

TWAS THE NIGHT BEFORE SYLVEON MAIDS

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Ditty for Eleen

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Rated General

Twas the night before Christmas, and all down the block, not a house was stirring... except the mansion at the end of the walk.

It had been left there for decades, abandoned. The mansion was a three story island of opulence in its day, where it was the only landmark down Pulaski Way. A gilded building made of broad shutters and great glass panels, with its own minaret, carport and splendiferous lawn, once glittering, then too soon gone. The shingles rotted. The paint cracked away. The law teemed with restless weeds and wildlife indifferent to the lot's intent as a place for the Atlantan rich to sit upon their vast hordes.

Yet now, in the twilight of falling snow, there came a shower of light. The mansion's windows shone brightly. Colors saturated through the glass - whites and bright blues and prurient pinks and purples. It was almost as though a ghost had found its way inside, or a rave'd chosen the ballroom as collateral damage. The dimensions sprung, they twisted forthright; the arches boughed as the panes and shingles shuddered; and all manner of roaring noise woke up the neighborhood, the rumble of which heard as far as the interchange to I-285.

Several dozen car alarms went off before it stopped. Several hundred people rose from their beds, rubbing eyes. Some of them weren't even in bed, but streaming, or cuddling with their partners, or cursing the holiday for making them lonely.

One was already outside. Their fox ears rang like a bell struck. They winced and covered their ears, shivering. "Nani the fuck-"

This was Ricky Mankae. They are a kitsune. Affectionately known as a dweeb among their friends, a dork among acquaintances, and a threat to everyone else. This creature is a hapless sort. Emphasis on was. They weren't very conspicuous - aside from the ears, and the tails (three of them), and the abnormally short frame. Distinctly animal-shaped bits stuck out of jeans and jacket collar, but that was all prelude; the rest of them was furry too.

Not that most would see it. Very rarely are hermaphrodite kitsune that distinctive.¹ On the road, they were a smudge of olive, vulpine tan and purple accent, which would have acted like tropical markings if anyone knew just how much magic was stored up in Ricky's soul.

To say that he felt the house bounce up and down was an understatement - the magical aftershock radiated through his bones. It wasn't pleasant. Not pleasant like the cold; this was just unnerving.

They backtracked down Pulaski Way, his boots crunching through snow. His lungs burned as he turned the corner, following bleeding lights reflecting off the frost. It was another turn, and they were there, at the end of the road. What stood solemnly before now dazzled the fox-person in its sheer purity.

"What in the world happened here...?" Ricky muttered to themselves, as they peered over the side of the gate.

The mansion they'd known on their way home from work had become something. It had metamorphosed, changed, like the very DNA itself had been wrung out and replaced. It resembled less the aging remains of American greed, and looked more like a small castle on a cliff. The rock that had made the lot a landmark now buoyed a massive keep, striped with the colors of the trans flag. It rose above the striped pines, roof bare, striped brickwork lit up bright, and Ricky could swear they saw the building shudder. Almost as though it was taking a breather from a strenuous growth spurt.

Ricky listened for anything ominous. Their ears swiveled left and right.

You there! shrieked the wind. **Androgynous fox!**

Well that was pretty ominous, huh? Ricky jumped. They cradled their tails. "Um! Hello?"

What day is it? The wind told them, a little less forcefully than an ear-splitting shriek.

Ricky checked their smartphone. In this weather, their fingers were shivering so much, it took a half-second longer than they intended. "Christmas eve," they said eventually.

Are we too late...?

"I dunno," Ricky said honestly. The wind's voice came at them from every direction. They had difficulty figuring out where to point themselves to be well, polite. "I'm going to need a little more context here, uh-hh-" Ricky scratched their head. "Are you the house or-"

We.

"Right right, we," Ricky nodded. He pretended not to be intimidated. "We. That doesn't

¹ Intentionally. They manage to grab attention unintentionally just fine.

answer my question directly, but it's good to meet you, we. We're three hours to Christmas."

Then there is still TIME.

The front door slammed open. Ricky lurched backward. They tumbled into the snowy embankment. From the porch, a velvet spool unwound, rolling off the stairs and into the stonepath, and down the winding strip that connected the house to the driveway. The velvet was pink, with a white tongue down the center, and when it landed at Ricky's feet, they nearly let fight or flight take them hurdling away from this anomaly in common sense. Fortunately, they were brave. Or stupid. Either way, they drew themselves back up, expecting the house to try to eat him or something.

Only that didn't happen. The house itself did nothing but host this rolling velvet carpet. Inside its windows, the lights dimmed. The curtains slid shut. Glowing glimmers gathered at the opening, barely visible at Ricky's distance. Shadowed figures stepped lightly through it, then out on the porch, then down the steps. They were followed by a jaunty [waltz](#), cranked out of an unseen gramophone.

Ricky squinted. What were they? Human? No, no they weren't human. Not at all.

The first two creatures walked on hind legs. They did with an unearthly poise, a delicate posture fitting their small size. Their paws swung left to right, over heavy dresses and heavier gaits. Their tails flicked together in perfect time. Their aprons were spotless, as were their little hats, and their little cufflinks, and their gorgeous frock coats, which unfortunately had no business being in a modern century. Ricky guessed Victorian at the latest, but the fashion might have been older. Long ribbons trailed around careful, clumsy-looking digitigrade paws, the same color as their coats. The ribbons ended at bow-ties that, for all Ricky knew, were one at the same with their flesh.

Ricky sat himself upright, as they fully took the creatures marking the way for the rest of the parade. These creatures were Sylveon. Feral Sylveon in maid clothes, standing upright.

The Sylveon maids curtsied as more joined. Column after column of them. Their numbers seemed to double as they spilled out of the mansion. Four became eight, then eight furry figures became sixteen, and soon thirty-two. After that, Ricky lost count. So many of them pranced out on their hindlegs, hurrying to the end of the carpet to take a bow. They stood statuesque, unphased by the sheet or the bitter cold. They hardly even moved.

Not a one was distinct. They shared the same face. Their bodies were identical. None had so much as a hair out of place, or fur a different color. It was a monochromatic collage of Eeveelutions in prissy service dresses.

They slid into position with a grace Ricky could barely fathom, these maids, with their dresses fluttering in the wind. What seemed to lay in them was an intricate professionalism. A combination of respect for the craft and sheer discipline, honed from

years of work. Ricky could not tell the Pokemon's age, not even up close, but they could imagine how much effort it would take to coordinate so many of them at once, and how much effort it would take...

The creatures paused at the gate. The waltz continued. Ricky held their breath.

In the doorway, the luminance from inside the building seemed to concentrate. It sublimated around a sublime individual, a maid only slightly taller than the others. Where the other maids wore bonnets, this one wore a cap. This one walked - as much as a four-legged Eevee morph could walk - until it reached Ricky, and properly took off her cap in reverence.

"Greetings and salutations!" said the head of the maid's parade brightly.

Ricky looked down at her, a little unsure of what to say. "Hhhello?"

They waved. The maid raised a limp paw and waved back. All of them waved. It was an eerie sight.

"We are grateful that you have clarified the time," the head maid said. Their ribbon tentacles wiggled with what could have been approximated as giddiness. "It was almost too late to participate in the festivities!"

Ricky laughed nervously. They rubbed the back of their head. "Actually, Christmas doesn't start until tomorrow. You're fine. You're not exactly, like, in the Christmas spirit though??? So I'm not sure???"

They gawked around. All of the maids had the same sparkly, pupil-less blue eyes.

Head maid giggled daintily into their paw. The rest mimed the motion. "You're cute."

Ricky blinked. "Oh. Well thank you, but-"

"You are also wrong."

To this, Ricky nodded reluctantly. "I usually am."

"We don't celebrate Christmas," said the head maid, fangs brimming in a small smile, "but we do recruit on special days."

Ricky froze. Their courage guttered out of their chest. "You..." they swallowed. "You recruit."

The head maid tilted their head. "Mhm~ That's right. We're the Society of Sylveon Servants."

“Well,” said Ricky, “that’s very nice, but when you say things like ‘recruit,’ I can’t help but feel targeted here.”

They tried to back away. The last row of Sylveons trotted around Ricky and pressed them forward. The gate turned on its own. It slowly rolled back.

“That isn’t helping,” they whimpered. They winced as the gate clicked shut. Slowly, they turned back to the buoyant and brusque head maid, who had not moved. She was smiling at them intently.

“The Society of Sylveon Servants recruits once a year,” she said, “on nights cold and gray, through places long abandoned and times long neglected by cheer. If you would be so kind as to offer yourself to the staff, we promise we won’t have you long.

“We are grateful, as we are pretty and industrious~”

A festival of giggles surrounded Ricky. They bit their lip. More nudging pushed the kitsune closer. The head maid stepped back to give them the space to breathe. It didn’t seem like they had a choice in the matter. Tellingly, though, they needed Ricky’s approval, or at least a sign of it.

There was something they wanted to know first. Ricky cleared their throat. “... is this a contract?”

The head maid nodded. “Yes, indeed!” Her ear flicked.

“How long is it?”

“As the ribbon curls~” So not any units Ricky was familiar with, okay.

“And what is going to happen to me?”

“You will become one of us!” the head maid replied exuberantly. “And you will clean the Infinite Circuit of celestial mansions with us!”

Ricky had no idea what that was, but they could intuit enough from the proper nouns to guess it wouldn’t be an easy experience on the mortal mind. They picked at their collar. This definitely didn’t sound like a short contract, but they were cute, and being a troop of effectively faceless pokemon had its charm.

They ran their response through their head a couple times before they were satisfied. “Achem! I... uh... I’d like to join. If that’s okay with you? It honestly sounds like fun. A-and, I wanted to get fuzzy too. Long as I get back here, y’know?! If you guys promise to take me back home, I’ll definitely do the whole thing.”

They blushed. “Maiding thing.” Oh, they hoped they weren’t too forward with that one.

Surprisingly, no. The head maid gave him a coy wiggle of her eyebrows and sauntered up to them. She offered her beans in an open-pawed gesture. "Then... May we have this dance?"

Ricky looked at it. They cautiously put their hand inside. The squishy digits inflated to cradle around the kitsune's palm and squeeze. It prompted a little gasp. "Sure. M-my name is Ricky..."

The head maid looked at Ricky as though they'd said nonsense. "Huhuhu... no, it is **not**."

The word shook through Ricky like an earthquake. It made them easy to sweep off their feet. "B-but I..." they blinked. "That's my..."

What was the word they were looking for? Name? Why couldn't they find it?

The waltzing resumed where it had stopped. Ricky stumbled, having to keep up with much smaller paws on a creature half their size. Despite these handicaps, the head maid still held both of Ricky's hands with an impossible tightness, and led them slowly, through spin and through pivot.

Formation broke before Ricky could get their thoughts together. Dizziness was starting to overtake them.

"You don't have a name, you know?" the head maid whispered.

"I-I don't..." Ricky asked, leaning in.

"Did any one of these maids ask you your name? Did they?"

"I suppose they didn't..."

"And why is that, dear creature? Why is that?"

Ricky's emotions were conflicted. They weren't a creature! But was it so bad being one? They were compelled to answer. "Maybe... because they don't..."

Language went mushy in their mouth. Thoughts turned gummy and vague. The music swelled, until the melody overtook everything, and squeezed Ricky's cognition into a fine mush.

When they opened their eyes, they were milky blue too.

"We don't," the head maid reminded them. She uttered it again, to drill it in. "We."

"Wuh..." Ricky's feet collided together. They pitched forward, almost about to trip - but their feet caught them, just in time. Boots slipped off. Crunches turned into delicate plaps,

and cold tingling on the soles of swelling paw pads.

They tried to look down. The head maid stopped their chin. She held it. Cradled it in her paw. Whiskers wriggled out of the gaps between the digits and dewclaw. Ricky marveled at how dextrous she could be, when she wanted to prove a point.

“We,” she whispered again, in a tone that penetrated through Ricky’s skull. “We~”

“We...” Ricky murmured. Their ears subtly changed shape. A few quiet cricks in their knee joints dropped them several inches. Their hands tingled. They glanced numbly, and caught them just as the gloves were sliding off and dropping into the snow.

What ‘hands’ look like great and firm bappy paws, one might wonder? Certainly not these.

There were giggles of encouragement from behind - or not giggles, but the emanations, the echoes traveling through Ricky’s mind. Not that there was much of one operational. As the waltz slowed, the head maid positioned Ricky on their shaky, shrinking hind legs around to where the other maids could measure them. Logically, there was no point - but even the act was an initiation.

The maids announced measurements in the same sugary voice. As they did, Ricky’s spine shrank to fit, and their figure warped to match, concentrating in thinning shoulders and thickening hips.

“I-I don’t understand...” they whined. Their voice sounded strange. It had a tinny quality to it, sweeter than normal, more femme than usual, and it hated having to sound out the first-person. It made them wince.

“Don’t you?” the head maid teased. “We are in league. We are dressing you up. We are making you presentable, like the rest of us~”

Those words. ‘We’ and ‘us,’ spoken with such emphasis, they made holes in Ricky’s conception of self. It lumped the kitsune together with the rest of the furry creatures. It took their individuality away, it harvested their insecurity, and made them perfectly identical...

Ricky smiled dumbly. There was something serene about not having it they simply couldn’t explain. Even as their hair turned pink and shrank towards the grain, and a bow poked their way through the jacket collar. They felt their fur changing, a subtle switch in texture coursing underneath. It itched. This was a kind of silk they’d never felt before.

“I’m... n-not ‘I...” Ricky droned. “My name is... nnnnothing~...”

Their height dwindled as they sounded it out. Nothing. Nothing at all. Not a single unique thing.

The maids undid their jacket. They pulled off the kitsune's pants. Patches of pink persisted, but within moments, it was all subsumed with Sylveon white. Their hands swelled firmly into paws, their feet arched up into paws, and their face, which so desperately clung to humanity, pressed out in the head maid's beans, until it was a sculpted copy. Fangs, snout, split lip, plush cheeks and all.

In a heartbeat moment, Ricky could still grasp everything that made them distinct. Then, as they stepped back, with clumsy hip sways and awkward head tilts, examining themselves, they realized there was no going back.

Not when the Society started praising them in their ears.

"Oh, she's gorgeous!"

"Just like me!"

"Just like me!"

"She must be half an inch taller- no, smaller!"

"I can't wait to clean with her."

"I can't wait to bump our flat chests together~"

The hollow sound didn't come from their mouths. It rang through their emotional core, a simultaneous network. Ricky was familiar with all of them somehow, despite never knowing them before. Despite never having been a maid.

They blushed hard. With that, their three kitsune tails wrapped together into one luxurious wagger.

Yet they were accumulating knowledge quickly. Despite appearances, and despite the fact they themselves were naked, the maid company was more than equipped to handle cleaning across magical realms. The combined knowledges of centuries came pouring in, and Ricky, unable to resist, staring stupidly up at the head maid, their dopey eyes sparkling.

All sense of their gender disappeared. They were she, and she was one of many.

The maids slowly dressed their new counterpart. She watched with a small amount of pride.

They gave her a number, only to be used in case a client needed in. Thirty-Eight.

There'd been thirty-seven Sylveon maids in aprons and frock coats that night, and now, departing back to their world of whimsy and magic, they now had thirty-eight.

Thirty-Eight was grateful for the opportunity. Or, she would be. Eventually. The maiding process tended to scramble brains for an awfully long time, so until she was lucid again, she was a passenger on this magical ride.

When the clocks struck midnight that night, the mansion returned to its old, musty glory. As for what happened to Maid Thirty-Eight, well...

That's another story.