the day with me, so she slowly crawled out from behind her hiding place, which was just enough for Lucy to grab her wrist.

"Gotcha! Come now, it's a big day today, and I need to talk to Clara and you. Let's go take your suit off."

Accalia nodded and followed her owner out of the lounge without any additional resistance.

On my side, I had a pretty good idea why Lucy wanted to talk to me and why she had asked me to come to the café so early in the morning.

A certain black cat was deep asleep on my lap while I was sipping my coffee. Her soft latex skin was glossy as ever since she had just received a little polishing that made her look so sexy. Misti was the only one wearing an entirely black catsuit, so she looked the most fetishist pet of them all. Amusingly enough, out of costume, she had such pale skin and this light blonde hair; it was quite a contrast with her cat persona, and I loved this duality so much. It was like having two friends for the price of one.

She took a very deep breath and let out a long slow sigh, making me wonder what she could be dreaming about. Maybe it was something I should ask my friends more often. Their entire life

revolved around being pets and working at the café, but didn't they have other goals and aspirations? The more I spent time around them, the more mysterious they became.

I slid my finger around her cute cat muzzle and made her small whiskers bounce. Mystery was great.



A bit later, Lucy came back to the lounge, followed by Accalia, who was a human girl again. As usual, the pets weren't very happy when they finished working, so Accalia just heavily let her butt fall on the couch next to me, making me bounce up and waking up Misti at the same time.

"Aww... You woke up Misti!"

"Well, Misti can work today, and I can't. So it's only fair that she stops being lazy and goes take care of the clients."

"But... the café is not open yet."

"Pfff! Whatever!"

The small Asian girl didn't mean what she was saying. She was just frustrated that her shift had ended and decided to be a bit mean just for the sake of venting.

Misti knew that as well, but it was not a good enough reason not to take revenge on her friend who had obliterated her dream. The black cat crawled off me and exaggeratedly ensured to make it extra uncomfortable for Accalia by pressing a paw in her face.

"Heeey! Stupid cat! Stop it!"

As Misti headed to another empty booth to continue her nap, Accalia wrapped her arm around mine and leaned on me. Since I started visiting the café, I spent a lot of time with the rubber pets. I knew them well by now, but I didn't have many opportunities to spend time with all of them when they were out of their suit. Accalia was one of them with whom I didn't do many activities outside the café; it was a bit odd to cuddle with her as a human even though I was very comfortable playing with her as a small wolf.

"Bleh! I wanted to work more."

"You'll work again soon, Accalia. Your next shift is in three days."

"It's so far. But at least I'll be able to spend all my time with you and Meeka."

"No, Meeka is starting her new shift today. Asha too."

"Really? Who will be off with me, then?"

"Oreo."

"Aaah... Yay! Oreo! That's going to be fun. I forgot our schedule got all messed up because Vix got punished the other day for kicking Lucy's tray and wasting all our food."

In the far corner of the café, Oreo was cuddling with Vix and Trixie, which made me wonder... If Oreo's shift was over as it was supposed to be, why did Lucy not take off her suit at the same time as Accalia's? It was a bit strange.

I felt my question was about to be answered because Lucy, with a wider smile than usual, walked to us and sat on the couch facing ours.

"So, how do you like your new home, Clara?"

"The pethouse is good. We sleep very well there."

"Haha. I bet. Those are comfy beds full of petgirls."

"..."

"Do you know why I asked you to come here today?"

Oof! Straight to the point. I knew exactly what I was doing here but wasn't sure if I wanted to talk about it just yet. So I sank in my seat a little bit instead of answering.

"That's right, Clara. You are going back to school, and you need to decide what you want to study."

"Mmmh... School... is hard."

"Yes it is! And that's why I set an appointment for you to see a guidance counselor at the college today. You have to be there for 10 am. They will help you decide on what program you would like to follow and help you get started with everything."

"Mmmh!"

"Hey, cheer up. You are very lucky. Because you are unemployed, the government will pay for most of your sessions. But you can't quit before you obtain your diploma, or else there will be big penalties, so keep that in mind, okay?"

"Yes, Lucy."

As much as I didn't look forward to going back to school, as much as I knew Lucy was right. I couldn't spend the rest of my life doing nothing and had no intention to get a similar job to what I was doing before. Until I had my mental breakdown, I had not realized how much doing something I hated for a living hurt me.

The other very important thing that I was very aware of was my deal with Lucy, one that I made when I was recovering at her apartment. When I had asked her if I could still move to the pethouse, she was happy to let me to, but only if I had a plan. She didn't want me to sit on the couch all day. So I had to find a job or go back to school, and she really pushed me to choose the latter so I could build myself a better life.

"Accalia, you will go with her."

"Sure! Yay! I'll spend the day with Clara!"

"Hmmm... I think you didn't understand correctly what I said."

"Uh? You want me to go with Clara to her appointment? No?"

"Yes, but I also mean that you are going back to school too."

"WHAT!? But...but...but..."

"No buts. You knew this was coming. We talked about it often. It's about time you pick a career too."

"But... I CAN'T go back to school!"

"Why not?"

"I'm a PET! You need me here."

"I'm not firing you. You'll keep working part-time. I'm not that cruel. I have a new girl starting soon, too, so we won't run out of pets!"

"You... you are replacing me!?"

"No, Accalia! That's not what I said, and you know it."

"Awww... But why me? Why not Trixie or Vix? They don't have college degrees either!"

"Different pets, different problems, different rhythm. Do you remember why you started working here in the first place?"

"..."

A grunt was all she could respond to this last question. I had no idea what Lucy was referring to, but Accalia certainly did. There was a little tension in the air, but the last thing I wanted to do was to put my nose into a matter that didn't concern me. I knew the petgirls all had their little secrets, and even though I was curious, I didn't want to invade their privacy.

"Good. We have an understanding then. Alright, you two. Help me feed the pets, then you can head to the college for your appointment."



Just before 10 am, Accalia and I arrived at the big college on the edge of the downtown area. If I were to study here, I could easily walk from the pethouse to there without having to climb aboard a crowded city bus, another thing I didn't miss since I had lost my job.

It was nice to be able to spend a bit of time with Accalia alone. She was very friendly and not as playful and intense as Trixie or Misti, not nearly as clingy; more normal, perhaps. There were awkward silences during our walk, but nothing bad. It just meant that we would slowly get to know each other.

"Ah, it's there. Let's go talk to the lady."

"Okay."

Going to new places with the pets when they were off work was always great because I didn't have to do the talking. I didn't know much about school stuff, so this was unknown territory, and I preferred avoiding looking like a fool.

Accalia let go of my arm and walked up to the receptionist desk.

"Hi, we have an appointment with the guidance counselor. This is Clara over there, hiding behind the plant, and I'm Lian."

"Ah, yes. Welcome. This is your questionnaire, and this one is hers. Please, take your time to fill it up. It will help Tim to evaluate you. Once they are completed, please bring them back to me. It's not a race. It should take you a good thirty minutes to fill it up."

"THAT LONG!?"

"Hum... Half an hour to help you make a lifetime decision? I think it's worth the effort. Keep in mind that this is not homework. It's something you do for yourself."

"Oops... I'm sorry..."

After spinning around to hide her blushing face from the receptionist, which was exactly why I preferred to let others do the talking, Accalia fast-walked toward me to give me my form and hug.

"Aaaah! I don't want to be here! I just want to be a pet!"

"Don't worry, Accalia. It's hard for me too. Let's go sit in the quiet corner over there."

"Nooo! I want to leave!"

"I... I don't think Lucy would be happy if you did."

"Aaaah! Okay, okay! But still... bleeeeh!"



The lady had lied to us. This questionnaire took way more than thirty minutes to fill up. I couldn't think straight anymore, and Accalia was about to die; we've been at it for almost an hour, and it felt like five. She had eventually laid down on the floor in front of me, and after I kicked my shoes off, I massaged her belly with my feet, like if we were at the café. With the questionnaire above her face, she kept asking me for help.

"Clara... What is my most outstanding personality trait?"

"Mmm... I don't know... You are cuddly?"

"Oh, I don't think I can write that on the form. They are going to give me grief if I do."

"I'm not sure Acca... I don't know much about you."

"Well, it's probably better to keep it that way. Trust me."

As we scribbled our answers on the sheet of paper, a man's voice interrupted us.

"Well, that is a first... I've never seen friends using each other as a floor mat before."

"..."

My breathing stopped. I knew I shouldn't have done that. At the café, we could do this cute stuff to the pet, but putting my feet on Accalia's soft belly in a public place was bound to be frowned upon.

"Hehe. Are you Clara?"

"Y... yes."

"Good, I'm your counselor. Tim's the name. Are you ready?"

"I... I didn't finish... my form."

"Oh, it's okay. It's not that important. Follow me. We are going to discuss your future. Lian, you are going to be next. And please get off the floor. It's probably not very clean."

What? After spending an hour working on the form, he told us that it was not that important? If I had known, I would not have had to endure Accalia's whining for the past hour. Despite this frustration, I stood up and followed the man to his office.

He must have been a good six foot four and well above two hundred pounds, which was seriously clashing with my pet size body type. That said, I didn't get any bad vibes from this man. It was nothing like the security guards at the pethouse who were very scary. He looked

friendly enough and didn't make me feel particularly intimidated. Perhaps it was because we were inside a school which I considered to be a safe place.

As I walked behind him, another thing made me feel strange. I had managed to talk to him even though he was a stranger. I would never have been able to do this before I started visiting the café. My anxiety was still very present, making my lungs struggle for air, but overall, I had managed to communicate some answers even if I was sure he had noticed that talking was not easy for me. This made me feel a bit hopeful since it was a giant leap in my belief that I could, one day, get better at talking to people.

When I entered his office, it immediately reminded me of my therapist's; it was too cozy to make me feel at ease. There was a leather sofa on which he invited me to sit and another one across the coffee table where his laptop was. As he slowly lowered his butt in his seat, his eyes rapidly went through my long document, and then he put it aside before observing me for a few seconds, as if to gauge who I was. I was willing to bet that, in his head, he was discarding all the potential jobs I couldn't do because of my small size.

"So, Clara. Do you have an idea of what you want to do as a career?"

"N—no..."

"Have you ever thought about it?"

"I... I don't think so."

"Okay. First things first, I guess. What are you good at?"

"..."

This question... Why was it hurting? Why did it remind me of my mother? Probably because she had raised me in a way that didn't allow me to express myself, therefore not trying new things that I may have liked. I didn't know myself that much since I never had granted myself a chance to explore who I really was until recently.

"I... I'm not very good... at anything."

"I'm sure it's not true because I've seen thousands of students in this office, and every one of them was good at something. They just didn't know it. What do you like to do then?"

"I... I don't do... much..."

"Let me rephrase that... What is important to you?"

"..."

What was important to me? I didn't expect that question today. Right away, the only answer that came to my mind was Lucy and the pets, the Cakes & Pets, but I was pretty sure that was not what he wanted to hear.

"I... I don't know."

"Aaah, Clara. I know that's not true either. Listen. There are no good or bad answers to those questions, you know. I'm just trying to get to know you so I can help you choose your field of study."

"But... It's... It's hard."

"Very, yes. So, take a deep breath and relax. Think about it. I see on your form that you've worked for a big company before."

"Yes... I was packing random items. But I don't want to do that anymore."

"You didn't like it?"

"No... It was really not fun."

"Yet, you did it for quite a while. Why?"

"..."

"There must have been something that made you stay in a position that you disliked for this long, no?"

This interview had just begun, but it was HARD. It was like the therapist, but without consideration for my feelings. Part of me wanted to leave, but the other part had to admit that his questions seemed good related to the purpose of my visit.

"Clara... What was the one thing that kept you going to work?"

"Hum... M... Money?"

"Good... So you like money then?"

"Well... I don't need much of it... It was just to pay my rent."

"That was not my question. Everybody needs to pay rent, but usually, it's not enough to keep them in a job they hate. People generally move on. So why did you stay?"

I lowered my head because I didn't like the answers popping up in my mind. I stayed there because of my speech disorder and because I didn't think I could do anything else with my life. And more recently, I...

"I... I wanted to... No... It's stupid."

"What is stupid?"

"My... my friends... I wanted to be able to stay near my friends."

"Aaaah, see. Money allows you to stay around your friends. That is a very good answer."

"Is... Is it?"

"Yes... So you like your friends a lot?"

"Yes... they are... everything to me. When I help Lucy at the café, It's always fun."

As soon as I said that, I froze like an ice cube. Why did I even mention the café? My face turned blue, and I didn't know what to say anymore.

"A café? You got a new job?"

"N...No... I'm just helping her feed my fr... I mean... No. I mean..."

"Hey, hey! Relax, Clara. You don't need to tell me about it. But that place seems very important to you. Your friend works there?"

"Yes."

"And you like taking care of your friends that much."

"Yes."

"Let's imagine something, okay. If I were to give you a million dollars, would it help you take care of your friends better?"

"Oh, yes."

"Would you like to help other people too if they needed it?"

"I think so. Yes."

"Good, good. See, we are getting somewhere now. Let's use that as a starting point. You are a very empathic person."

This was definitely worse than the therapist. I wished Accalia was here with me so I could hug her while he was working on my case. Instead, my little arms over-squeezed one of the cushions that had unconsciously grabbed, even though it made me look like a distressed child.

Tim explained different possible career paths for the next thirty minutes. Some of them were unexpected. He kept drilling me with tough questions that forced me to understand better who I was. I now had a small pile of documents in front of me on the coffee table, each of them describing a different profession. It was still not easy to wrap my head around everything he had said so far.

"So, Clara. Those are ten jobs I want you to think about. You'll bring those documents home, read them, and think about what they would bring to you in the future. Would they allow you to help you do what you want? Do you understand?"

"Yes... I think so."

"Good. There are still a few weeks before you have to choose, so don't rush it. I'll see you again next week and we will discuss it some more. Sounds good?"

"Yes. Thank you, Tim."

"No problem, now let's take care of your carpet friend who loves lying on the floor. It was a bit odd."

"Hehe. She loves doing that."

It was a relief to know that I would have some more time to make up my mind about my future. I traded my pillow for the pile of documents and followed Tim outside of his office. Accalia was still sitting on the floor, and she had clearly given up working on her form.



"Aaah! It's over! Tim was nice, though."

"Yes, he was."

Accalia held my arm tightly as we walked out of the college with our documents. It was still a bit strange to see her out of her pet costumes. It was as if my friends all had two versions of themselves, making it difficult to learn everything about them.

And thinking about that reminded me that I had another upcoming challenge.

"Acca... Do you think Oreo is waiting for us at the pethouse?"

"Yes, I'm sure she is. Why?"

"She... She is the only pet I have never seen out of costume."

"Oh, really?"

"Yes. I don't know what she is like... It makes me a bit nervous."

"Haha. Oreo is quite something. She is super awkward! But we love her that way."

"Awkward? How come?"

"Well, she doesn't talk much, a bit like you. And she always looks angry, but it's just because she has funny eyebrows."

Accalia jumped in front of me and started to walk backward while mimicking with her fingers what Oreo's eyebrows looked like. The way she was doing it was funny, but I knew she didn't do it to be mean.

"I don't think you'll see what she looks like, though. Haha. But she sure will want you to sleep with us."

"... That doesn't make sense!"

"I knooow! I said that on purpose to confuse you. I bet you'll love her very much. Hurry! Now that you mentioned it, I want to get to the pethouse faster! I hadn't had a day off with Oreo in a while! It's going to be a lot of fun."

"Acca! Wait for me! Why do the pets always walk so fast?"

What did she mean by, "I don't think you'll see what she looks like?" I knew for a fact that Lucy didn't allow the pets to bring their costumes to the pethouse because she wanted them to rest and live a little outside the café. So yes, I was confused. And was it possible that Oreo also had similar communication difficulties than I had? If that were to be true, I would really like to know why she was like that.

Accalia and I walked the three kilometers separating the college from the pethouse in record time. Good thing it was winter, the cold temperature prevented us from sweating too much. Along the way, we discussed our career choice and shared the same feeling that we were not ready to choose anything yet. At least Tim had given us useful pointers that would help us think about it. It was a bit silly to be in my twenties and not having a clue about what to do with my life yet. I would have to thank Lucy for getting me started with all of this. Somehow, despite my lack of confidence, I felt ready for this new chapter in my life.

When we reached the big insurance building, home of the pethouse, we got in the elevator and headed straight to the top floor. After the short ride, we were standing in front of the two big wooden doors, but Accalia asked me something using a more serious tone before we went in.

"Clara, if Oreo did what I think she did, you cannot tell Lucy because that will make her angry. All the pets know what Oreo is doing, but we just let her do what she likes. Okay?"

"O...okay?"

"Don't worry. You'll understand what we mean right away. It's nothing bad. Oreo is probably nervous about it too, but I will tell her that you won't say anything to Lucy."

Without giving me a chance to absorb this additional mystery, Accalia pushed the door open and announced our arrival.

"OREO! Clara and I are back!"

A silence greeted us. The girl giving life to the black and white rubber cat didn't seem to be around.

After kicking off our shoes and hanging our coats, Accalia climbed the big stairs.

"Come, Clara. I'm sure she is upstairs."

"Is she sleeping? Don't wake her up."

"I don't think she is sleeping, and even if she were, she would want you to wake her up."

I was getting a bit nervous now. Accalia acted very casually about this, but how could I not be anxious when she said that Oreo was not asleep, yet, not responding. What was going on? I wanted Accalia to explain to me what was going on.

"Acca! Wait! Tell me... I'm a bit scared now."

"Scared? Oh... sorry. I didn't mean to scare you. Don't worry. As I said, there is nothing bad going on."

"But, why are you so evasive?"

"Aaah, you are right. Lucy told me that I had to be nice to you. When things are going too fast, you worry a lot. I'm sorry. Mmm... Let me think about this for a second... It's kind of hard to explain."

Once more, the petgirls understood the difficulties I had in coping with stressful situations. I was glad I had voiced my feelings because Accalia was getting a bit too intense, and I needed to take a step back. She liked to tease me, which was fine, but since I had never met Oreo out of costume, it was too much all at once.

"Okay, Clara. You know what. I'm sure she is in the bedroom. I will let you go see her by yourself, that way you'll be able to take all the time you need to meet her. I need to shower anyway. It will give you some quiet time together so you can get to know each other. I tell you, Oreo is super nice."

"But... What are you hiding from me?"

"Hehe. Oreo's secret. Go see her. You'll understand everything right away. Trust me, okay?"

"Mmm... okay."

Accalia pulled me in a hug and kissed my cheek before heading to the bathroom, leaving me alone with the closed bedroom door that I had to cross. It reminded me awfully of when I met Vix out of costume for the first time, when the poor thing was recovering from a cold. It had ended up being an awkward moment, but it had also turned into something magical shortly after.

I knocked lightly on the door before cracking it open. Like that first time with Vix, the lights were turned off, and the curtains closed.

"Oreo? Are...are you sleeping?"

I didn't get an answer, but I heard something moving on the big bed.

"I'm coming in, okay? I'll open the curtain a little bit... so we can see each other."

Carefully walking on my tiptoes, just in case she really was asleep, I headed to the window and parted the curtains just enough to brighten the room.

When I turned around, my lungs stopped functioning, as it was the case too often when dealing with these petgirls who always put me through a whole range of emotions.

A small latex-covered someone rested on the bed. If it had been just that, I wouldn't have been this shocked; latex was good, and I loved it. But this time, there was more. Lying flat on her belly, she had her arms and legs restrained behind her back by what seemed to be leather cuffs. A matching black rubber blindfold covered her eyes, and a black ballgag, secured with leather straps running around her head, robbed her from her voice. A leather harness zigzagged around her shiny black torso. But the small cat ears on top of her head left no doubt about her identity.

"O... Oreo?"

"Mmmph!"

She nodded.

"Are... are you okay?"

"HmmHm."

I didn't know what to do. All the vague information Accalia had provided me beforehand now made a lot more sense, but it didn't help me figure out where to go from there. I could barely comprehend what I was looking at. Part of me wanted to go to the bathroom to fetch Accalia, and the other part wanted to stay and absorb this new experience.

Oreo began to twist, push, and pull on her bonds and managed to roll to her side. Her gag moved oddly in her mouth as if she unsuccessfully tried to expel it.

"Do... Do you want... to talk?"

She nodded.

As I carefully approached the large bed, I noticed a funny sensation in my lower belly. Did I like what I was looking at that much? My love for shiny latex was something I had fully accepted, so it made sense that I liked what Oreo looked like. But all those little extras were not something I was familiar with, and I never had an opportunity to ask myself what I thought of it.

There was something about her cutely restrained body that just made me feel funny. I could sense it under my few layers of discomfort.

Since she had rolled away from me, I had to climb on the big mattress to meet her. The rubber harness she wore made her body look even thinner, but I found it quite cute. This costume was actually making it easier for me somehow. I was no longer intimidated by the latex pets, and this catsuit wasn't too far from what I was used to.

I knelt next to her.

"I... I'll... try to remove... your... gag?"

Oreo nodded again.

"O... okay... Don't move... okay?"

It was so strange. Trying not to touch her too much, fearing I don't know what, I reached behind her head to find the buckles. Carefully, I unfastened the straps, she had tightened them quite a bit, and then, I pulled the delicate harness off her face, making her rubber ears bounce adorably.

When I pulled the ballgag out of her mouth, Oreo let a little moan out while stretching her jaw.

"Aaaah..."

"O... Oreo?"

"... Y... yes..."

"... You... you are all... tied up."

"I... I know."

"O... okay."

It was so awkward. Oreo seemed as embarrassed as I was. It was the first time I heard her little voice, but somehow it matched what I had in mind for her. Despite that, I still wished Accalia was around to help me break the ice.

"Can... can I take your... blindfold... off?"

"... yes. If... if you want to."

The thin rubber blindfold perfectly following her face's shape certainly didn't allow any light in. For some obscure reason, not having had to meet her gaze so far made it easier for me, exactly like when I had to interact with the pets at the café for the first time. Their black eyes hiding their real eyes had been a lifesaver and had allowed me to get to know them without being oppressed by something intimidating.

This made me wonder if Oreo had done this on purpose to make it easier on me or just felt kinky. But since Oreo seemed very gentle and shy, non-threatening, I thought that revealing her eyes would be the right thing to do... or at least, something to do.

I slowly peeled the rubber sheet from Oreo's face and uncovered the most striking part of her human form, her eyes. They were closed at first, but she shyly blinked them open. She was very still. Her hood's eye holes were big enough for me to see her eyebrows and understand what Accalia had meant when she amusingly mimicked her friend in front of me earlier...

But her irises...

Oreo looked straight at me with her BEAUTIFUL dark-brown eyes. VERY dark. Other pets had dark eyes too, but nothing like this. It was as if I were looking at the most expensive black pearls in the world. Her white skin just made them stand out like crazy...

"O... Oreo..."

"... I... I know... My eyebrows... they are weird..."

"... No... That's... That's not it..."

"... no?"

"No... You are... so... so pretty!"

"..."

The tied-up catgirl gasped and then stopped breathing as if I had stabbed her in the guts. I didn't know what she was thinking exactly, but as my face turned beet-red after having admitted my real first impression, I wondered if I had said something too nice a bit too quickly.

Those words I just said... They had accidentally escaped my mouth for one particular reason. It was the absolute truth.

Every time I had met a pet outside its costume so far, I had always been impressed by how cute they all were. Trixie and Mistie with their blonde hair, Asha and Accalia with their dark skin and silky hair, Vix with her incredible adorability and friendliness, I was jealous of them all...

But, Oreo... her eyes... her voice... her tied up little body covered by a thin layer of black latex. She made my heart beat faster. There was this sensation in my chest that seemed to grow almost painfully the more I stared at her. It wasn't like anything else I had felt around any other pets before. Was this just because of this very unusual way that she had chosen to present herself to me? Was it just my body having trouble coping with all the concurrent emotions that rose inside of me?

"Do... do you... want to untie me?"

"... Oh... Yes. Sorry... I... I'll try."

Her little hesitant question snapped me out of my strange trance. I followed her smooth arms all the way to her delicate wrists and inspected her cuffs. Bondage was something I knew about from the internet, but I had never really thought much about it. Seeing it in real life was very different and intimidating.

Once I understood that an x-shaped strap attached to the D-rings of her cuffs was what kept her in this position, it was easy to free her up. Now that she was untied, Oreo knelt... and just stared at me some more with those amazing eyes.

"I... I like your... harness..."

"I love it too."

"Can... can I... touch it?"

"... yes."

I carefully extended my arms to visit her extremely sensual rubber harness. It fitted all her curves perfectly and significantly enhanced her breasts. As awkward as it was to think about this right now, there was something about her latex covered chest that was just so attractive. Her suit seemed way thinner than her usual animal suit, I could even see her nipples through it.

Unconsciously, and perhaps because I had done that regularly with Trixie, my hands covered her breasts and gave them a little squeeze. It was so warm and so comfortable. But I had forgotten about something...

"Aaaah... C... Claraaa..."

Oreo looked like a pet, but she had no masks on this time around to keep her muted. I wasn't used to hearing a pet voicing its state of mind. It even made me wonder if, during all this time, when I had grabbed pet boobs, perhaps they had reacted just like Oreo did, but behind a mask that had prevented me from hearing them.

I quickly withdrew my arms back to my chest.

"I'm... I'm sorry... I didn't... mean to..."

"It's... it's okay... The other girls... they do that too... but you do it better..."

"..."

"Can... can you... hug me, now?"

Yes... It was the best idea ever. That precisely was what I needed at the moment, a comforting, reassuring hug from a cute pet.

As soon as I opened my arm, Oreo tossed herself on me and made me fall on my back. Having her on top of me confirmed that she was as light as when we did this at the café. Now that she was straddling me and pushing her head against my chest while squeezing my rib cage, I felt so happy because I understood that it was what I had wanted to do since the first second I discovered her tied-up body on the bed. I was very attracted to this new version of Oreo, even if I didn't know why.

After a long moment, she raised her body a bit, enough to look at me in the eyes... Again... That gaze... why was it so intense. There was something about her that I had never felt with anybody else. Even though shiny black latex covered most of her face, I could still see her eyes and mouth...

Her mouth... Those thin lips...

My hands that rested on her back gripped her harness and pulled her toward me.

Our lips locked...

"Mmmm..."

"Hmmm...:"

This was involuntary... this was a reflex... this was unexpected.

For a fraction of a second, I wondered why I had done this, or was it her that did it? Nevertheless, the sensation of our tongues slowly sliding on each other wiped my concerns. An insane amount of sexual hormones flooded my entire body, making me grip Oreo's harness even harder to make sure she wouldn't stop kissing me... I didn't want her to stop... in case she would hate me for having done this without asking first...

No... She was kissing me back so intentionally.

It was perfect.



Accalia had watched the scene discreetly from the hallway to make sure everything would go well for Clara and Oreo. She had pretended to be in the shower, but instead, her motherly instinct made her decide to monitor her two friends who had never met in case she had to intervene.

As expected, Oreo had tied herself up; she tended to do that when she felt lonely. The good news was that Clara had managed the situation beautifully, and it surprisingly escalated into something scorching and romantic.

The thing was that Accalia didn't decide to keep an eye on them because of Clara. She mostly did it because of her friend Oreo.

Clara was much stronger than she appeared. Her latest struggle with her family issues and the incredible way she bounced back on her feet after her meltdown was proof that she was smart enough to understand this cruel world and, with some guidance, make the best decisions for herself... for her own happiness.

But Oreo was nothing like that. Oreo had a tough time fitting in this world. She could barely identify herself to this society, feeling like an outsider, and even struggled to feel human like her friends did outside the café. Oreo was fragile and needed support and protection, and this was why none of the pets would ever tell Lucy that she was wearing a latex catsuit at home and tied herself to feel safer.

This was why Accalia wanted to make sure Clara and Oreo got along. But what she saw just now, even if very unexpected, was probably the best thing that could have happened to Oreo.

There was no mistaking it... Accalia was certain of it... After thinking about it twice, it was not surprising because Clara and Oreo had so much in common.

What she saw was...

...Clara having her first real crush on a girl...

And Oreo seemed to feel the same way toward Clara.

One question remained... Would they both be smart enough to ever admit it to themselves?

Chapter 20 - Chaos, cakes, and pets

"Morning, Clara!"

"Mmm..."

The bed was warm, the sheets silky, and my pillow very squishy; I could have slept all day. I cracked my eyes open, and in front of me was Accalia, with her cute Asian face. She just pulled me out of my slumber and placed a basket full of random breakfast items next to me.

"Hey, where is your lover?"

"... My... lover?"

"Yes... Oreo! Where did she go? She was next to you when I left the room to go prepare breakfast half an hour ago."

"Oh, I don't know. I was sleeping."

As I pulled myself up to rest my back on the cushioned headboard, I noticed a pile of latex on the floor along with some straps, more than likely Oreo's harness. A weird sensation went down my spine when I realized that Oreo was no longer hidden behind a layer of glossy latex. If she were to come back to the bedroom as a human, I wasn't too sure how I would react.

Accalia noticed what I was looking at and theorized about the whereabouts of our little friend.

"Ah. She undressed. She must be in the shower then."

"She... she doesn't mind undressing... around us?"

"Well, yes, she does. But we are pushing her to do it more outside the café. We won't tell Lucy that she is wearing a catsuit outside work, but we won't let her get away with everything either. It would be good if she were more comfortable in her own skin, you know."

"It looks... hard for her."

"Yes, Clara. Oreo is struggling. But she is doing well overall. So, what did you think of her?"

I only met Oreo for the first time yesterday. It went well... strangely well. Embarrassingly well. Accalia was in the washroom when I had discovered Oreo and her habits of wearing a latex catsuit outside the café and being into bondage, and then, things degenerated slightly. Right after I had untied her, we ended up secretly making out while we were alone. How was that even

possible? Why had I felt an urge to kiss a girl I had never met before so intently, and why has it been so pleasant?

It was confusing me greatly because I liked other pets too. I made love to several of them, and it was very fun. But kissing Oreo was just not the same, and I didn't understand why. My emotions were like scrambled eggs right now.

"Oreo is... nice."

"What? That's it?"

"Yes. She is friendly."

"Clara... come on. Tell me the truth. When I joined you two in bed yesterday, I could see in your eyes that there was more."

"N...no... I cuddled with you too. You are both nice."

"Silly Clara! Whatever."

As she poked me on the forehead with her finger, a small voice coming from afar interrupted our conversation. Oreo must have exited the shower.

"Acca... Could you bring me my latex suit?"

"No, Oreo. Clara wants to see you out of your suit. Get out from behind that wall and come eat breakfast with us."

"... Aww..."

Timidly, a small girl looking down at her own feet turned the corner and entered the bedroom. Her fuzzy hair was short and black, and her skin creamy white. She had wrapped a towel around her torso, which wasn't enough to hide her delicate arms and sexy collarbones, the same collarbones I had felt countless times with my fingers when she was dressed up as a pet. Her small hands pressed to the middle of her chest were adorable, and the way she twisted her toes on the soft carpet left no doubt about her current state of mind.

I said her name.

"O... Oreo?"

She lifted her head, and we locked eyes, which sent a powerful wave of... something... throughout my body. Why was my body reacting so strongly every time she looked at me with her mesmerizing eyes? It was so odd.

"Hi, Clara."

As if seeking protection, she fast-walked to the bed and sat near Accalia before wrapping her arms around her. I would probably have done the same if I had been in her shoes.

Of course, Accalia was mature and socially skilled, so she didn't even flinch like I would have done. Instead, she plunged her hand inside the breakfast basket and pulled out a croissant from it, and offered it to Oreo.

"Here you go, your favorite food."

"Thanks."

"You want one too, Clara? I'm not sure what you like other than cheesecakes."

"Yes, I like croissants too. But I never eat them because I have no money for that."

"Ah, no longer a problem. Don't forget that if you want something, you just write it on the fridge screen, and you'll more than likely get it."

"Yes, Asha showed me."

We continued to eat our breakfast quietly. Accalia did most of the talking, but Oreo and I occasionally shared an awkward gaze that we didn't know how to interpret. Knowing that I would spend the next four days with Oreo and the next three with Accalia was kind of odd, and I didn't know how it would turn out.

So far, I have spent most of my time with Trixie, Misti, Vix, and Asha. It was easy with them because they either just decided what to do or just wanted to cuddle all day. With Trixie, it was all about going out on dates, and with Vix, it was all about sweet cuddles. They all were different.

But Oreo, outside our accidental make-out session, I didn't know what she would like to do. I knew for sure she loved bondage, and Accalia even tied her back up last night for fun, but could I take charge and do such an extreme activity? I didn't know... Maybe it would be better if I left everything to Accalia to decide for now.

Yeah... that was what I would do. It would be easier.

"Hey, Clara? Do you hear something?"

"Hear... something?"

"Yes... Something is buzzing."

We all kept silent, trying to listen, and yes, something was indeed buzzing. I quickly realized that it was probably my cell phone since the noise came from my pile of clothes on the floor.

My nakedness was problematic. I would have jumped out of bed, but they would have seen me naked.

"My... My phone is ringing..."

"Well, are you not going to answer it?"

"I'm... naked..."

"Aaaah, Clara! We've seen you naked often. Why are you so shy about your body? You are very cute."

As if Oreo had sensed and sympathized with my discomfort, she got off the bed, pulled the phone from my clothes, and handed it over to me. Her good deed to save my honor was quickly rewarded with some teasing from Accalia.

"Ah! Oreo, you should wear Apricot's suit! You are a good obedient doggy. You went to fetch Clara's phone!"

"I'm not a dog! I just wanted to be nice."

"Ahan! Being nice for your special person... right?"

"... Shut up, Acca! It's nothing like that."

"Ahan!"

As Oreo jumped on Accalia to make the teasing stop, I unlocked my phone and looked at my call logs. Nobody ever called me, so it was unusual. But quickly, I discovered that it was Lucy who had attempted to reach me, which was even weirder.

"Oh, Lucy called me."

"Aaah, no! Oreo, not my ears! Don't pull on them! They are sensitive!"

They were not listening to me, so I decided just to call Lucy back. The phone only rang once before a panicked voice answered.

"Clara! Where are you!? I need you to come to the café right away with Oreo!"

"... With... Oreo? Why?"

"Trixie just broke her arm! We are heading to the hospital right away. Tell Accalia to meet me at the Civic Hospital, okay? Do you have your key to the café? Can you go right there to take care of the pets for me?"

"Yes, yes. I do. I will tell Accalia."

"Okay, thanks. Call me back if there is anything. You are in charge of the café until I return. Take good care of the clients. We are leaving now. Bye... and thanks!"

"..."

My plan, to let Accalia decide everything for me, had suddenly collapsed on itself. Not only did I feel horrible because Trixie had broken her arm, but on top of that, did Lucy just ask me to RUN the café? I had taken care of the pets on her days off, but I had never operated the café during business hours. It was crazy! I wasn't qualified to do that.

When I took my eyes off my phone, I noticed that Accalia and Oreo had paused their fighting and were just staring at me, waiting for me to tell them what was going on. There was no doubt that they had heard my voice tone and suspected something was wrong. Or maybe it was my shaky hands and my absence of breathing that put them on high alert.

"Trixie... She broke her arm."

"WHAT? SERIOUSLY?"

"Yes. Lucy wants you to meet her at the hospital, Accalia."

"Which one? The civic?"

"Yes... And Oreo, we have to go to the café right now."

"... To the café?"

"Yes. Lucy wants us to take care of it today, but I don't know how to do that. Do you?"

"... No. I'm just a pet."

Accalia was already busy putting her clothes on, but she turned to me with a reassuring smile.

"Don't worry, Clara! You'll be fine! It's not hard. You just feed the pets and bring cakes to the clients. They will be so enamored with the pets that they won't even talk to you."



The pets went ballistic as soon as I opened the lounge door. Vix grabbed my leg, Asha was gesticulating like crazy, Meeka escaped the lounge, and Misti jumped on Oreo, her best friend. Right away, I didn't know what to do anymore. Lucy had left no instructions about what she wanted me to do.

It was chaos. Was I really supposed to let the clients in the café? What about the food and drinks? Was I supposed to take care of all that by myself? I was panicking a little. At least the café didn't open for another thirty minutes, so I had a bit of time ahead of me to get my bearings

together. Knowing Lucy was busy taking care of Trixie, the last thing I wanted was to call her back so soon.

First thing first, I had to calm down and come up with a good plan. I wobbled to the nearest couch and sat on it. Vix climbed on me and wrapped her arms around my neck. Her big black pet eyes were so cute, and she smelled good too, but it wasn't time to cuddle. I think she just wanted to reassure me.

"Vix... What am I... supposed to do?"

Vix shrugged.

"Did Lucy tell you anything?"

Vix shook her head, no.

"Is Trixie okay?"

Vix nodded. Then she shook her head, no, which was a bit confusing. Well, a broken arm wouldn't make anybody feel good, so the question was a bit irrelevant.

Misti joined us on the couch, pointing at her own skinny belly.

"Did... did you have breakfast yet?"

Misti shook her head, no.

"Oh, I guess I have to start with that then. Oreo, do you want to help?... Oreo?"

Wait, was Oreo gone? I quickly stood up and didn't see her in the lounge anymore. The last time I saw her, she was with Misti, but now Misti was with me. Did she leave me all alone?

"Okay, stay here. Okay? I'll go get you food and try to find Oreo. And Meeka has escaped too. Aargh!"

I exited the lounge and made sure to close the door behind me so no more pets would sneak out. Just as I was about to start looking for my two lost friends, a loud rumbling noise came from the kitchen. That was scary.

After a short jog to the kitchen, what I saw made my jaw drop. The big fridge door was wide open, the shelves had collapsed, and the whole reserve of food bottles fell out; some of them had even burst on the floor. But what worried me even more was that some cake boxes had fallen out as well and had been crushed. I placed my two hands on my head, panicking and imagining what the cakes looked like inside their box now.

"Nooo! What... what happened!?"

And then I saw Meeka, the rubber raccoon, hugging her knees in the corner next to the fridge. Her cute mask wasn't enough to hide the fact that she was directly involved with this mess.

"Meeka! Did... did you do this?"

She hid her muzzle between her knees.

"Lucy is going to be so angry. What am I going to do now?"

My best guess was that she had tried to help me by gathering the food bottles for her friends, but with those cushy paws, things didn't go as planned. She must have dropped a bottle, and while trying to catch it back, she had tripped or something and made the entire shelf fall on the cakes. It was a disaster.

With my anxiety through the roof and the need to get some control back, I grabbed Meeka's wrist and pulled her back to the lounge.

"Come Meeka! You... you can't help. You have to stay in the lounge."

Once I had reunited the raccoon girl with her friends, I went back to the kitchen to clean up the mess... or try to. The first thing I did was to put all the food bottles on the countertop, but my shaky hands made an open one tip over, which nicely coated the cabinet doors and the floor with blended food.

"Aaaah! Nooo! I made it worse!"

What else could go wrong? That was something I would have to clean later before Lucy came back.

Next, I stacked the cake boxes on the other countertop. I knew some of those were expensive and would only know which ones got damaged until I inspected them all one by one. A couple of them fell on their side during the fridge accident, so I was pretty sure they were crushed inside the box.

But just as I was about to place the last box on the countertop, its bottom failed, and the cake it contained made an Olympic dive straight down and splattered all over the floor... Of course, it had to be the triple chocolate one with the most icing.

"Noooo! Whyyyy!?"

My eyes immediately welled up, and I couldn't think straight anymore. What was happening to me? How did I end up in this situation, and why was I unable to handle this by myself. I was ruining Lucy's café at an alarming rate.

Oreo... Oreo must help me. She has been working at the café for a lot longer than I did, so even if she said she didn't know how, she should at least be able to help me a little. Where was she?

"Oreo? OREO? Where are you?"

I walked out of the kitchen and looked up the staircase.

"Oreo? Are you upstairs?"

Before I went looking for her, I noticed that I had dragged cake purée and blended food all over the hallway with my dirty shoes, which enhanced my panic. And then, my wet eyes landed on the wall clock, making my heart skip a beat. The café was supposed to open in ten minutes, but there was not a chance in the world for me to be ready to serve customers so quickly.

I rushed upstairs to find my friend, not conscious enough to understand that I was making things worse with my food-coated shoes.

"Oreo?"

The pod room was empty, and all the capsule doors were open, so Oreo probably wasn't hiding in there. I then went to the costume room, and that was where I found her, but what I saw stirred mixed feelings inside my belly. Oreo had undressed and was now trying to put her cat

costume on by herself. When she noticed me, she just froze, probably because of the strange way I was looking at her.

"O... Oreo? What... what are you doing?"

"I'm... putting my costume on..."

"But... I was calling your name. I... I need your help."

"I know, but I wanted to wear my costume first."

"Is... Is that what you do... when your friends are in trouble? You prefer to play?"

A feeling I never expected to experience around the pets invaded my fast-beating heart; anger. For the first time, I fully experienced what Lucy must have felt regularly around her girls when they reached her limits or hit a nerve. Whenever I saw her scolding the pets, I always thought she was too severe, but what was happening to her then seemed to happen to me now.

How could Oreo do this to me? She knew that I didn't know how to run a café. She should have heard the loud noise coming from the kitchen when Meeka broke the shelf. She should have heard me calling for help.

Yet, she had decided to come here to put on her cat costume instead. Could it be possible that she was THAT selfish?

"Clara... I... I just wanted to help..."

"NO! You preferred to play!"

"Nooo... Trixie is at the hospital... I need to replace her... Four pets are not enough to take care of the clients..."

"Oreo! Stop lying! Leaving me alone was mean!"

"But... I'm not lying. Claraaa... Don't be angry! You... you are scaring me!"

As Oreo's eyes became all wet, a little voice inside me felt like this was well-deserved and that she should feel guilty. At the same time, I felt horrible for having talked to her in that tone.

Not being able to handle my mixed emotions any longer, I turned around and left the room. Anyway, my throat had clamped shut, and talking was no longer possible.

I ran downstairs, walked around the reception desk, and sat on the floor to hide from the world. Hugging my knees and sobbing seemed like the only good thing to do at the moment. I also reached in my pocket for my phone. If I could just calm down enough to call Lucy and ask her what to do, things would get better. Lucy always knew what to do.

But as I woke up my device, it beeped a few times and turned off in front of my reddened eyes. There was no doubt anymore; this day was cursed. I had not recharged my phone last night, and the battery stupidly died in front of my face at the worst possible moment. Once more, a familiar question popped into my mind; what else could go wrong? More than ever, I felt lonely and isolated.

Lucy had entrusted me with her café and her pets, something I had partially done in the past when she took a day off, but this time, I had quickly lost control and failed her on all levels. I now had a bunch of starving pets in the lounge, the pet food was half gone, the expensive cakes were ruined, the café had never been this dirty, and above all else, I got angry at a pet who was very special to me, and she would probably never talk to me again. Perhaps I would even have to leave the café.

"Bwaaaahaaa!"

Crying was all I had left. I pressed my face against my knees and broke down like a defective human being. Terrible fictional scenarios spun inside my brain, and there was no escape for me anymore. Everybody would be angry at me for having failed them, and I would never be able to look at them in the eyes again.

What else could go wrong? What else could go wrong?

Dingdong! Dingdong!

"..."

NO!

It couldn't be!

The café's door chime rang, alerting me that the front door had opened... My lungs ceased to function at the realization of what had just happened.

I had not locked the front door after we arrived... and someone had just entered the café. I heard their footsteps approaching the reception desk, my hiding place, and then there was a long silence.

"HELLO? Lucy?"

"Where is everybody?"

"She runs the café by herself. Give her a minute. Don't be so impatient, cathead."

"Only Mark can call me cathead. You must not! Come on, Syr. I want to see the animals. That shy girl said there was a raccoon... I never petted a raccoon before. I must pet the raccoon!"

"Kitty. Stop bouncing like that and relax a bit, would you, or else we are leaving. HELLO?"

No way! Those voices... It couldn't be. Those nicknames... Syr, Kitty... Was my brain so distressed that I started hallucinating things?

Unable to hide any longer, I wiped my tears with my long sleeve and slowly rose from behind the desk, exposing my miserable state to the two women who were puzzled by the technique I had chosen to reveal myself.

"Oh? Clara? What were you doing behind that desk? Is Lucy around?"

"... N... No."

Definitely not a hallucination. In front of me was the very beautiful Elizabeth, the artist who had created the pet costumes. This time, she was not wearing a maid uniform. Next to her, the scary girl named Kitty, the one who had asked tons of questions about the café when Misti and I had visited their place a while ago.

Somehow, I was happy to see Elizabeth, which had given me a very good vibe when Misti and I first met her. She was sweet, intelligent, beautiful, caring. But on the other hand, her friend Kitty was terrifying, and now she was about to learn that I had lied to her and that our animals were not real animals. What were they even doing here?

Trembling was my best option.

"Wait... Clara? Are you crying? Are you alright?"

"... No. I... I messed up... everything."

"Where is Lucy?"

"At... at the hospital..."

"WHAT? Is she okay?"

"Yes... yes... A pet got hurt... and... I messed up. I don't know how to take care of the café..."

"Aaah. Okay. Well, it seems we've picked the right day to visit then."

"Meow! Yes. Syr is our slave! She does everything around our house."

"Kitty, I'm not your slave! Why would you say such a thing?"

"..."

What was Elizabeth saying? What was she suggesting? That she would help me run the café? Why would she do that? And would Lucy even be okay with it too? I had no idea what kind of relationship those two had with each other. The only thing I knew was that Elizabeth knew about the pet girls, and Kitty presumably didn't.

Elizabeth confirmed my assumption.

"Kitty and I will help you. Kitty, do you want to go take care of the pets while I'm talking to Clara and figure out what needs to be done?"

"WHAT? SERIOUSLY? CAN I?"

"Yes... But I tell you... It might not be exactly what you expect."

"Stop being mysterious, Syr! I've taken care of cats and dogs before. I'm super good with small furry critters."

"Right... You are in for a shock. Clara, could you let Kitty in the lounge? While she is meeting with your friends, we will see what we can do for you. I suppose the amount of icing on the floor has something to do with your bad day."

"Y...yes... O... okay."

Was I about to be saved? Just like that? Would Elizabeth, calm as ever, be able to fix all my mistakes with a snap of a finger? I didn't have many other options at the moment, so I obeyed her request. I carefully walked around the reception desk with an access card in hand, making sure not to get too close to Kitty, as her over-happiness was still scaring me.

I swiped my card on the reader and pulled the lounge door open. Kitty was already crouching down, probably hoping to see a small animal squeeze out. Clearly, she wasn't expecting the right thing. Syr grabbed Kitty's red leather collar and pushed her, not so gently, inside the lounge.

"Close the door, Clara! Quick! Quick!"

"She... she doesn't know... about the pets?"

"Nope. Kitty had no clue about them. But she will adapt quickly. Trust me."

"..."

"Alright, Clara. Now, tell me what happened, and we will fix it together. I'm sure it can't be that bad."

Have the Gods blessed me with a guardian angel? I had no firm answer to that question, but it sure felt like it at the moment.

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