

# The Mage's Servant (Anthro Fox-Girl TFTG Preg)

By FoxFaceStories

## A Lottery Winner Story for Zaydin

*When poor thief Zachary breaks into a mage's estate in order to make a big score, he is horrified to find that the riches are cursed, and he is turned into a beautiful, busty, and quite furry fox woman as a result! Now working for Mage Hugo in order to work off her debt, the new fox woman finds herself increasingly desiring him. Can she resist her urges, or will she find that the life of an attractive mage's fox woman servant is the very treasure she needed all along?*

## The Mage's Servant

Zachary climbed up the stone wall guarding the mage's estate with ease. Most would have hesitated at such an action, or perhaps even backed down entirely. After all, everyone knew that mages had all kinds of traps guarding their wealth, particularly the most successful ones, and Mage Hugo was among the most successful in all of Zaemar. The stone walls along were covered in runic inscriptions that could blast a man off the side and leave him with a broken arm or leg if he landed poorly enough.

But Zachary was not most thieves. In the city of Zaemar, those who committed thefts had to be members of the local Thieves Guild, or else risk losing one's hands . . . or worse. It was a lucrative business, one that was heavily regulated, controlled, and hierarchical. The leader of the Thieves Guild was one Haym Pascal, and he was not a man to be crossed. The majority of the profits went to him, and one had to work their way up the ranks to finally make a good percentage. It was dangerous to cross him, and so any man who valued his life stayed on his good side, and made sure to pay their dues.

And yet Zachary Cawthor was *not* a member of the Thieves Guild. Instead, the young man was desperate, hungry, and willing to put his neck on the line. He was committing the ultimate crime, one that would get the authorities of the city of Zaemar *and* its vicious Underworld against him. But only if he was *caught*.

Zachary didn't plan to get caught. No one had tried to steal from Mage Hugo in decades. He was an old man, secure in his wealth, and his estate was beyond the edge of the city, located among the rolling hills that led into the Fielding Forest. If Zachary pulled this off, he could flee without anyone knowing his name, and travel to one of the other Free Cities and make his profit there. He was a hungry, lean, red-haired man with freckles on his face. Not too identifiable, as far as he was concerned, especially if he left the cosmopolitan

populace of orcs, dwarves, snake-kin and the like of Zaemar and headed to a city with an even larger human populace.

So he climbed. He jackknifed his way up the wall, spotting each of the signs of runes and traps. He vaulted over, then darted over the bushes that he knew would be too tempting for a thief to hide in, but almost certainly had some kind of man-eating trap in them. The moon was nonexistent in the sky, and he'd imbibed a single potion he needed for this night: a cat's eye potion so he could see in the dark. He'd had it for over a year, not wanting anyone to link a recent purchase to a recent theft. The potion allowed him to weave through the estate's gardens, dodging more traps and spells. There were all sorts of worrisome arcane tricks at work, and he barely understood them at all; a maze nearly closed around him until he jumped back, and he avoided the brick path, noticing that some stones were raised higher, as if they could activate levers beneath. Slowly, he made his way to the estate, which was large and impressive, three entire floors in height and with a large dome in the centre, no doubt the site of the mage's experiments.

*What riches, he thought to himself. Old men like this have everything, and I was born with nothing. Well, I'll get my worth from it. I deserve it.*

He advanced to an open window and decided better. Another too-tempting trap. Instead, he wedged himself into a basement window after cutting its edges expertly with his flick-knife, severing the end-points where a rune was likely placed. Sure enough, something sparked but fizzled as he pulled the window back, and then he slipped in.

The interior had its own clear traps. Zachary was very, very well aware that the estate likely had sentry knights ready to be activated at a moment's notice. He passed through a hall of them, searching for the vault that he knew would be in the basement. He was close, he could feel it, but still he had to be careful, which was why he passed around *behind* the statues, jumping behind one to the next, to avoid their vision. Likely, they would activate if anyone passed between their rows. Magic was just like the gnomish sciences, he'd heard, at least in its own way; there were rules, and for thieves, there were exploits.

He descended into the basement, leaping past the clearly triggered stairs and then closing the door behind him before the animated rug could notice his presence. He continued his infiltration, his heart beating rapidly in his chest.

*So close. So very close and then you've done it, Zach. And no one's the wiser!*

Finally, the vault. It was almost exactly as he expected it to be; a large circular door made of secure steel and covered in runes. This would be tricky, but not impossible as the legends said. He had seen Mage Hugo in public, the doddering old man, and he quickly inverted his robe to look more like him, and then donned his fake beard. Magic wasn't smart; it worked on outlines.

"Open!" he declared.

The door did nothing, but it also did not activate a trap or alarm.

*Good. I just need to open it, then. So long as it thinks I'm him.*

Zachary took a deep breath, then worked on the lock. It took him the better part of half an hour, during which he thought he might die from the sheer anxiety-inducing effort. The runes would no doubt blow, perhaps even killing him, if he put one step wrong. But this was an *Azay Bank* model, and he knew that these had a proprietary feature invented by their dwarven-makers which allowed one to bypass the magic protections that could be placed on top. He exploited these, working with his thieves tools to find the right hinge point in the lock until -

*K-CHK*

The door opened slowly but surely, and Zachary was immediately filled with a sense of relief. Within, the treasures *glowed*. It looked like a series of museum displays in the room beyond, instead of the stereotypical hoard of gold he'd imagined. Numerous priceless treasures, ranging from precious artworks to steel gauntlets of elven make, to a single tree frozen in time within a glass case.

*Don't take too much. Just enough to fill your pockets. Too much greed will end you, Zach. Just take what will make you rich, and nothing more.*

He stepped inside. There were dozens upon dozens of rare treasures here, some of which would make him a deeply rich man all on their own. But one in particular called out to him; it was a golden ring with a beautiful ruby stud. He wasn't sure why, but it seemed to almost call him.

"A good start," he murmured to himself. The thief strode forward and plucked the ring from its stand. He went to put it in his pocket, when suddenly a new urge came over him. For reasons he couldn't quite comprehend, Zachary took the ring and raised it to, appropriately, the ring finger of his left hand. Slowly, he placed it on.

*It's beautiful, he thought. But I should take it off. A poor thief will look out of place while wearing such a priceless - ughh!*

Suddenly, the ring glowed a vibrant red and he doubled over, groaning and clutching his belly. It was like his insides were on fire, and the discomfort spread outwards, causing him to gasp. Instantly, a loud bell rang within the room, and then more bell ringing spread throughout the estate.

"No!" Zachary cried. He tried to run to the exit, but instantly fell over in response to the ring's strange and painful effects. He tried to remove the ring, but it was impossible; some arcane magic was keeping it in place.

*Fuck! It's a trap! It's - ohhhh Gods!*

He was going to die. He knew it. All this planning and preparation. All his ambition, and he was going to die. He could feel his skin burning, a million pinpricks starting across his

skin. Something was marching, and when he tried to get up again and move, he could see that the hordes of knight armour had animated and were now moving into the treasure vault to prevent his escape.

“Shit!” he groaned, only to clutch his body again. “Get this off!”

He tried to get the dagger to cut off his finger. A huge risk, to leave his own blood so the mage could track him, but he was desperate. Unfortunately for the young man, the blade fell from his fingers at the same time as they began to change. He held up his hand in horror as orange fur began to push through the skin. He cringed at the alien sensation, but more was on the way, because his fingernails began to extend, turning black and claw-like. The same was true for the ends of his digits, which were likewise darkening.

“No!” he cried. “No, no, no!”

More fur began to spread, white on the inside of his palm, bright orange like his hair on the other side. It spread up the arm that had the ring finger at its end, and soon his chest was sprouting thick and long fur that was bright orange around his shoulders but white at his front. It was soft and full and furry, and it left him in a deeply panicked state. Worse, his ears were changing; he could feel them getting longer, and an expensive mirror in the vault’s collection showed him that they were looking like *fox ears*, vulpine in shape and length and slowly migrating to the top of his head in a way that left the man groaning.

At this point, a figure ran down the steps, flanked by more guards. She was clearly a servant, perhaps a headservant, and she looked to be in her forties and with a wide figure reserved for the most battle-axe of an old maid belonging to a mage’s staff. She stared in shock at the changing figure of Zachary, then yelled with a voice so loud that she could have been a valkyrie.

“INTRUDER! GET MASTER HUGO! INTRUDER IN THE VAULT!”

At this point, Zachary was already well aware of how hopeless the situation was. He was just focused on getting this damn ring off of his finger in order to prevent himself from being turned into some kind of animal, no doubt so that the Mage could hunt him across his estate grounds in some dangerous game. The fur continued to expand across his body, but to Zach’s surprise and terror, other changes were taking place as well. As the bright orange and white fur pushed out from his form, new alterations took place wherever it spread. His tail bone started to push out, causing him to grow again.

“H-help me!” he cried, his voice rising in tone awkwardly. “I surrender! Just s-stop this freaking th-thing!”

“I can’t do that!” the woman declared. “This is the Vault of Cursed Treasures!”

“The *what!*?”

“MAGE HUGO!” she called. “FETCH MAGE HUGO!”

Zachary almost found himself wanting the mage to get here, because the ring was *not* coming off. His other hand was now clawed with black ends to its digits. The protuberance in his tailbone pushed out with every breath, and soon his pants could no longer contain its growth.

“OH GODS!” he cried, voice cracking up yet another octave. “IT’S GROWINGNNGH!!”

It *burst* out of his backside, splitting the back of his pants open. Sensation flooded him as he realised an entirely new limb had emerged; a huge furry fox tail. A *very* furry one, like a great brush that swayed from side to side, that same bright orange but with a white tip at the end. His legs thickened, gaining a little more fat and muscle, but even as he tried to flee again, using the unexpected to flee past the woman and the suits of armour, Zach instead stumbled as his left hip seemed to pop free.

“Agh!”

And then the right hip.

“Nghh!”

His pelvis stretched wider, and each hip reattached, but now there was no denying that he had a broader lower half with sweeping thighs that left him with an hourglass shape, because his waist was also pulled inwards.

“By the B-Black Mountain!” he groaned, voice squeaking again. His pants ripped apart, unable to contain his new fluffy tail *and* his womanly hips. “What’s h-happening to m-meeee!?”

It was only then that a new figure entered, moving with alacrity down the stairs and past the guards. It was an old, withered man with dark skin and many wrinkles, but he moved in a highly animated fashion, his white beard bouncing about the place and his red sleeping robe hastily swaying about.

“Agatha!” he pronounced. “Who is this!?”

“An intruder, good mage!” she exclaimed. “He was a man a moment ago, but he’s becoming a monster! I think he put on a cursed item!”

The man’s eyes narrowed. “Not a monster, a fox-folk! He has taken the Vulpine Ring!”

“The what!?” Zach gasped between groans. “The *what* ring!?”

His chest was pushing out, a pressure there growing until it was almost agony. His nipples hardened and grew, pushing against the fabric of his shirt.

*My jaw! My jaw is pushing forward! What in the seven hells is happening!?*

“The Vulpine Ring!” the mage declared in an aged, croaky voice. “You fool! I haven’t gotten around to de-cursing that yet!”

Zach wanted to scream an angry reply, but his hips pushed out yet further, and his rear swelled just a little. His moans were sounding almost womanly, but they became briefly more animalistic as his jaw pushed forwards. His nose turned black and shiny, and in moments he was clutching what could only be described as a *muzzle*, one that was easily visible between his eyes.

“Yoo hath tah bee kiddung mweah!” he cried, barely able to form words with this strange new jaw configuration. His tongue swelled, growing longer and then lolling out the side of his mouth, and this was made worse as his teeth sharpened and his gums thickened. It was all so overwhelming. But the worst change was yet to come, because the spread of fur now covered Zachary’s chest completely, as well as his crotch. He clutched himself, shaking and shuddering as the most unwanted sensations followed yet. The changing man’s genitals began to pull back up into his body, causing him to produce a high vulpine whine, pathetic and female in sound.

“Nooooo!” he cried. “Get it off!”

“It’s cursed, you fool!” the Mage said.

“But my diiii - ahhhh!”

It pulled up inside of him, followed by his testes, until only a smooth passage remained, one that already felt strangely wet. He rubbed his furry thighs together, but the sheer discomfort caused the man to rip apart his shirt, tearing it to shreds. It couldn’t have been worse-timed, because the pressure in his chest finally gave way and expanded magnificently.

“Eughhhh! MMhmmm!”

Pleasure bloomed, unwanted yet powerful, as two bumps rose upon his chest, furry and white. They grew and grew, as did his pink nipples, until they were undeniably breasts.

“By the Gods, no!” he cried, though his voice was now sultry and vixen-like, sounding like some tavern wench in heat. The new female fox-folk tried to push and mash *her* new breasts in, but it was impossible, and they were surprisingly sensitive, causing her to produce another high fox whine.

“Good Gods,” the Mage said, his jaw lowering. Something was odd about the old man’s appearance, a slight shimmer that rippled around him, but Zachary couldn’t focus on it yet. The new fox-folk woman was too preoccupied with her breasts, which were still surging forward, taking up more space on her chest and growing outwards, becoming round and full and marvellous to behold - or at least they would have been, were they not now *her* breasts. She cupped them, and then they started to overflow her palms.

“T-too biiiiig!” she whined, panting just like a fox after a frolic. Her tail swayed in agitation behind her, brushing against other treasures, and her fur rose a little from the sheer horror she was experiencing. But still her new bustline blossomed, slowing down gradually

but surely until they finally halted. They overwhelmed her dainty palms, her nipples large and proud and stiff with an unwanted arousal. She looked down, her new muzzle causing her face to feel much longer than it should be, and then let out a squeak.

*They're, they're huge!* she thought. *Oh Gods, they're bigger than Maggie the tavern wench at the Outside Inn! They feel almost the size of my own head!*

Her ears flickered in agitation, and her tail stiffened again. It was all so wrong, to the point where it took a moment for her to realise that even her *thoughts* had changed.

*No, no, it can't be. I'm thinking of myself as a woman. It's not fair! You can't change my mind as well!*

The new fox-folk regarded her body, her heavy white-furred chest heaving and wobbling a little from the movement of her shoulders. Slowly, she turned her muzzle up to stare at the mage whose cursed item had just changed her.

"Well," the man said. "It seems we have much to talk about."

But then his form shimmered, and to her surprise she saw only a young man around her age, boyish and a little thin.

"Who - who are you!?" she asked, still not used to her vixen voice.

"I am Mage Hugo!"

"No you're not! You're a thief! I can see the real you! You're just a boy like me!"

The mage blinked, and he and the maid named Agatha exchanged an odd glance before returning their gaze to Zachary.

"Well, this is unexpected," the mage said, his voice that of a young man's now. "It seems we have a lot to talk about."

Awkwardly and with a great deal of shame, Zachary tried to cover her breasts with one forearm (a nearly impossible task thanks to their sheer size) and her new crotch with another.

"You're godsdamned right we do!" she cried.

\*\*\*

Zachary tapped her clawed foot upon the ground. Most fox-folk did not don footwear, and now she knew why; their feet were not only clawed, but naturally arched for leaping and dextrous movements, which meant that she literally walked on the balls of her feet now, as if she were permanently wearing invisible heels. It had made the march to the mage's study all the more embarrassing, but so had a number of other things, such as how her very large breasts jostled on her chest and her hips swayed with the hypnotic grace that fox-folk were known for - and lusted after in many a bardic song about the strange and irresistible pleasures of the far north-eastern lands. Gods, she'd only seen five or six fox-folk in her

entire twenty two years of life. They were so rare and exotic in these parts, and always captivating in their movements in a way that not even elves could quite replicate.

*Stupid tail, she thought to herself. Stupid ass. Stupid breasts and fur! I'm moving just like one of them! I can't stop . . . swaying!*

Thankfully, at least, she wasn't naked. She had been provided a long tunic to cover her form, and Maid Agatha had arched a judgemental eyebrow as she cut a hole in the back for Zachary's new tail to stick through. It was utterly humiliating, and the new fox-folk could only imagine the laughter when Haym Pascal took position of her. She would either be killed, or worse now, placed in a brothel to repay the dues she'd failed to give to the Thieves Guild. Looking down her strained collar to her large breasts, where her fur ran thinnest and therefore showed the true bountiful size of her new pair of mammaries, she could easily imagine the latter being her dark fate.

*Gods, even I don't deserve that, surely!*

Her only leverage was with Mage Hugo. She'd seen that he was an imposter. Perhaps something could be done there. It was a thought that stayed with her as she was led around a corner and through a doorway into the mage's study. The animated armour knocked, and a figure on the other side bid them to enter. Sure enough, a young man with dark skin and curly black hair that fell to either side of his face was waiting at the desk. Zachary could see the outline of his illusory appearance like a shimmer, but the reality was beneath.

*He's definitely as young as me. Handsome, too.*

That last thought jolted her, making her tail stick up rigidly. Where in the Seven Hells had *that* thought come from?

"Please, take a seat," the young man said. The study was impressively large, with rows of tomes on shelves behind him, not to mention other desks of alchemical equipment and various other treasures in their own displays. Zachary folded her arms in front of her.

"I'd rather stand, thank you," she said. She hadn't intended it, but her voice was far sweeter, perhaps even sultrier, than she'd intended it to be. That was another thing about fox-folk; they were said to be marvellous singers.

"Have it your way," the young mage said. "Tell me, what do you see when you look at me?"

Honesty was the best answer. There were two animated sets of armour blocking the only exit. "I see a young man. Dark-skinned. Blue-robed instead of red. Not bad looking. Er, I mean, you don't appear aged like your illusion."

He nodded slowly. "Incredible. You're the first person to see past my illusion. Tell me, what's your name? Who are you?"

Zachary could have smirked. Lying came easily to a thief. "I'm . . . Zachary Cawthor. I'm a thief, but I'm not a member of the Thieves Guild."

Her muzzled jaw fell. She hadn't meant to say that! But the mage grinned and gestured to a rune far above on the domed ceiling.

"Truth rune," he said. "Works a treat for liars. Tell me why you were here in my estate."

"Your estate? You're not even Mage Hugo! You're an imposter just like me!"

"I'll be asking the questions."

The truth rune glowed, and she had to answer. "I was just looking for treasure from your vault in order to make myself rich."

"Pah! A common thief."

"Not common!" she protested, her tail now swaying angrily. She bared her teeth by instinct, growling a little without meaning to. It was an odd instinct, but one she felt in her bones. "I'm an excellent thief! And I've got good reasons to do what I do!"

"Please, you were trying to steal from me. That's the same as anyone else."

"I'm not rich like you! Barely anyone is! The streets of Zaemar beyond your walls are cruel, you upper class twit! I wasn't going to take everything in your vault! Just enough to start again in another city and no longer have to live off scraps from the gutter!"

At this, Mage Hugo's expression softened a little. He cocked his head a little, as if examining her. "Well, that may indeed be the case. I know better than you think about that, actually. But that's not your story to know. For now, you can call me Nathaniel, and know that I am *not* an imposter, at least not as you think I am, thief."

"Look," Zachary said, gesturing to her furry form. "Clearly, I've stumbled into something. Just let me go, and I'll never mention what's going on with you. I promise."

"I'll take my chances. You can go to the authorities."

"I'll be dead within a week! Pascal of the Thieves Guild will have my head! Please, at least reverse this change and give me a sporting chance."

At this, the mage actually chuckled. He stood up and walked around Zachary, inspecting her. It was an odd sensation, to suddenly feel like a piece of meat on display. Her superior nose could also pick up his perfume, even his interest.

*Oh shit, he finds me attractive? How much worse can this get!?*

"It occurs to me," Nathaniel said, "that leaving you like this would actually *improve* your chances, wouldn't it? After all, the Thieves Guild and the authorities would have no idea who you are. You could start a new life as a fox-folk woman."

"Are you kidding me!?! No! You have to change me back!"

The mage sighed. "I don't have to do anything. You were trying to steal from me. Not that you were doing it very well."

Zachary couldn't take much more of this taunting. She placed her hands on her widened vixen hips and snarled again, baring her sharp teeth. "I got into your treasure vault, didn't I?"

The man laughed. "Hardly! That's not my treasure vault. All of the treasure of this estate is held in the Forscythe Bank in town."

"I - what?"

The mage stood in front of her now. Gods, he smelled good. It was infuriating how good her nose was now. He folded his arms and smirked. "Why would I have a personal vault of treasure when I could just store it securely in a bank? Or the real Mage Hugo, at least."

"Then - then what was all that in your vault?"

"That, Zachary Cawthor, was the Vault of Cursed Items."

A shiver ran down her spine and made her puffy tail shake. She still wasn't used to the odd sensation of it. Even her whiskers twitched.

"C-cursed items?"

"Yes! I make a good portion of my coin from the business of carefully removing curses from various items that have been lent to me. That vault keeps them safe. As you've found, that ring has a curse upon it that will turn its wearer into an attractive fox-folk woman."

*Attractive?*

"Then get it off!"

Nathaniel shrugged. "I don't know how! I haven't gotten to that one yet. It's near the end of the queue. And besides, why would I? It's my best way of managing the would-be thief of my estate."

"It's not *your* estate," she growled.

But to her surprise, Nathaniel's face briefly became saddened, and he looked to the ground. When he spoke, all smugness had fled his voice. "You're right, it isn't. But perhaps one day I will be worthy of it." He looked back into her eyes, and she saw the steel in his gaze. It was almost magnetic. "That's what you'll help me with, Zachary. I propose a deal. In exchange for me ending the ring's curse and turning you back, *and* allowing you to escape the clutches of the Thieves Guild and the authorities by *never* reporting this, you in turn will work for me as my new servant and assistant."

Zachary frowned. Even frowning felt odd; *this jaw is too damn long*, she thought.

"And then you'll turn me back?" she asked, folding her arms beneath her chest in such a fashion that she accidentally showed off some impressive cleavage through her strained collar. Nathaniel briefly looked down, and she realised what she was showing off. The fox-folk lowered her arms immediately, and Nathaniel coughed awkwardly.

“Yes, I’ll change you back. When I’m caught up on the backlog, I’ll research into the ring and form a counter to the curse. Then, provided you’ve done good work for me, you’ll be let go.”

“And if I refuse?”

He smirked and gestured back towards the animated armour behind her. “It’s either that, or be turned over to the city guard. Pick your poison.”

Zachary took a deep breath. Her large furry breasts rose and fell. *Gods, how strange that feels. These are far too big, and my nipples are far too . . . out from me! And that’s to say nothing of all the other changes.*

No, she couldn’t stay like this. What good was a thief as memorable as a rare fox-folk? And besides, she was *not* staying as a woman.

“Fine,” she said. I’ll be your servant. But you better be on the level about this.”

Nathaniel extended a hand. “I always honour my promises,” he said. “Always.”

She sniffed the air, and somehow seemed to sense the honesty in his words. It would be a useful talent to have as a human.

“Deal, then,” she said.

They shook hands; one dark and strong, the other soft and furry. It made her tail kink at the end for some reason.

\*\*\*

Zachary was shown to her room. It was apparently just a servant’s quarters, but it was far lovelier than any of the rat holes she had ever had the misfortune of staying in. She even had a bed - an *actual* bed! Food was delivered to her, and while Maid Agatha was there with her battleaxe personality and glowering expression, she delivered a warm lamb stew with vegetables on the side that made Zachary’s furry belly groan with desire.

“That’s . . . all for me?” she said.

Agatha scoffed. “Try not to make yourself sick by eating it all at once. There’s plenty more where that came from.”

“Um, well, thank you, I guess.”

The maid just guffawed. “You better save your thanks till *after* I’ve sorted your clothing. Gonna have to make some new garments for that figure of yours. Lucky you. I remember when I had a figure like that. They go, you know. They go before you know it.”

Zachary covered her form a little, even though she was still wearing her brown tunic. “I’m not planning on staying like this.”

“Ha! The young don’t know how good they have it. I’d wear that ring in an instant if it could make me young again. If you need anything in the night, ring that bell. Try not to steal it first.”

“Oh, very funny.”

“Who’s joking?”

She left, and Zachary started eating at the nearby desk. It was . . . an awkward experience to say the least. She was not used to eating with a fox-like muzzle at all, and bits of food kept falling out the side. It didn’t help that her tongue was longer, and seemed more sensitive to taste and heat. She started making hacking sounds as she struggled with her food, and then bits of the stew landed in her fur, staining it.

“Gods, this is ridiculous!” she groaned. By the time she got into bed, she was exhausted from the effort of learning how to manage her new body. And that was when she discovered that she couldn’t sleep on her damn chest anymore. Her mammaries were just too large that it seriously hurt. “A godsdamned *vixen!* Why’d I have to be a godsdamned *vixen!?*”

Eventually, she went to sleep.

Zachary woke to her new life. Agatha was right there to greet her once she emerged in her brown tunic. The brusque woman looked her up and down and sighed.

“It’ll take a lot to make you a good servant! Come with me. Let’s get you to your new life, Zaria.”

“Zachary. My name is still Zachary.”

“No, that was your name, and might be again. Jeremiah and I had a look through the library last night. Zaria is a fox-folk name, and not far from your own. So welcome to Mage Hugo’s estates, Lady Zaria. Nathaniel is now your lord, and it’s time to let you know your duties.”

Zaria frowned, still not used to the way her changed, longer face moved, but she followed the woman. “Wait, who’s Jeremiah?”

Agatha rolled her eyes. “The *other* member of the staff. He oversees maintenance and the academic areas of the estate.”

“The other member of staff? There’s only two of you?”

“Mage Nathaniel prefers to keep a small staff. We have an occasional gardener and maintenance staff, but we are the only full-time members.”

Zachary chuckled as she followed Agatha down the estate halls. She was trying to avoid swaying her hips too much, but it was difficult due to her new pelvic structure. The same was true of her tail, which swayed seemingly of its own accord unless she concentrated on turning it where she wanted.

“So this Jeremiah, am I gonna meet him?”

“Eventually. Be warned. He’s a spindly, stuffy man who is so old-fashioned he’ll be able to sniff the poverty on you before he even sees you.”

“Sounds like a delightful old skeleton.”

Agatha gave the first genuine smile that Zaria had seen from the broad-figured, black-haired woman. “He certainly is, but he is my husband, so say a bad word to him and I’ll give you a whallopping.”

It took Zaria several minutes to realise that Agatha had actually shown a sense of humour. There wasn’t time to dwell upon it, however, because Zaria’s new duties had begun. A proper outfit was promised for him in future days, but for now she had her tunic and the hold in the back for her remarkably fluffy orange and white tail. She didn’t see Mage Nathaniel that day at all. Apparently he was ‘in his study,’ where all the actual work of magical practice and wizardry was done. This annoyed Zaria that the man who had forced her into this service was effectively closed off from her, but in the end she simply had to swish her tail with frustration.

What followed was a set of completely ordinary and utterly boring instructions from Agatha. The maid showed the fox-folk around the impressive estate, making her aware of where everything was and where not to go - which included the vault.

“Don’t worry, I’m not going there again,” Zaria groaned.

“See that you don’t,” Agatha said. “Jeremiah will have a fit if his delicate order within the vault is disturbed. Now let’s get to cleaning and ordering the master’s clothes.”

“I can do that, but I am *not* calling him master.”

“Ha! You watch out, I’m almost starting to like your spirit.”

Unfortunately, Zaria’s own spirit was just about broken over the next few days. She had lived off of the streets. She had eaten cooked rat in order to survive. She had fled from the city guards and broken her nails upon stone as she climbed towers in order to escape. What she *hadn’t* done, however, was clean the floor. Or wipe a set of windows. Or scrape mould from the ceiling while balancing upon a ladder. Or clean dishes, or fold another’s clothing, or any number of menial tasks that practically drove her to insanity. It made it even worse when half of what she was cleaning up was her own mess; her fluffy tail had a habit of shedding even more than the rest of her body, and her habit of scratching her ears led to little white and orange hairs sprinkling trails of hair after her.

*No wonder so few intelligent races have fur!* she thought to herself as she once again had to get out the broom to clean after her own furry deposits. *How do they put up with it? It’s bad enough that my ears keep twitching at every sound.*

Jeremiah wasn’t much of a help. Zaria met him on the third day when she was finally allowed to visit the east wing where the library and the arcanum were located. He was exactly as Agatha described; a spindly skeleton of a man who was over six feet in height and

had a dour disposition. He was also elvish, and to Zaria's surprise he was a *wood* elf, with bronze skin and red hair. He looked down at the new fox-folk from his round spectacles.

"So, you are the new hire," he said, as if she wouldn't be around for long.

"More like the blackmailed thief," she said.

"Hmm, so I've heard. Let me be clear, you are *not* to steal my books."

"Aren't they Nathaniel's books?"

"Master *Hugo's* books, specifically, and no. The master may always borrow them, but as the librarian, they are *mine* to keep safe. Do *not* steal them."

"Wow, I thought you wood elves were all about trees."

"Books are made from paper, Miss Zaria. And paper is made from . . . trees."

Agatha was present and burst into a hearty laugh, hugging her husband around the waist. "Isn't he just a joy?"

*Sure*, Zaria thought. *This whole situation is a true joy.*

It was only after a full week, when Zaria was slowly starting to get used to her changed body, the fur, the swaying tail that occasionally knocked over ornaments and so forth, that she finally got to see Nathaniel again. She'd stumbled through her cleaning and maintenance tasks, even learned to fold a sheet 'properly,' which she hadn't even known was a thing. Agatha was decidedly not too impressed with her efforts on the whole, which was why it was a huge surprise that Nathaniel had apparently summoned her. She expected him to be sitting behind his desk again in some kind of authorial judgement over her. Instead, when she made her way into the study, she found him on his back holding up a book against a pillar of light from the window above, with numerous other texts all around him. There was a large goblet next to his head, and he kept turning to look at the item. He didn't even seem to notice her until she rapped her knuckles on the side of the door she'd just opened.

"Zachary! Zaria, I mean!" he said, sitting upright. "Come on in. Agatha tells me that you've done excellent work around the estate."

The fox-folk placed her hands on her hips. It was an automatic reaction by her, but every time it reminded her how wide they were. "Excellent work, huh?"

"Well, she used a different adjectival description. Nevertheless, I am told you have not tried to steal anything from my estate—"

"Mage Hugo's estate."

". . . indeed," he said, after a momentary pause. "Well, come on in. If you are to be my servant, it's time I make use of your skills."

"You want me to *steal* something?"

He chuckled. "Not at all! Besides, you'd rather stick out now. But I do want to make use of your nimble fingers and adaptable mind when it comes to helping me remove the curses from these items."

Zaria frowned. "I don't know the first thing about magic."

"Neither did I, once. But it has rules, and it has principles, and as you demonstrated so perfectly by getting all the way into my - into Mage Hugo's - vault, it also has loopholes that can be exploited. Now come. Have a look. This is the Goblet of Sharn. It's meant to be a holy relic for worshippers of Sharn, the Deity of Crossroads and Travellers."

"Yeah, I know. I've prayed to him more than once. The big guy didn't exactly answer."

"Well, you found yourself at a crossroads just a week ago, didn't you? Anyway, a certain mage from a rival order cursed it so that when one drinks from the goblet, instead of experiencing a brief peace to allow for calm choices and decision-making, and good health for travelling, it instead induces a nauseating effect. A strong one, in fact."

Zaria clicked the claws of her feet upon the wooden floor. "It makes you vomit?"

"Pretty much! So I'm trying to omit the runes. Unfortunately, these are carved runes. They can be easily removed by magic, but only once *their* magic is gone. Which requires me to get rid of them all at once, or else we might all come down with nausea and the runes will re-assert themselves."

The fox-folk looked at the goblet that Nathaniel had picked up. "What do you want me to do with it?"

"Well, I need to know what solvent to use to interfere with the goblet. And I thought . . . someone with a good sense of smell and a canny ear might be good for this, hmm?"

*Great, so the attractive mage is just using me for my new senses. I mean, he's not attractive. It's just . . . ugh. This stupid body.*

It was true, there was something magnetic about him. His dark eyes, his perfect teeth, the way his gaze occasionally roamed over her form while he thought she wasn't looking. She was damn well aware that her tunic pulled far too tightly across her impressive chest, as well as at her hips.

"Fine, what am I smelling for?"

"Just describe the scent. Come right up close. It might help if you hold the goblet with me, since that partially activates the runes."

She hesitated, then placed her paw-hands upon it. The goblet was not particularly large, and so she found that her fingers brushed over his, something that made her tail stiffen a little, and her fur fluff up a bit. She tried to avoid panting, or the awkward realisation that her changed form, courtesy of the ring she was still forced to wear, was actually making her *attracted to men*.

*How humiliating can this get?*

"Okay, now smell," he said, his voice low and brassy.

She closed her eyes and sniffed through her black nose. "I can smell . . . sulfur. And something metallic. Like blood, but it's not blood. Don't ask me how I know that."

“Copper!” Nathaniel declared with a bit of a cheer. “I know exactly what to use now.”

“Do you want me to go or -”

“No, stay! You’ve helped solve the case, and brought your own counter-curse a little closer. You should see the fruit of your efforts.”

He moved to his desk, his blue robes flowing about him. It was amusing to realise that she was taller than him - he wasn’t short, but fox-folk were quite tall, and besides, she rested naturally on the balls of her feet now, which were padded just like those of a fox. When Nathaniel returned, he had a little vial with him. He broke it over the goblet, pouring its red contents within and saying some words in a language Zaria had never heard.

*Wine? It was just red wine he needed and a few magic words?*

Nathaniel smiled as the runes slowly fell away, so that only scratches remained. “I know what you’re thinking; it’s that easy? Well, yes! The hardest part, really, is figuring out what simple solution is needed. Thanks for that.”

“I don’t suppose it’s enough to get this fur off of me, is it?”

He considered this, then smiled. “Not quite, but it’s enough to enjoy a good drink. Come, have some water.”

To her surprise, he cleaned the goblet, then filled it with water from a nearby tap in his study. “Try it. Please, I promise you, you won’t throw up. But perhaps your prayers to Sharn may finally be answered now that you have aided in the restoration of one of his holy relics.”

Zaria was unsure, but she was feeling quite thirsty. That was the thing about now having a body that was entirely coated in thick, soft, and impressively long fur; it made one overheat easily, and the need for water was making her pant with longing for it like a true canine. She took it and had a sip.

And entered *nirvana*.

It was impossible to describe, but an astonishing peace suddenly came over Zaria. She almost dropped the goblet, but Nathaniel was thankfully there to take it from her and then partake in a sip of his own. But then *he* dropped the cup, and the pair of them stood opposite one another, caught in a state of near-thoughtless bliss that seemed to clarify *everything*. For the first time, Zaria felt fully comfortable in her new skin. She could feel every individual fur on her body, how soft and silky they each were. She smiled as her tail swayed slowly behind her, brushing against a shelf but not upending anything, thankfully. She raised her muzzle up to look at the ceiling of the dome and sighed, then lowered it again to inspect herself. For the first time she didn’t even mind her curvaceous form, or even her womanly body. In fact, she felt a latent pride in her impressive curves and her full bust, the way it swelled with each breath and pushed against the confines of her tunic.

“I’m . . . beautiful,” she said, the epiphany striking over her.

It was only then that she noticed Nathaniel staring forwards, his eyes wide, his gaze *captivated* by her presence. Something about his stare . . . it was like he was looking at a goddess. Zaria looked behind herself then back again, until she realised he was looking at *her*.

“Nathaniel?” she said.

“You *are* beautiful,” he said.

The words were so certain that they made her heart skip a beat. Her loins tingled, and her nipples stiffened just slightly.

“And you are . . . very handsome,” she said.

That’s when the effect of the goblet wore off. The wondrous peace passed, but its effects would linger, perhaps forever. Zaria knew she’d never forget that sense of lucidity and calm, not ever. But she also realised that she was still looking at Nathaniel and he at her. His eyes lowered down to her bust, at which point her anger finally returned.

“Hey! Eyes up here, mage!”

He blinked, looked up, and then panic hit him. “Oh, by the Gods and the Black Mountain! You have my apologies. Er, but it worked, didn’t it? What a remarkable feeling! Better even than Mad Cath’s swill down Cranny Lane, eh?”

Zaria’s brief arousal and shame was halted by this. “Wait, you know Mad Cath’s swill?”

“Let’s just say I’ve had a taste in my time, back in the poor lanes. Thank you for your help, Zaria. You can return to your duties. But . . . I look forward to working with you again soon.”

Zaria turned on the spot so fast that the bushy end of her tail swiped across his face and practically suffocated him in the resulting fur. “Sorry!” she said, before moving with graceful speed out of the study. “I’ll get back to work. Just make sure you figure out how to un-curse me!”

She closed the door and pressed her back against it, breathing heavily, her large breasts prominent, their weight obvious to her once again.

*Zaria, just what the hell was that?*

She managed to collect herself by the time Agatha returned, but she spent the rest of the day fidgeting her claws together. The rest of the day was spent helping Jeremiah with the book placements and Agatha with the old carpets. Yet despite the former male’s disgust at how her body had responded to Nathaniel, and how he’d looked at her, she couldn’t help but want to return to that study.

It was an ache that followed her all the way to the bedroom.

\*\*\*

Things slowly shifted as the next month passed. Zaria was far more used to her fox-folk body, including the art of eating with a snout, and she even practised her dexterity in the yard, helping with Agatha's maintenance by literally climbing with ease up the side of the estate to pluck branches and rubbish from the gutters and rooftiles. The maid harrumphed at this, clearly impressed but not always willing to show it. Zaria found herself actually *trying* to get a compliment out of the obstinate woman. She was half-convinced that her dour husband would be more forthcoming, if she could ever understand the labyrinthine book system she had to help catalogue.

But the real big shift was how those duties started to melt away. Ever since that awkward yet *intriguing* experience between her and Nathaniel in his study, he had started inviting her more and more in order to help him. At first it was also for menial tasks - the young man was clearly brilliant but couldn't clean a mess to save his life - but given that she wasn't great at those either, her focus started to shift. It started with just a few questions about his magecraft, and developed from there to asking about cursed items, what arcane words he was speaking, the interactions between different alchemical solutions. Zaria didn't exactly have a scientific mind, but one didn't survive off of the streets without a certain hunger to see a world beyond them, and this she was experiencing now. It didn't hurt that Nathaniel was clearly delighted to play the role of teacher, despite being her own age.

"Yes, so you see mercury in this instance . . ."

"Would dissolve the transformative effects but leave the others in place, I guess? No, that's stupid. I don't understand this stuff."

"No!" he said excitedly one afternoon. "That's exactly it, Zaria! Who knew you would be such a natural at this. And all it took was you becoming a fox-folk to get the chance."

At this, she actually laughed a little. Nathaniel may have been holding the curse over her head, but he was . . . rather charming. Not just handsome, but passionate. He was a man who *loved* magical puzzles, loved to challenge himself and his craft. It reminded her of herself as a thief; the thrill of the impossible, or taking one's ambitions further than anyone else had ever gone.

"Well, maybe it was just a lucky guess," she admitted, though she leaned closer over the bench where he was seated so she could watch the alchemical branch of his magical talents. "Plus, I'm not a real fox-folk. This body is still very alien to me."

Nathaniel regarded her for a moment. She felt an embarrassing warm glow from the way his eyes just briefly - almost imperceptibly - glanced at her furry cleavage before moving up to her vulpine features. "Please don't take offence, Zaria, but you wear it very, very well. Especially with that lovely dress, if I may say so."

This made her whiskers twitch, which she had found out was her new body's equivalent of blushing. That, and the fact that her tail had gone very noticeably straight. It was true, Agatha had come through with a number of outfits and clothing articles fit for a fox-folk. Apparently, Nathaniel had spared no expense on ordering material that did not cause fur-friction or discomfort for hair-bodied races. As such, she now had brassieres for her breasts (quite necessary if she ever wanted to not be wobbling and jiggling all the time), as well as female underwear, undergarments for sleeping, a maid uniform that felt positively fetishistic when she was on it, though perhaps only because the joke about the 'Foxy Maid' was a classic where she'd grown up. And, of course, she'd been given the robes of a mage's assistant. Normally, these would be thicker, but to be kind to her fur, the material was quite thin and silky, and so it felt more like a dress. It didn't pronounce her curves, at least, but it didn't exactly hide them, and the tied belt around her waist hinted at her lovely figure all the same. It felt . . . strange to both finally be comfortable in her clothing *and* to know how exotic and beautiful she looked in part because of them. The fact that Nathaniel was now commenting directly on said beauty only made her mind even more confused.

"I, um, thank you for getting these for me," she said diplomatically.

"I spoke out of turn. I shouldn't have said that."

"No, it's . . . alright. It's not as bad as the comments I get in public when picking up your magical orders."

"Still, I wish I'd been there when that knave tried to have a feel of your tail. I would have turned him into a newt for a year."

She giggled. "It wasn't that bad. I just about scratched his arm to bloody ribbons, and I *do* mean bloody. I was ready to sink my teeth into him."

"There's my vulpine assistant! Shall we look at the next cursed item?"

She stood up so suddenly that even her undergarments couldn't prevent the obvious jostle of her breasts, nor Nathaniel from noticing them. "Oooh, let's! The sooner we get them out of the way, the sooner I can be me again. Is it the globe we're looking at? I hope it's the globe?"

"You better not, it has at least three goblinoid ghosts inside of it. We counter-charm that one wrong, and they'll be haunting this estate before you can say 'Goblins are hanging from my chandeliers.'"

Still, each new cursed item being countered meant she was getting closer to her own service being released. Zaria was grateful for it, but at the same time she was coming to appreciate her body, particularly how elegant and graceful it was, yet possessed of dexterity and speed that she'd never known. If she wasn't such a rare specimen in these parts, she might consider staying a male fox-folk if possible, if only to be a better thief! She joked about this to Agatha, who snorted immediately.

“Next time we should hit you with a ring that turns you into a squid.”

“All the better!” Zaria boasted. “More arms to thief with!”

But in truth, the former human man hadn't felt a desire to steal while she was in Mage Hugo's estate. She lacked any reason to, for one; she lived in so much more comfort than she had ever imagined. And for two, the art of thievery was slowly being substituted by the art of magic. As a mage's servant, the buxom fox-folk beauty was learning that countering curses required its own sleight of hand and clever cunning, as well as the right resources. Nathaniel was much like her in ways that even she couldn't quite grasp, particularly when his eyes lit up at a new challenge, or he showed her the latest magical gadget as if he was a boy in a gnomish toystore. She couldn't dislike him, no matter how much she wanted to.

*He's just too . . . cute. Too confident. He knows what he wants, and isn't afraid to show that obsessive side, but he's not unkind. He's quite kind, in fact.*

That was clearly shown when, while learning how to use an ironbulb, which was for extracting pixie and fairy dust from cursed items, she accidentally ignited the mixture. It blew up in her face, and soon sections of her fur were on fire.

“AGGH! HELP ME!” she screamed, her body in a panic.

But Nathaniel acted so quickly that it amazed her. His eyes turned blue as he swiftly ran and upended a heavy jar of water. Eldritch words slid from his tongue, and the water animated, crashing over her and then seeping across the fur, stopping not only the flame but then glowing as it healed her.

“Oh Gods, you saved me!” she said, and without thinking she grabbed the man and clutched him against her, not even caring that her large breasts were quite obviously pressing against his wonderfully muscular chest.

“Are you okay? Zaria, your hands!”

They were still painful, and already had burn sores upon them, and weeping flesh. Nathaniel ordered her not to work, and to her surprise Agatha came around to check on the bandages on her hands multiple times.

“Thank you Agatha,” she said two days later. “You don't have to do this.”

“You're a member of the staff, which means I do and I will. We're a small group, we take care of each other.”

At this, Zaria cracked a smirk as she sat in her bed, feeling a little exposed in just her undergarments. “I don't imagine Jeremiah does much caretaking.”

Agatha scoffed. “You'd be surprised. The instant he found out, he compiled this for you.”

She handed a stack of books with a piece of paper on top to Zaria.

“What's this?”

“It’s books he thinks you’d like. Trust me, Jeremiah is never wrong.”

“Oh, that’s . . . surprisingly kind of him.”

“He also says don’t bend the spines, or he’ll bend you till you break.”

“Ah, that’s the Jeremiah I’ve come to know. I’m not . . . great at reading, though. I can do it, but I’m slow.”

Agatha smiled. It was the second genuine smile from her in six weeks. “He thought you’d say that too. His note says that only by reading more can you read better.”

The maid left the room and closed the door. She had probably thought this was an ordinary interaction, but for Zaria, who had grown up as a poor orphan with nobody to trust all of her life, a sea of emotions churned within her furry belly, none of which she could explain. She looked to her bedside table where Nathaniel had left his pair of presents. The first was a vase of beautiful flowers he had used magic to bloom. They had a wondrous scent that helped her calm, just as he’d intended, no doubt. The second present was even better; a new set of lockpicks and a message:

*‘Come find me in my room when you’re ready to see me.’*

The thought made her shiver, as humiliating as it was to admit. Meet him in his room? It was the kind of thing that would produce scandal, not that she cared about such things. But he should, shouldn’t he?

*It’s not like he views me romantically. And I definitely don’t view him the same way. I just like looking at his forearms and his shoulders and that attractive face of his because this stupid fox body likes it. There’s nothing more to it.*

And yet . . . that image of him valiantly saving her life so quickly kept flashing in her mind, and each time it did, it seemed that Nathaniel was wearing less and less clothing than the previous remembrance. Sometimes, when she went for a walk as her hands recovered, she could smell where he’d been, and it made her . . . nostalgic. As if she truly missed his company.

*I do miss his company, damn him. There’s something mysterious with him. I need to find out what it is. And . . . I should do something for him. For teaching me all this stuff, when he could have just made me clean the privy or something.*

She lay back in bed that night, and Agatha brought her an extravagant meal as well as new magically-enchanted gloves to heal her burnt palms. Those were courtesy of Nathaniel. The same was true of the wondrous meal, which she had cooked, but he had ordered for her. It was very thoughtful, too; Nathaniel had remembered an off-hand comment she’d made about always looking into the windows of the orcish meat shop on the corner of her street, wishing she could try some salami when she was a child. Now, entire slices were provided for her, and they were *marvellous*. Far better than the off-cuts she’d stolen from Grumash’s pantry.

Her fingers were better, and his water treatments were applied delicately. He told Zaria that he wanted her healthy so she could help with the countercharms against the cursed items, but he was so tender when he animated the healing waters and rubbed them over her hands. There was a closeness, an intimacy that made her heart skip a beat, and then skip a second when she realised she'd just skipped a beat from the touch of a *man*. It stirred up all sorts of confusion in the thief, and it set her tail wagging; from frustration or some quiet joy, she couldn't quite tell.

"How do you feel?" he asked her as he massaged her hands, which were almost fully healed just two days later.

"Wonderful, thanks to you," she said, before her ears shot up straight in alarm. "I mean, you're doing a wonderful job. You feel good. I mean, this feels good. You know what I mean."

He regarded her curiously. "I hope I do," he said. "You know, you impress me a lot, Zaria. You remind me a lot of myself. Just . . . scrappier."

"Hey!"

"Relax, I mean it as a compliment. I could have been you in another life. You've improvised and survived, adapted and learned. No wonder you have such an affinity for magic. One day, if you want, I could even teach you."

She halted, her whiskers twitching. She was distinctly aware of how close he was, and how he was almost . . . petting the fur of her hands and right forearm. It was dreamy in its luxurious sensation.

"Me? Do magic? You're just joking at this point, Nathaniel."

"Not at all," he said with an easy smile. "You've got what it takes. But you'd have to stay, of course."

"No way. I'm not staying as a fox-folk lass!"

"I didn't say that! But if you stayed on afterwards . . . but you *could* stay as a fox-folk, if you wished."

She'd let loose a little vulpine snarl at the mere thought of it, and that had been that.

Only it really hadn't, because that night she lay in bed again, his words turning in her mind again and again.

*I could do magic, she thought to herself. Actual magic. He believes in me, and when he says stuff like that, I believe in me too. Like I could do more. But . . . he also looks at me like any guy would look at a fox-folk female with a chest out to her and hips that look ripe for bearing babies. Cubs? Whatever. He looks at me like . . .*

Like she was beautiful. She shivered a little in bed, clutching her tail up against her chest and stroking it to calm herself. It didn't do anything for her this time, however. Her nipples were already hardening, her breasts and womanly passage tingling with desirous

warmth. Zaria took a deep breath and tried to think of other things, but she could only think of how handsome he was, how fit he was, how passionate and intelligent and . . . arousing he was.

“Ohhhh, Gods,” she moaned, panting like a fox. She started to touch her breasts without thinking, and it set a fire under her, growing her yearnings ever more. The former human male moaned and touched herself again. Her fur was so silky and soft, wonderful to the touch, even more so because she’d bathed early in the morning and shaken her fur out beneath the sun’s warm rays. Getting dry was far more of a hassle these days, but Gods if it didn’t feel marvellous to be so clean and fluffy and beautiful.

*He told me he liked how I look after a bath. How’s a girl meant to respond to that? Mhmmm . . . Gods, I need to touch myself. I can’t keep holding off! It’s been nearly two months and I can’t resist anymore!*

After all, she’d already experienced the awful pangs of a woman’s period just two weeks ago, it was hardly fair to only go through the female horrors and none of the pleasures. Slowly, she lowered her hands down and began to rub the wet passage between her thighs, even as she palmed and squeezed her magnificently large breasts. She no longer had any regrets about having such a huge bust; they were so full and round and pert and *sensitive*. With each squeeze, she found herself whining in a vixen-like fashion, and her cries of relief became louder and ever-more enthusiastic as she probed her depths.

*Yes. Yessss, take me! Take me, Nathaniel! M-mount your foxgirl! Mount me like your naughty thief of a vixen! Yesss!*

When she finally came, it was so explosively powerful that she almost fainted, and that was before the aftershocks of numerous other orgasms washed through her body. Zaria had heard once that fox-folk had powerful libidos and even more powerful climaxes. It was often just a joke.

But now, as she lay back to sleep, luxuriating in her thoughts of attraction towards Nathaniel, she could confirm it was true.

*I really n-need to turn back before I go too f-far . . .*

\*\*\*

Nathaniel watched her with eagle eyes in the study as Zaria performed her first solo dismantling of a curse. It was a mirror, one with an imperfect reflection that heightened one’s flaws and eventually gave one the wrong body if one looked for too long, leaving the victim as a haggard, misshapen distortion of their true self. But Zaria was already not in her right body, so the assumption was that she might not be affected.

Wrong.

One ear was too long. Her teeth were gnarled and incorrect. Her breasts were uneven in size, and one foot was gigantic. She could feel her body needing to change, but Nathaniel was to the left of her, looking at her and not at the reflection, not even knowing the risk she was undertaking.

*You can do this, Zaria thought to herself. You can prove yourself to him. Don't let him down, Zaria. Don't let Nathaniel down!*

The fact that she'd masturbated to the thought of him for what had to be the tenth time in as many days may have had something to do with it. She'd tried to stop herself, but after experiencing the female orgasm, not to mention those dirty fantasies, she couldn't resist indulging in them privately. Or at least as privately as she could. Agatha had raised an eyebrow at her on a few mornings.

"You seemed to be in quite an excited state last night," she remarked. "Try to keep the howling at a minimum."

Jeremiah simply side-eyed her when she asked to grab a few magical texts for her own studies from him. "So long as you do not interrupt my reading tonight."

"Never do."

"Hmhf! And yet the blissful baying of the fox at midnight occurs as surely as the change in the seasons."

*That* left her whiskers twitching with embarrassment. It didn't help that she'd been a bit more daring with her dresses and clothing lately. Not anything ridiculous; she hadn't been dressing like a bar wench, but she had styled her wizard's assistant robe a little more to her body, even asking Agatha if it could be cut off a little earlier to avoid brushing against her sensitive calf hair, and rolling up the sleeves to expose her slender furry arms. She'd also cinched it a little more at the waist, and decided that the colour blue suited her best; it did go with her magnificent new green eyes, after all. She hadn't even realised how much she'd been trying to catch Nathaniel's eye even more than usual until she was face-to-face with the mirror and trying to dispel the charms upon it.

*By the Black Mountain, don't end up ugly. You don't want to be some revolting fox-folk abomination on the streets of Zaemar. Besides, he's enjoying the new robe! I can tell! He is!*

She curled her tail in concentration.

"Okay," she said. "The runes are in . . . Old Cyrician, I think."

"Does the writing flow vertically or horizontally?"

"Oh, drat. It's Second Form Ecundrian then . . . right?"

"It should be. It's okay, the mirror can't damage you. We've got all the time in the world."

But she could feel her body wanting to change more. Soon, it would happen for real. She took a deep breath that heaved her chest, then sniffed the mirror.

“Traces of sulfur, just like the goblet. But no copper. I smell . . . arraumjuice.”

“Are you sure?”

“I’ve got a better nose, remember?”

“Well, I doubt the dark mage who cursed this put arraumjuice on it from the poor quarter!”

“Oh, shut it!” she said a bit too passionately. “I want to do this quickly. What’s in arraumjuice?”

Suddenly, Nathaniel was flipping through the pages of several tomes.

“Thoremberries! It has to be!”

“Makes sense,” Zaria continued. “And they’re from the far north, so . . . ice magic?”

“Or wind. Don’t assume.”

“I think it’s ice. Reflections, right? I read last night that it goes under their magical purview or whatever?”

She could almost *hear* his smile. “You were doing extra-curricular studying last night?”

*Among other things*, she thought, remembering how she’d imagined Nathaniel taking her from behind. *Those things are humiliating, though.*

“I’m sure it’s ice magic. And the sulfur would be from the mountains too, according to your maps. So it’s northern ice magic, so . . .”

“So . . . ?”

“So heat incantation using southern sunmelon fruit would do the trick! Do we have any sunmelon?”

“No, but I have southern peaches, and they should do the same trick.”

He returned with a bowl of them, but then stopped next to her. She looked at him, worried she was transforming already. “Well, what are you waiting for?”

Nathaniel had accidentally looked at her reflection. He could see how warped it was.

“Zaria! The mirror! Why didn’t you tell me?”

“You said it wouldn’t change me!”

“If it doesn’t show your true self. What - I don’t understand - you have to stop.”

“Too late,” she said. “It chose me half an hour ago. Can you do the incantation?”

“No, you have to. Oh, shit. Oh, bugger me.”

*Some language for a noble*, she thought. “What do you mean I have to do it?”

Nathaniel was in a panic now. His anxiousness over her safety was only endearing him to her further, which was not what she wanted. Still, her tail shook with a sort of half-worried, half-delighted sway.

“Look, I’ll walk you through this. It’s been nearly forty minutes, which means you might turn any second now. We’ll have to be fast, so repeat after me. *Seluna boilas morta-*”

“*Etra infernus dissolvem!*” she shouted, completing the incantation without his help. The knowledge . . . she couldn’t even remember acquiring it. She’d been doing so much reading lately, getting faster just like Jeremiah promised she would. Reading all the texts that Nathaniel had gotten her and more.

The mirror shifted, warbled, and then turned to normal. Her horrid reflection disappeared, she and stood facing it, still panting in the aftermath. Suddenly, a pair of arms pulled her to the side and she was instantly wrapped into a deep, warm hug. Nathaniel had his arms around her, and his face was buried into the warm fur of his neck. She could feel her large chest squashing against his, and it felt . . . *very powerful.*

*Gods, he’s muscular. And comfortable. Mhmmm . . . I could learn to enjoy this comfort. Even more than riches . . .*

She pulled back, realising what she was thinking, but only a little; their faces were close, and the pointy nature of her muzzle meant that her nose was almost brushing against his. It happened so quickly, that she almost didn’t realise that she was as much of an active participant in what followed as the mage was.

They kissed.

It was only a brief kiss; his lips to the point of her muzzle. But it was a kiss nonetheless, and it left her tail to kink at its end, and her shoulders to shake a little from the delight it produced.

And then she pulled back, and so did he.

“I’m - I’m sorry,” Nathaniel said. “That was most . . . unprofessional of me. By all the Gods and the works they leave behind, I’m deeply embarrassed. I promise, I never meant to offend you like that, Zaria. It was never my attention to-”

“It’s okay!” she announced. “We were both excited. I’m a fox-folk lady with big tits. I don’t blame you for, uh, seeing me like that. And this body is, well, pretty excitable as well. It’s not either of our fault.”

She gave him a sheepish smile, and he gave one in return. The pair of them laughed.

“I feel ridiculous,” he said.

“You smell . . .”

She couldn’t finish the sentence. *You smell aroused as hell*, she almost said, because he really was. So was she; she could practically taste her own damn estrus in the air, which spoke to how good her nose was now.

“That was . . . marvellous work,” the mage finally said. He gestured to the mirror. “Couldn’t have done it better myself.”

“Well, you’re the mage. I’m just the mage’s servant.”

“Mage’s servant you may be, Zaria, but now you are also a mage too.”

She laughed. “Get out of town!” she declared, placing her hands on her hips and letting her tail sway almost comedically back and forth as if to emphasise her point. “I’m no mage! I’m just a thief who got caught in a rather hairy trap.”

“You just did magic, didn’t you? You did the incantation on your own. You determined the cause of the curse. You lifted it. That’s magic.”

She was about to argue, but the beautiful fox-folk realised he was right. *I did just perform magic*, she thought to herself. *Godsdamn, I did it. Actual freaking magic.*

“Seven hells,” she breathed.

The charismatic young mage smirked and then gestured like a performer. “I said that you could do it, and here we are. Which means, I guess, that you could learn to counter your own ring’s curse ahead of time, if you want.”

Immediately, something in her spirits fell. Zaria couldn’t even say why.

*I could*, she thought to herself later that night as she slept on her back and caressed her large, furry breasts. *Why is that?*

But she knew. She was no fool. She’d grown up on the streets of Zaemar, populated by grifters and liars and scoundrels. The fox-folk woman was no stranger to those who fooled others *and* themselves. The truth was right at the end of her snout.

*Because you like him*, she thought. *You want him. And you’re afraid that he wants you too, Zaria, you sap. You came to steal his treasure, and now the bastard is stealing your godsdamned heart.*

\*\*\*

Her studies continued. Zaria was getting damn good at it, and she was spending less and less time as Nathaniel’s servant and more of his assistant, and at times, his magical *partner*. She learned how to perform a light incantation, and even better, she learned how to perform a rudimentary drying spell. That had involved her and Nathaniel laughing again and again as he poured bucket after bucket of water onto her in his large study.

“You have no idea how it feels to be so furry and then get so wet!” she yelled with clearly fake outrage at him.

“Sorry!” he declared, all sternness from their original meeting dissolved away to reveal the passionate and quite playful young man beneath the facade. “But you’re very close, I assure you!”

“I better be! My tail is twice as heavy when it soaks up all this water! And you better not be looking at my chest, because this wet clothing is sticking to me, see?”

At that, she thrust out her chest, just to emphasise how her large nipples were pressed against the wet fabric. It caused the man to look away out of politeness, and her to almost bark with laughter until she managed to try the spell again. But when it worked, by the *Gods* it worked. Her fur became fluffy and soft and warm, and she even convinced Nathaniel to stroke it with a brush in the aftermath. Without even meaning to, she found herself practically folded across his lap on the study's couch as he ran the brush across the fur of her back. She had pulled up the robe so he could access her, though he looked a little uncertain.

"Go on," she said, rolling her eyes. "I'm never naked anyway. I'm covered in fur. Except on my nipples."

"That is a very unladylike thing to say."

"Well, you turned me into a lady."

"Please, the actions of a rash thief did that."

"Ha! He sounds like a moron. I hope he's doing better now."

"*She* seems to, yes," Nathaniel replied, stroking her fur a little more. It caused her to let out a pleasurable vulpine whine, then stretch herself further across his lap. Her tongue lolled out one side of her long jaw as the bliss rose.

*I'm going too far. You can stop anytime. You can stop any damn time.*

Finally, the brushing stopped, but Nathaniel didn't ask her to move. She could smell his arousal, and her own, but the thief knew that she had to be careful here. The lust she felt could be pushed against, she knew. She had the will to resist it.

*Do I want to? He's opened up my whole world, and he's laughing and smiling. Even Agatha says he wasn't like this before. Have I helped him too? Was he lonely?*

She raised her head to look at him, and noticed that he was suddenly quite pensive. The woman rose up and sat next to him, folding her tail affectionately over his shoulder.

"What's wrong?"

Nathaniel sighed. "I - it's late. The stars are out. Gods, we should depart for the night."

He went to move, but her tail was stronger than he thought, because she fixed him in place. "Hey, talk to me."

"I don't want to burden a servant."

At this, she snarled a little, baring her teeth affectionately. "I'm a mage, remember. So . . . lay your problems on my bare, clawed feet, mage."

Nathaniel scratched the back of his head. "I was just thinking about how I don't deserve to be in your company."

"What? Are you a fool? Did you forget that over three months ago I tried to steal from your vault?"

Nathaniel just sighed again, and stood up, pulling away from her tail. He walked to the door at the south end of the study and opened it, before stepping onto the balcony. He gestured for her to follow, and so Zaria did. Her arousal was still clear; her hips swayed more than usual, and she was definitely not wearing a brassiere after all that experimentation with water. She stood beside him, almost nuzzling him a little as they stared out across the city of Zaemar beyond the fields that separated it and his estate. The sky was indeed lit up with stars, but firelight burned in the city, and one could see the night traffic.

"I grew up over there," he said, pointing to the district of Havill. "Not quite the poverty-stricken quarter you survived in, but I was poor all the same."

Zaria frowned. "Wait, is that why you pretend to be an old mage? I've been wanting to ask, but . . . well, it seemed private."

"You really are more than a thief. Look at you, respecting privacy."

It made her laugh and curl her tail around his waist just a little.

"Someone came along and changed me, just a little," she grinned. "So you really grew up in Havill? That's not . . . a kind place."

"It's not. Like I said, it's not the poorest quarter, but I was poor. Quite poor, actually. An orphan as well, after a time. But I had this strange talent: I could put out the candles in any room. I could do little tricks with cards and change their faces. I wasn't even aware of *how* I did it. I just . . . could. And then one day, this kindly old man came to me. He had skin even darker than mine, and a white beard that amazed me. He talked to me about a boy he'd heard about, who could do magic without any study. A prodigy, he called me. Well, one thing led to another, and I was his pupil. And then . . . something more, I think. Almost like a son, really."

Zaria felt her female intuition stirring. It had been something she'd found out just a couple of weeks ago, when Agatha was even antsier than usual, and Zaria realised that an anniversary was coming up and the woman was worried her husband had forgotten. She'd told Jeremiah to get something for his wife, and the stoic elf had actually nodded and thanked her. Later, a rather rare text on arcane knowledge was on the desk in her room. Now, that same intuition blared, giving her a more compassionate perspective.

"He died, didn't he?"

Nathaniel nodded sadly. "A year and a half ago. I've managed his affairs and estate ever since. Agatha and Jeremiah are family to me, but . . . I've been rather stoic and professional at times with them. I felt a sort of . . . need to be in charge. To push through and be the proper master of the Hugo estate."

"Why?" she said, placing a hand upon his shoulder. "Aren't you his . . . wait. You're *not* his heir, are you?"

The man shrugged. "Possibly I am. Observe."

He whispered what she now recognised as a summoning ritual. Suddenly, an egg-shaped brassy device was in his hand. It had no seams, but intricate runes were all over it, glowing a faint gold.

“A mage’s will,” Nathaniel said, turning it over in his hands. “A true heir has the capacity to open it. That’s how it goes. He left it for me, and perhaps . . . perhaps I am his heir. Or perhaps not.”

“You’ve tried to open it?”

He raised an eyebrow, and Zaria suddenly felt embarrassed.

“Sorry, of course you have.”

“Many, many times. But there’s something missing. He said I’d find it, one day. The spark. The thing that makes the magic happen, more than just the theories. The spark I’d first displayed with him, I suppose. Before I got bogged down in books. It’s why I’ve tried to regain it; the challenge of undoing curses is deeply satisfying, and it tests my creativity.”

“But?”

The handsome mage shrugged. “But no dice, alas. A mage worth his salt would know the condition to open it. The ‘missing spark,’ as he put it. He told me that he’d found his just recently in his long life. I think he meant to tell me more, but his heart gave out unexpectedly. We both imagined we had more time . . .”

Zaria had to wipe her eyes. Her damn female emotions were getting to her, and now her tears were getting her fur wet. She found herself clinging to Nathaniel, her tail stroking affectionately against his leg.

“I’m sorry,” she whispered.

“Thank you,” he replied, his voice a little hoarse, the man on the verge of tears. “I don’t know why I’m telling you this. Actually, yes, I do. I . . . I’m going to say something foolish, Zaria. And perhaps very poorly timed, but if I don’t do it now, then . . . then at the rate you’re going then you’ll damn well be getting that ring off tomorrow for all I know, and so I want to tell you now before it’s too late. Now, I’ve never been great at this sort of thing. I’ve been a studious, well, *student*, and a practitioner of magic beyond most men my age, but when it comes to women perhaps I am not so skilled. And there are professional boundaries to consider, as you are technically not just my employee but someone who - by the Gods - is also technically being blackmailed into service, and so perhaps I am convincing myself in a roundabout way that this is, in fact, *not* the right thing to say right now. But I can’t help myself, and, well-”

“Shhh,” she said, placing a clawed finger upon his lips lightly. She removed it, then gave him a light peck on the lips, an act that felt braver than any act of thievery that she had ever committed in her life. “I know.”

“You . . . do?”

She took his hands in hers, her fur against his skin. It felt right. So very, very right.

“Just say the words,” she said. “I want to hear you say them. I’m . . . a little nervous myself.”

The mage had put the mage’s will aside, and was now focused entirely upon Zaria. “I think,” he said. “I think I’m falling for you, Zaria. No, that’s not correct. I *am* falling for you, Zaria. I’m sorry.”

It was almost impossible not to smile. She was practically hopping already on the balls of her feet. “I think I’m falling for you too, Nathaniel,” she said in her sultry vixen voice. “No, that’s not correct. I *know* I am.”

His face showed surprise. “R-really?”

She nodded, then giggled like a child, like how she’d been before the streets had broken her. “By the Seven Hells and the Seven Lights.”

“That’s wonderful! I-”

*Oh, shut up!* she thought, and kissed him. Their lips locked, and then he kissed down the length of her muzzle and upon her furry cheeks. His hands pulled tight against her waist, and she in turn ran her hands down his shirt, unbuttoning it as she went.

“What are you doing?”

“I want you,” she said. “I want to be your vixen.”

“But - right now? Are you sure?”

“Here and now! Can we get something comfortable on the balcony?”

The man smiled. “I can do one better!”

He whispered an incantation and spread his hands upon the stone floor of the balcony, suddenly, the texture shifted, and now the surface was adorned in a warm blanket, thick and perfect for lying on.

“Oh, you’ve got to teach me that!” she declared, but then she grabbed him and pulled him to the ground. The pair began to pull their clothes off, but the process was halted by their continual lovemaking. Zaria had never felt so aroused in her life. Her body yearned for this man far more than any night of selfpleasure, and the sensation of his hands roaming her form was even better. She tore off her robe and pressed her full chest into his face, so that he was suffocating in her furry cleavage. He squeezed her breasts and stroked her nipples, and it made her let loose little fox whines.

“Ohhhhhh, yessssss!” she moaned. “Oh Gods, I can’t believe this is h-happening!”

The man was naked by this point, and his hard member was before her, sliding against her furry thighs and causing her to rub her legs together in anticipation.

“We can stop,” he said. “We don’t have to do this now.”

“Screw that!” she declared, her voice somehow making her sound elegant. “I want you in me now.”

They kissed again, and he fondled her chest while she stroked his cock, the act so very foreign yet all the better for it.

“Are you sure?” he asked. “Are you really sure?”

But the fox-folk woman simply licked her lips. “I stole from your vault. It’s time you paid me back and stole this vixen’s *pussy*.”

She could see the effect that her sentence had upon him, because soon he was pushing her back onto the warm blankets. He kissed and sucked upon her nipples, then nuzzled her furry neck. He fondled her ears, which caused her to gasp in delight - it felt so good! But then he widened her legs. Her tail stroked against his skin, urging him on as his huge penis pressed against her female flower.

“D-do it!” she cried, still nervous but desperate to continue. “I want you in me. Mate your naughty vixen!”

*I’m almost too good at playing this part, she thought. But then again, who’s playing?*

He slid inside of her. She whined, high and soft and beautiful as his full length entered her. She wrapped her legs around him, taking in the thrusts that followed, and letting the mage squeeze her magnificent tits, which rocked with each impact of his cock.

“G-Gods! It’s a-amazing!” she moaned. “It’s great! D-don’t stop!”

“By the Light of the Four Pillars, Zaria,” he grunted. “You’re s-so wet. So tight. So - so *fucking beautiful!*”

The emergence of a more guttural tongue made her moan in pleasure, turning her fox-folk body on all the more.

“You w-want me to stay like this, don’t you?” she gasped, clutching his muscular back as he thrust into her passage again and again.

“I d-do! Please don’t go back! I - I love you, Zaria!”

The words filled her with warmth. Somewhere besides them, something metallic clicked, but neither cared about that at the moment. Instead, she shivered with delight as he squeezed her enormous breasts again, then lowered a hand to stroke her tail.

“I - oh Gods! - I love you too, Nathaniel! I love you s-soooo much! OHHHHHH! AAHHH!!!”

The orgasm hit her with all the ferocity of an ancient brass dragon’s breath. It rocked her to her core, leaving the fox-folk women to shudder with the purest ecstasy she could imagine. Still the man thrust, leaving her at the mercy of more climaxes, until just twenty seconds later he seized up, making the more sexual roaring sound, like a big protective bear. His member throbbed inside of her, and suddenly she was filled with his seed. It spread up inside of her, causing her to moan once again.

*Ohhhhh, it’s his c-cum. It’s so hot and warm and wonderful. Mhmmm - wait, can f-foxfolk and humans breed? What if - ohhhh! Forget it! It’s t-too good!*

“I I-love you!” she cried.

“I love you too,” he replied, clutching her. “I love you too, Zaria.”

Finally, after a long time, he laid his head upon her large breast, and she stroked his skin while he stroked her warm fur. They stayed like that for even longer, neither wanting to extract their body from the other. But then, suddenly, Zaria opened her eyes and noticed something.

“Nathaniel?”

“I’m awake,” he managed. “But barely. You’re soooo comfortable, my love. Is it too soon to call you my love?”

She licked her lips and ran some claws lightly down his back in an affectionate manner. “I like it,” she said. “My love. But, uh, you said you couldn’t open the mage’s will, right?”

“Yes,” he said, idly playing with one of her breasts while his head rested comfortably on the other. “I don’t know that I’ll ever be worthy of my master.”

“Well, that missing spark he talked about, you don’t think it was . . . a new assistant, was it? Or someone else to love, like he found you?”

He raised his head to look at her. “Why do you say that?”

At this, she found herself grinning, showing off all of her canine teeth. Her tail swished and knocked the now-open mage’s will further towards him.

“Just a feeling,” she said.

And if she didn’t already know she truly loved the man, the astonished and tearfully joyous look on his face that followed would have clinched it.

\*\*\*

Zaria struggled up the stairs, clutching her enormous belly as she waddled her way up. Agatha was on her other side, her arm linked with the fox-folk’s.

“I can do this myself, Agatha!” she protested. “You don’t have to coddle me.”

“Oh, please! When I had my first, I had no idea what I was doing, and I guarantee I was a lot sharper than you, Lady Zaria!”

“I keep telling you, just call me Zaria, Agatha. I’m not your boss. That’s Nathaniel.”

“You married him, didn’t you? I seemed to recall a rather rushed ceremony, in fact. I wonder why that could be?”

Zaria’s whiskers twitched as they reached the top of the stairs. She took a moment to straighten her back, then rubbed her large belly. She was so huge at the moment, and she knew *exactly* the reason why, because of what Agatha had just alluded to.

“How could I have known that I’d fall pregnant with Nathaniel’s kits after just that first time?”

Agatha gave a characteristic harrumph at this. “Oh, so you only had that ‘first time,’ did you? And here I thought the master was distracted for two whole weeks until the pair of you slowed down. Ah, but then came the morning sickness, didn’t it?”

Zaria’s tail swayed with annoyance. “Don’t remind me. Gods, whoever said fox-folk women are all naturally elegant and graceful at all times should take a damn arrow to the knee.”

“You’ve only got yourself to blame,” said Agatha, moving forward to open the door for the heavily pregnant fox-folk, who was now ten months along with her pregnancy, which was the length of such for her kind, and therefore she could ‘pop’ any day now.

“I am *well* aware, Agatha,” Zaria said, sighing as she rubbed her stomach. Her kits were kicking again. One or two or three were always awake. She had a sense that she had four in there. Perhaps even five. The thought worried her almost as much as it excited her, though at least her anxieties melted away when Nathaniel showed excitement, or when they were quite *intimate*, even now. “You know, we *did* get married as fast as we could.”

At this, Agatha paused and placed a hand on the pregnant woman’s stomach. The battleaxe of a maid smiled. “Ah, just like I did when my Jeremiah got me knocked up unexpectedly.”

“Yes, well - wait, what!?”

The woman guffawed. “I told you once, I was quite the looker! Only I had my children one at a time.”

“Lucky you,” Zaria said, though the woman’s touch on her bare, furry belly was nice. It was too hot to wear anything that truly covered her, so she simply had a wraptop around her chest that was popular among her fellow fox-folk people in the south-east, as well as a mage’s skirt below her massive furry stomach.

“No, lucky you, dear. You’re going to be an amazing mother. So long as you don’t teach those kits to steal.”

“Only mage’s hearts,” Zaria joked, and the woman actually laughed as the furry woman strode ahead.

“Don’t forget, Jeremiah expects you for the book club this evening!”

“I’ll try to make it if I don’t go into labour!” Zaria called back.

*Or if I’m not letting my sexy husband mount me from behind while I rest my tail over his muscular shoulders. Mhmmm . . . that might trigger labor, finally.*

Not that she felt quite ready to deliver just yet, even after ten months of preparation. Not even after learning that she was expecting quadruplets - or more! Not even after her breasts swelled yet further, or when she and Nathaniel worked to prepare the nursery. Not

even after she realised that she was excited to be a mother, and even more so to have children that grew up in a place of learning and opportunity, where they'd never need to steal anything but hearts when they got older, like she had. They were heirs to an entire estate, after all, an estate that belonged wholly to Nathaniel, as per Mage Hugo's will. And with the old mage's recent passing - a little later to the public's knowledge than the real event - Nathaniel had been able to come out of hiding, and with a beautiful vixen wife alongside him.

Zaria's stomach rippled with movement, and the furry beauty strode into her husband's study. Well, it was *her* study now as well. Her loving Nathaniel was inspecting another cursed item, this one a ring just like the one she'd worn over a year ago. She loved to watch him work, and even more so to work with him, but with so many vulnerable kits in her belly, she let him tackle the more . . . volatile curses. But he was so obsessive over his work right now that he hadn't noticed her come in, so she thudded her tail loudly against the floor.

"My love!" Nathaniel called out, striding away from the wing. He embraced her immediately, kissing her passionately in such a fashion that it made her fall for him all over again. Then he lowered himself and stroked her bare belly, playing with the fur and then kissing her massive dome.

"And how are my little kits doing?" he asked, before kissing her stomach again.

"Active as a Phalian Phalanx!" she replied. "I swear, had I known you would get me knocked up on our first night of lovemaking, I would have gotten a lot more of our agile positions in early, my love. As it is, I feel like a whale! Ah, now I know I'm truly a woman, caring about my size and appearance like this."

"Well," he said, looking her up and down. "I do like the exotic look."

She slid her tail against him, giggling a little. "I *am* an exotic race, you know. At least around these parts."

"And a beautiful one to boot."

"And buxom. Don't forget that."

"And a mage. A deeply intelligent mage that I love with all my heart."

She nuzzled against him affectionately, letting him feel her stomach again. "You know," she said. "I'm very glad I decided to steal from your vault, Mage Nathaniel. You've made me much more than just a thief."

"I don't know about that," he said, stroking her body and making her more than a little aroused as he did so. "You have my soul and my love, and I never intended to give those away. By that standard, I'd say you were the best thief I've ever met."

The beautiful and very pregnant fox-folk embraced her husband happily.

**The End**