

“Hey guys, wake up I'm bored,” complained the fox, standing behind the couch.

Natsuro looked down and his friends, two twin German Shepherd/Tiger hybrids slept on the couch, each resting their heads on either side of the armrest. Natsuro pouted, tapping his foot on the ground as he grabbed the head of the couch.

“Come on Takaru, Takaro, get up. Let's do something,” he whined, pleading for a response with bored eyes. When the cats didn't reply, softly snoring in unison with each other, Natsuro gripped the couch firmly, his voice deep and serious. “You have 3 seconds to get up.” He paused for a moment. “One... two...three!”

With a quick shove, Natsuro pushed the twins off the couch, startling them into reality. Both fell face first to the floor with a loud thud, smacking their noses first.

“Ack! My nose!” yelled Takaro, rubbing his nose as he stood up quickly. He eyed the fox with one eye and growled. “Why... you...!”

Natsuro took several steps back after seeing the aggressive brother climb onto the couch and jump over it. He grabbed Natsuro by his shirt and pinned him against the wall. Natsuro lifted his hands innocently in response. “I'm gonna tear you apart! What's the big idea waking me up!” he growled.

“Hehehe, morning Takaro,” Natsuro said as cutely as possible, only adding to the older brother's rage. “Now that you're up... wanna play?!”

“No! I don't wanna play! I wanna nap and now you ruined it!”

“Brother calm down,” spoke the young Takaru, coming around the couch. “Just let it go.”

“Are you serious? I outta wring his neck!”

“Brother, we know you get a little cranky when you wake up from your nap. Just calm down. Take some deep breaths, and let's get something to eat, okay?”

Takaro growled deeply, gripping the fox's shirt tightly before sighing and letting it go.

Natsuro rubbed the back of his head. "Phew, that was close, thanks Takaru, I owe you one."

Takaru frowned, not appreciating getting woke up that way either.

"So! After we get some food, what do you guys wanna do?" Natsuro persisted, a large smile on his face.

"Food first, you later," groaned the older brother, stretching as he walked into the kitchen, followed by Takaru then Natsuro.

The three furs sat at the table, eating a variety of cereals stored in the cabinet. Natsuro came over with the milk and sat down. He fixed his bowl, then handed the milk over to the twins. Natsuro ate quickly, making dramatic gulping sounds and slurping his milk happily, though being careful not to make a mess. The older brother, Takaro, grumbled at hearing Natsuro's routine nonsense while the youngest, Takaru, ignored it, eating at his own pace.

"Do you guys wanna head to the arcade?" Natsuro asked, trying to break the silence.

The twins looked at each other. "Not really," they said in unison.

"Awwww, but why not? It's so much fun there."

"Same old games, same old people, same old place you always want to go too when you get bored," said the twins in perfect unison again.

Natsuro pouted, resting his head in his hand as he continued eating. His ears dropped with disappointment. He sighed before and after each spoonful of cereal, each sigh louder and more played out than the last.

Takaro grew irritated again, getting up after his second bowl of cereal was finished. Then he walked over to the sink to drop his items there. Takaru wasn't too far behind, repeating the same motion and matching the speed of his elder twin brother. Both proceeded back into the living room.

“Wait, wait! I know: how about I pay for the first three games at the arcade! Whatta ya say?” Natsuro suggested to the brothers. They looked at each other and were about to speak before Natsuro interrupted. “I'll even pay for the pizza. I heard that returning customers with a card get a discount on some of their food items. We can have that right after a few games. There's even a championship going on at a new dance game they have. It's suppose to be epic!”

“We're go-”

“And,” persisted the stubborn fox. “About three blocks away there's this ice cream shop I heard about. We can even go there and sit around outside, it's suppose to be close to the park.

“Will yo-”

“And we can also go to the park later if you guys don-”

“ALRIGHT!” Said the brothers together, giving in. “Finish eating and let's go!”

“Yay, hehe” Natsuro replied, drinking the rest of his milk before letting out a wide burp of victory.

A few minutes later, Natsuro opened the front door and jumped down the stairs. He raised his arms up to the sky in an exaggerated stretch as the twins followed down the stairs.

“Going to the arcade, going to the arcade!” the fox sang as he turned around. “Come on slow pokes! We're going to be late!”

The twins looked at Natsuro. “Calm down,” they said together.

“But we're going to the arcade for the rest of the day!” Without looking, Natsuro opened the front gate and jumped out onto the curb with his finger pointing to the sky heroically. “Nothing can stop us no-”

“Bark!”

A little white fur-ball smacked against the tall fox, sending Natsuro off his feet down to his side. The twins blinked. They saw a small dust cloud but failed to make out what actually hit their friend.

“Uh... what hit me?” Natsuro asked, sitting up with swirling eyes and rotating stars around his head.

“Sorry, sorry. I didn't mean to hit you. I just saw you but couldn't stop,” pleaded the small white Corgi.

Natsuro shook his head and saw a white furred, yellow eyed Corgi with flattened ears apologizing to him. Natsuro scratched the back of his head, smiling cheerfully. “Oh, it's not your fault. Don't worry about it. I kinda just jumped out into the sidewalk.”

“Yep, it's *your* fault, Natsuro” said the hybrid German Shepherd/tiger twins as they came out of the gate.

The corgi stood up and helped Natsuro up. Natsuro looked at the small pup, barely taller than his hybrid friends and kinda cute. He wore brown pants with a blue jacket and a green scarf.

“Anyways, nice to meet you. My name is Natsuro, what's yours?”

“Oh, my names Sol, Gavin Sol,” he replied, shaking the fox's hand. Natsuro blinked, sensing a familiar aura protecting Sol. It reminded him of something his ancestors used to protect people, but he brushed it off with a smile.

“Running into the locals Sol?” spoke a voice from behind the twins. The four looked down the street, seeing a yellow and orange fox approaching with a raven next to him.

“I told you not to run to the arcade without us. It's not that far away,” the raven said sternly.

“Hehe, sorry,” Sol said as he scratched the back of his head.

Natsuro looked at the raven but focused unnaturally on the fox. He saw an orange and yellow fox with one tail, a tail ring, and pink pads on his hands and feet. He wore long black pants, a blue t-shirt and had strange feathers in his ears.

“Sorry again for running into you,” the corgi said, breaking Natsuro's gaze.

“Oh, it's okay, hehe,” he responded cheerily. His ears went up as he realized what he heard.

“Wait, are you three headed to the arcade too?”

“Yes,” replied the fox. “We heard there was a good arcade in the neighborhood and wanted to try it out.”

“Correction,” said the raven, he was wearing a short black shirt with blue jeans, and out of place prayer beads shined around his neck. “Sol thought it'd be a good idea to spend the day goofing off, playing old style video games. He basically said let's go and took off before getting an approval.”

Sol whimpered, putting his hands together pleadingly. He made puppy eyes and folded his ears.

“Can we go? Together? Please...” he begged.

The twins looked at the corgi, then at each other, and then at Natsuro. “Deja vu,” they both said exaggeratedly.

The fox rubbed the back of his head, instantly defeated. "I can't say no to that face."

The raven sighed

"Horrrayyyy," smiled the corgi triumphantly.

"Horrrayyy," joined Natsuro, drawing everyone's attention to him. "We were just on our way to the arcade too. Wanna come with us?"

The second group agreed. Natsuro's tail swayed furiously.

"I'm Zen by the way and this is my friend Venishi," he said, making a gesture to the Raven.

"Pleasure to meet you all," Venishi replied.

"I'm Takaro," said one.

"I'm Takaru," said the other.

"We're twins," they said together.

Everyone exchanged handshakes while Venishi inquisitively tried to tell the twins apart. When Natsuro and Zen shook hands, a small fire burst in the middle of their palms. It was small enough to go unnoticed by the others, but they both saw it. They looked at each other, feeling a sense of familiarity with the other, though faintly.

“What was th-” Natsuro started to say.

“Alrighty, let's head out then. Lead the way,” Zenion said to his fox companion. He smiled and played it off, heading down the street with Natsuro quick to catch up to lead the way. He had come out of his curious state. The rest followed behind quickly, talking among themselves about the city and some of the best places to go.

Zenion and Natsuro stayed quiet as they walked ahead, silently contemplating what happened with their handshake earlier.

Within a few minutes the group reached the entrance of the arcade. It had a massive sign lighting up despite the brightness of the day. Past the windows, the inside was dark, save for those wearing white which glowed from the black lights on the ceiling. As the group walked in the smell of cheese, blueberry gum, and assorted candies filled their noses. The cold air circulating throughout the room made Natsuro and Zen smile in bliss while Sol rubbed his shoulders, happy he had on a jacket.

“We made it!” Natsuro cheered. “I got first dibs!” He ran to a random game but was caught by the tail. He yelped and swayed back and forth on one foot, trying to balance himself.

“Not so fast,” the twins said in unison. The oldest, Takaro, pulled him back. “You're paying for the first game for us.”

“O-oh... right... hehe” Natsuro chuckled nervously.

Zenion looked to his friends and they exchanged a small chuckle. Natsuro depressingly swayed back and forth as he was pushed by the twin cat/dogs to a dancing game they wanted to play together. Natsuro took out the coins and inserted them, pouting as he wanted to play first but had to keep his promise. Zenion watched the twins dance in unison, fascinated and a little disturbed at how much they mirrored each other. The only difference was the placements of their red and grey eyes.

Sol went with Venishi as they walked around the arcade, eying the games before they started playing anything.

“Wanna go play PacMan?” Natsuro asked Zenion, grabbing the fox's arm to drag him to the machine before he got a proper answer.

Zenion felt a mystical warmth around Natsuro as he was dragged away despite the temperature in the room. It wasn't natural; it felt more like inner fire. He looked over at Natsuro again. The yellow, red, and sometimes orange patterns, combined with his choice of clothing, cheerful personality, and goofiness made him start to suspect Natsuro was different than he led on. He didn't voice his observation and instead tried to get his mind ready for the game. They both inserted the amount of coins needed to play and Natsuro went first, grinning since he was a master at this. He was waiting to be victorious over another, other than the twins.

"Nooooo," Zenion cried dramatically, as over 5 rounds later, he was slowly losing. The speed of the ghosts increased and they got smarter, trapping him more times than he expected.

"Don't touch me, don't touch me, don't touch me," said the fox, his volume and speed increasing with each phrase. When PacMan was touched Zenion whimpered playfully, having suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of the cheeky Natsuro, cheering next to him.

"I win!" He smiled. "Undefeated champion of PacMan! Nothing could ruin this mome--"

"We're hungry, buy pizza," said the twins, coming over along with Venishi and Sol.

Natsuro's eyes went blank and a bead of sweat ran down the side of his head. He'd forgotten how big his promise was to the twins to force them to come there and the crocodile tears traveled down the cheeks of his face.

"You promised," said Tarako, the oldest.

"No taking it back," said Taraku, the youngest.

"We want sausage," they said in unison.

"You're buying pizza for all of us?" Sol asked, surprised with glowing stars in his eyes. "Can we get something to drink?! And some candy for dessert too?"

"I don't think he'll pay for that much," Venishi cut in He was trying to save Natsuro from going broke but still spoke in a tone that assumed he'd still be paying for lunch.

Natsuro's face went pale and his fur lost color from the ears to the toes at the thought of paying so much for his friends when he was already short on funds. His tail tucked between his legs and he began to sweat profusely.

“Come on, let's go, buy pizza, now,” said the twins impatiently.

“Bathroom!” Natsuro yelled, leaving a cloud of smoke in his wake as he disappeared into the bathroom.

Zenion laughed as he watched his fox friend leave before turning to his friends. His ear flicked as he noticed that past his friend's, near the entrance of the arcade, a group of shady huskies came in looking around. They made their way slowly towards the employee's only room. He pretended he didn't notice and smiled to the four.

“Why don't you all get a table? I have to use the bathroom too. Pick a seat and we'll be back. Be careful,” he said before leaving. The twins looked at each other confused but the raven and corgi understood the hidden message, staying on guard if something were to happen.

Zenion walked into the bathroom after passing by a bluejay who walked out. Natsuro had his head down against the wall in depressed defeat, afraid to face his feline/dog hybrid friends with the confession that he didn't have enough money to buy lunch.

“Natsuro?” Zenion called out.

“O-oh hey buddy,” he turned around quickly, chuckling nervously. “I-I was just getting done, I guess it really didn't come out so I'll just-”

“Don't worry about lunch. If it helps any, I'll pay,” he smiled.

Natsuro's eyes lit up as he came over and hugged his fox friend dramatically, on his knees with his arms wrapped around Zen's waist. “You're a life saver!” he howled in appreciation.

Zen flicked his ears and shook his head. “At ease soldier. I have something I wanna talk to you about,” he said, picking up Natsuro to his feet.

“What's up?”

Zen paused for a moment “I didn't really think I'd see another... I'm... shocked to be honest, but happy.”

Natsuro tilted his head in confusion. “What do you mean?”

“You have the blood of 'the fire bird', don't you?” Zen grinned.

Natsuro choked, sweat seeping from his pores. “Hehe what do you mean? Pfft, what's a “fire bird”? I mean look at me? I'm a fox. I don't have an-”

“I can tell. I'm not looking for a confession nor am I striving to see it. I'm just saying that you might-”

The doors to the bathroom opened and Zen turned to look at them. Two of the five shady huskies walked in, glanced at the two foxes for a moment, before going to the stalls to take a wizz. Natsuro expression began to change, turning from its usual cheerfulness to unprecedented seriousness.

“Might want to keep an eye out,” Zen continued.

“Oh... yeah I know what you mean...” Natsuro said.

“So, how good are your friend's at some of the arcade games here? I know you're good in Pacman but what else?” Zenion asked, keeping his tongue playful and smiled.

“They're good at a few games,” replied Natsuro. His tone changed, becoming a little sharper and cautious. “They always try to double team me but I can take care of them, no sweat.”

Despite Zenion's suspicions, he was still slightly surprised by Natsuro's change in character. His smiling, carefree, playful, and sometimes dramatic appearance seemed to melt in second when presented with danger to himself, possibly even more so to his friends.

The canines listened to the conversation discreetly, exchanging a glance at each other every so often. They finished at the same time, coming over to the sink to wash their hands. Zen nudged Natsuro to move closer to the doors hiding the latrines. The two foxes looked at each other, Zenion still smiling as Natsuro tried to keep his composure.

A scream was heard outside, followed by gunshots and shouting. The foxes lifted their ears to hear while the canines got to work. They reached into their pockets, turned and aimed at the foxes standing behind them. Already on alert, both foxes took on a mutt. Natsuro redirected the gun, span slightly, and bashed his elbow into the dog's nose in a smooth motion. The dog yelped, smacked against the sink and the glass, and fell to the floor holding his bleeding nose.

Zen held his hands behind his back as he turned around. His tail grew in size, swiftly following the fox's movements, gliding up and smacked the husky on the jaw at the moment of the first missed fire. The dog hit the wall with a small thud and the gun flew out of his hand upon impact. Zen's tail went back to normal while Natsuro looked at his friend surprised.

“You're dead you brat!” said a husky to Natsuro. The mutt got to his feet and aimed his gun again, growling with rage in his eyes. Natsuro growled back and grabbed the man's wrist. He bended his upper half slightly to dodge the bullet he shot. Natsuro gripped tightly and steam erupted from his hand as he burnt the fur off the canine.

“Gahhhhhhhh!” screamed the huskie as he dropped the gun, aiming a swing at Natsuro's side with his left fist. Natsuro blocked it, grabbed his left wrist with both hands and twisted it. The huskie gave a cry in pain as the fox pushed and pinned the dog against the wall, growling.

“What are you and doing here? What do you want? Talk!” Natsuro demanded, baring his teeth.

“There's about 3 more outside just to let you know,” Zen said, turning to face Natsuro as he waited for his opponent to stand back up on his feet.

“What!” Natsuro said. “Why didn't you say anything sooner? Our friends our out there!”

“Don't worry, they'll be fine. Trust me.”

Outside the bathroom, a minute before two of the five huskies went inside, the four friends gathered at a booth and sat down waiting.

“What's wrong guys?” the twins asked in unison, noticing a stern look on Venishi's and Gavin's face.

“I have a feeling that trouble's going to start soon,” Gavin warned. “You two had best duck for cover.”

The twins looked at each other, then back at the two, confused. “There's going to be trouble? We can handle it,” they both complied.

“Are you sure?” Sol asked. “We don't want you two to get hurt or anything.”

“We can fight!” They both protested sternly, making Venishi signal them to be quiet.

“Alright, alright... there are five huskies. Two of them went into the security room, two went into the bathroom and-”

“The last one is talking to the man at the register,” Sol interrupted.

The four looked at the husky and the man behind the counter. He was tensed up and looking down, fumbling with the cash register. This husky was by far the most muscular, with a hat, shades, and a cocky grin on his face. He wore a brown jacket but the left side had a shape like a gun inside. The twins hissed and growled under their breath.

“Can you two take care of that one?” Venishi asked the twins.

“Leave it to us!” They said.

Seconds later a husky came out of the control room, throwing an unconscious doberman security guard to the ground.

“Everybody get outta here! Now!” The husky shot a few rounds into the ceiling, causing widespread panic in the arcade. Several kids ran out instantly, save for the few kids who were too scared to run and instead hid behind some of the games. The husky by the register took his gun out and aimed it at the cashier, who sweated profusely.

“NOW!” Venishi said, signaling everyone to move.

Sol being the fastest, ran towards the husky who dropped the security guard. Venishi ran toward the one at the register with the cat/dogs running behind him. The muscular husky noticed them and quickly turned his gun to face the three but was caught by the wrist as Venishi reached him first. He twisted the canine's wrist, causing the dog to howl in pain. Venishi twisted further and span with the dog, letting him go to run towards the husky in the control room.

When the muscular husky stopped spinning he was greeted by the two fists of the felines, who jumped in unison and delivered a critical hit to the face. The husky flipped and landed on the other side of the counter-top after hitting his head on the counter.

It took a few seconds for that husky to recover before slowly rising to his feet, clutching the side of his slightly bleeding head. He groaned and stumbled, looking forward and seeing four cats circling themselves. His blurred vision prevented him from seeing what they were doing until he shook his head.

“Surprise,” said the twins in unison. The husky's blur faded and he saw both cats sitting on the counter-top looking at him. They had their backs to him but turned to the side smiling at him. The dog roared in a fit of fury, the muscles in his veins tensed and were visible outside his fur. He huffed and reached for both brats with his claws out and mouth open as he snarled loudly at them.

The twin German Shepherd/Tiger hybrids span around on the counter top, each one with an extended poll rod in their hand that was concealed in their collars for defensive reasons. As they lifted their feet over the counter and swung their bodies to face the canine, they brought their arms up, swung their polls, and smacked the husky face first. The husky flew backwards, smacking his head against the wall and fell to the ground unconscious.

“Piece of cake,” said the twins, giving each other a high five.

Meanwhile, Sol dashed towards the husky who shot a few rounds into the ceiling. This husky wore a similar outfit to the muscular one but had darker fur, a black ring around his left eye and unkempt hair. He eyed the white Corgi running at him and fired a few rounds in his direction. Sol ran in front of a game machine and went to the left of the husky. The husky turned his aim abruptly but Sol feigned and practically vanished from his sights for a moment. His eyes couldn't keep up with Sol's speed.

Sol ran into his gut, making the husky exhale deeply from the sudden loss of breath. He flew back and hit the wall, struggling to stay on his feet. He looked up wheezing and shot the rest of his rounds, desperate to hit the white corgi in retaliation. Sol saw the bullets and moved a margin of an inch out of the way of each shot, his speed surpassing that of the bullet's velocity. The husky couldn't believe his eyes. To him, he saw each bullet go directly in and through the corgi but he wouldn't go down. The after-image of Sol's appearance led the husky to panic when he lost his ammo. Before he could reach into his pocket, Sol came close and bashed the canine in the back of the neck, rendering him unconscious. The husky went down with his eyes closed, numb as he drifted into unconsciousness.

Venishi made it to the control room where the third husky, who's hair was dyed red, played with the control panel and searched through some files to find the combination to a safe in the corner of the room. A guard was knocked out on the side of the room and the husky didn't see Venishi come in yet. The raven looked around and grabbed several discarded CD's on a rack near the light switch.

“Hey!” Venishi yelled, startling the canine.

The husky looked up and quickly reached for the gun in his pocket. Venishi threw the three discs he had, one knocking him in the face, the other on his side, and the third cut his arm slightly. The husky held his face, stumbling back for a moment while Venishi raced towards him, bashing his knee to the husky's gut. Venishi smacked the gun away, grabbed the husky's face while he was slightly bent over, and slammed it against the wall, leaving a small hole inside. The husky fell unconscious, giving the weak density of the wall, it would give him a headache when he woke up but nothing more.

“That takes care of that.” Venishi picked up the husky over his shoulder and walked out of the room to join the others.

Meanwhile, Natsuro and Zenion took care of the two in the bathroom, both lay unconscious, leaning back to back against each other in the middle of the room.

“I knew you had some fight in you,” Zen said to his fox friend smiling.

“I'll be honest, I was curious about what happened earlier... when we shook hands... are you really a...”

“Yep, half bird half fox,” Zen winked. “Though I can sense you don't have more than one tail.”

Natsuro looked surprised. Never would he have believed there could have been someone else just like him, having an ancestral bird's blood but the appearance of a fox.

“You really are one... that's awesome! W-wait a minute, what do you mean by more tails?”

Zen snickered and put his hands behind his head. “Don't worry about it. Once all this is over, let's hangout more. I really wanna talk to you more in private, cousin,” he teased.

“C-cousin?” Natsuro tilted his head, confused He realized seconds later what he meant. “Oooh, okay!” he smiled, returning to his cheerful self again.

The two foxes dragged the criminals out of the bathroom and threw them into a pile in the middle of the room, along with the other three who were already flat on the ground, moaning as they piled on top of each other.

“I just talked to the other workers,” Venishi said. “The police will be here in a few minutes to arrest these guys.”

“Sadly, we have to leave so repairs can be made,” Sol said with his ears down.

“It's alright! This was fun!” Said the twins smiling at the corgi, who responded with a smile in return.

“So what should we do now then?” Venishi asked.

“Let's go to an ice cream shop. My treat this time,” Zen said, causing the twins to cheer while Natsuro stared at Zen with crocodile tears of happiness.

The six left the arcade and walked down the sidewalk three minutes before the police arrived. Zen and Natsuro looked at each other and smiled, giving each other a fist bump and a small fire-bird appeared again when they took their hands away.