Stranded

The ship is quiet, has been for the past month. It’s been drifting in dead space, out of fuel and running low on life support. The pilot remains asleep, conserving as much energy as he can, as there’s not much he can do anyways. The past year has been rough for him. Moving from job to job, but still only making enough money to get by. His last job did not end so well, with him being completely out of money and with a damaged ship. He was delivering cargo when pirates raided his ship, disabled his engines, and took everything of value. That was a month ago, and he’s been adrift ever since.

One of the many consoles at the pilot’s station of the ship begins beeping, and an alert appears on the screen indicating only 30 minutes of oxygen remains. Then another alarm, this one louder, indicating a temperature warning. A loud, roaring noise can suddenly be heard which startles the pilot awake as he looks around. Flames can be seen through the window and what appears to be a desert rapidly approaching. The pilot scrambles to his controls, flipping a switch on the console and trying to use the ship’s atmospheric control surfaces to guide the ship into a more stable descent. The ship groans with stress as the ship enters the thicker part of the atmosphere. The flames soon die out and the ship begins to respond to inputs and the pilot is able to level out the spacecraft as it nears the ground. However, due to the fact that its engines will not start, he cannot slow the ship down much. He pitches the ship up, trying to keep it in the air for as long as possible to reduce its speed. The ground rapidly approaches, now only a thousand feet away. The pilot pulls back on the controls, keeping the ship level as it rapidly descends, but does begin to slow down.

Now less than five hundred feet away, the pilot panics as the ship still seems to be approaching the ground rapidly, and then finally there’s a very loud clanging thud followed by the ship shaking violently as it crashes into the desert. Pieces fall off the ship as it slides across the ground, kicking up a sandstorm, and it finally comes to rest after several minutes of skidding and sliding. The pilot sits back in his chair, taking a deep breath, before testing the atmosphere. Fortunately, the atmosphere is breathable, so he quickly shuts everything down and opens the rear hatch, letting fresh oxygen from outside flood the ship. He breathes in the fresh oxygen deeply, happy to finally not have to worry about oxygen. However, there is another thing to worry about. He’s in the middle of nowhere. As he exits the ship, he realizes there’s no signs of civilization visible in any direction. Even upon climbing to the top of his ship, he only sees flat desert for miles around.

The pilot looks up at the sky and sees the sun high and figures it must be in the middle of the day. Out of desperation, he digs into his backpack and pulls out a flare gun and fires it into the air, hoping that someone sees it. After firing it, the pilot takes a food kit out of his bag and a bottle of water. He tears open the meal and begins preparing it, pouring the water into the dehydrated food pouch, and activating the heater on it. It’s the last meal that he has so he eats slowly, savoring every bite. Halfway through he stops, and considers saving the rest, but he knows it won’t last so he just finishes the meal. Once finished, he discards the packaging and pulls a blanket out of his bag and lays it on the top of the ship and lays down, hoping that someone comes soon. Despite the sweltering heat of the desert, he does manage to fall asleep on top of the ship.

Hours pass and the sun sets, bringing night to the desert. It is dark and cold, and the pilot is still asleep though in his sleep he grabs his blanket and bundles up with it. The cold steel of his ship is not helping things so he wraps himself up completely in the blanket on all sides, trying to do what he can to keep warm. The pilot is awoken by a loud banging on the hull of his ship. He jumps awake, and nearly falls off the top. He gets up and peers over the edge to see an alien creature looking up at him, covered head to toe in armor and wielding an energy sword. He quickly covers himself with the blanket out of fear, but then the creature addresses him.

“Now, now, no need to be afraid…you’re no threat to me, especially with that broken junkheap of yours. Come on down, I saw your flare.” His voice is gruff, and he speaks directly with the tone of a career soldier. Someone who’s been in for a very long time.

The pilot timidly uncovers himself and slowly climbs down and stands a few feet from the Sangheili standing in front of him, towering over him. “Y-Yes sir…sorry to intrude but…my ship…”

“Yes, we saw…you made quite the entrance, even before you fired off your flare, we saw it. You’ll never survive the desert on your own, which is why I came.” The Sangheili stares down at him, eyeing him up and down, examining him closely. “Yes…you’ll do just fine…”

“W-What do you mean? Please don’t hurt me!”

“Oh, no, I won’t harm you…you’re far too inferior to even be a match for me. I’ve got something *else* in mind for you~”

The pilot looks up with fear as many things go through his mind. Could he be captured and locked away in prison? His ship stripped for parts?

“I suppose I should introduce myself before we proceed…after all we’re going to know each other *very well* after all this. My name is Roz 'Vadamai.” Roz takes his energy sword and presses a button on it. The normal bluish-white blade changes to a green color with a flash, and he holds it close to the pilot.

“Please! Don’t hurt me, I beg of you, I was just lost and had no choice but to crash here!”

“Don’t worry, this won’t hurt a bit…” Roz takes the sword and gently rests it on the pilot’s shoulder, and he begins to glow a faint green, the same shade of green coming from the sword. The pilot feels a warm, tingling sensation all over his body followed by a sharp pressure as light brown scales appear all over his body in patches, and are spreading around.

“What is this? What are you doing?” The pilot panics as he watches the scales spread around his body. His waist narrows while his hips widen, and thighs grow thicker. He also feels an outward pressure as everything around him seems to grow smaller, and he begins getting closer to the Sangheili’s eye level. His outfit feels tighter as he grows.

“Just a few improvements, you’ll be able to survive much easier once this is over, so just let it happen.”

“Okay…” The pilot fears that running would only make things worse, it could provoke the Sangheili to attack, or he could get lost and die in the middle of this strange transformation. Another thought crosses his mind, if he doesn’t do what this massive creature says, he might actually hurt him. He knows that he’s at a severe disadvantage having no weapons on him. He is a simple trader after all.

He winces as his clothes begin to tear from his growing size. Some of his fingers merge together and grow longer, along with his fingernails, which also grow much sharper. An additional thumb grows out of each hand, and he is left with four digits on each hand, two fingers and two thumbs, each of them with long, thick claws. As he grows, his legs snap backwards, then forwards again giving his legs a digitigrade look, but his feet remain plantigrade as they grow wider and thicker, meeting the width of his legs. His toes merge together as his toenails grow longer and sharper, much like his fingernails, and large, two-digited flat feet burst free from his boots. Two thick claws grow out from his heels and curl down to touch the ground. The rest of his clothes tear to shreds as he soon stops growing, just a few inches shy of the Sangheili before him. The pilot looks down at his hands and nearly screams. “I-I’m like you!” As she says this, she notices her voice sounds different. Softer, lighter. “Wait…I’m…a girl?”

“Of course! Now, just stay calm, you’re doing good, you’re almost done!”

The pilot nods and then winces as she feels a pressure all around her head. Her hair falls out and then long, pointed pink growths come out of the back of her head where her hair once was. It almost resembles dreadlocks. Her neck grows longer, and jaw stretches forward as the bridge of her nose widens, giving her an almost reptilian muzzle. Her ears and nose shrink away, leaving behind only nostrils and ear holes. She then feels a pulling, splitting feeling in her mouth. Scores appear coming from her lips that stretch back that grow deeper until her mouth splits open into four pieces, which grow larger and new joints grow in from the jaw stretching to the lips. Her mouth hangs open, two flaps on each side with a row of sharp teeth in the front, and each lip is covered on the inside with equally sharp, but smaller, teeth. She reaches up to feel her mouth and practices opening and closing it. Where once an explorer stood, now stands a female Sangheili.

“You look perfect! Oh, you’ll need these now.” Roz reaches into a bag and pulls out a black and grey jumpsuit, one that looks similar to what Roz wears under his armor.

The pilot takes it and quickly tries to put it on, struggling some with her new limbs. After some effort, and a few chuckles from Roz, she finally has it on. “…So what now?”

“Well, when I saw your ship land I knew it wasn’t going anywhere anytime soon, so I thought maybe we could just go back to my home and…well…relax. After all, you must be hot and tired after that ordeal.”

“Yeah…I kinda am, actually. Where is your home, anyways, I don’t see anything for miles!”

“It’s not that far…just follow me, dear~”

The pilot gave Roz a weird look after that last comment, but pushes it out of her mind, not wanting to worry too much about it given how he’s giving her shelter. She follows Roz for what feels like an eternity, but in reality, was maybe a few hours. It’s very dark when they arrive at Roz’ home, and he leads the pilot inside.

“Would you like something to drink?”

“Water, please.” The pilot anxiously waits on a piece of furniture in the main room, which looks like a sofa without a back or arms and is covered in a blanket and pillows. Before too long, Roz comes back with two clay cups filled with water. He hands one to the pilot and then sits down next to her on the bench. “Thank you…” The pilot quickly downs the cup of water, having not had anything to drink in over a day.

“My, you’re thirsty! Anyways, now that you’re here I wanted to…well…explain. All of this…making you like me, bringing you here…it’s all for a very specific reason. Do you know much about our kind?”

The pilot looks up to Roz with a confused look. “Not really…not much beyond stories of the war.”

“I see…we have…moved past that. You see, swordsmen like myself…we don’t wed. However, it is important that the bloodline is continued…that swordsmen genes are passed down to the next generation. I could be with any female that I want, however…I felt no attraction to any of them. They’re either all too tall or too short, most of them far too pretentious for my tastes. I wanted the perfect partner to pass my genes to. That is why I worked so hard to modify my sword the way I did…to be able to make someone in the image that I want.”

“You…want to sleep with me?”

“Well…to put it bluntly, yes. I wanted someone not from this world because I just could not find the perfect one here. I felt that I could never find my match here so I would make my match.”

“Oh…I don’t know…I mean…we just met and all…you seem nice, but I hardly know you!”

“Oh, don’t worry about that, we have plenty of time to get to know each other well! For now, though, I bet you would like to just relax…” Roz reaches one arm around the pilot and pulls her in closer, cuddling with her. Her face flushes with embarrassment.

She had to admit that it did feel good to have another person touch her, especially romantically. She hasn’t had that sort of contact in many years. She feels something inside her that she hasn’t felt in a long time. The longer she spends in Roz’ embrace, the stronger this feeling becomes. The pilot feels conflicted, unsure of how to feel. She wants her ship to be repaired so she can be on her way and continue seeking work, but Roz is so nice, taking her in when she’s stranded and helping her to survive the harsh desert, even in an unorthodox fashion. Then he wants to…sleep with her? Many parts of her mind says this is wrong, she still feels like a human despite being in a Sangheili body now, but the longer she spends with Roz, the closer she feels to him. Maybe it’s desperation…having not had much physical contact with another living being for years.

Eventually she does lay her head down on Roz’ chest, feeling relaxed. Maybe this won’t be so bad. After all, he seems to respect her enough to not just take her into the bedroom right then and there…so maybe she could make this work.

The next few weeks pass, and Roz and the pilot get closer and closer. Each moment they have, each outing they spend together brings them ever closer. Roz gets plenty of weird looks from other Sangheili, as swordsmen don’t have partners, they simply be with who they want for the purpose of passing on genes. Of course, none of this matters to Roz. He doesn’t care what others think of him, he knows that he’s happy.

The pilot feels equally happy to be with Roz. Even though she would still love to have her ship repaired and go back into the depths of space and keep working, more and more she feels more at home with Roz and feels more and more comfortable with her new body.

A month after they met, and Roz and the pilot are at home, cuddling on the bench. The pilot looks up to Roz and asks, “You never have called me by anything except ‘she’ or ‘her’ or something non-specific like that…and you never asked my name…”

“That’s because humans have not earned a name to us. However, now that you bring it up, I think you’ve earned a name to me I cannot give you a badge name because you are not of this planet and do not belong to a clan, however I shall name you Fexa. You should consider this an honor, as your kind…well…what *was* your kind, do not get names. However, I think you’ve earned it now.”

“Fexa…I could get used to that!” Fexa smiles. She then leans over, laying down on the bench with her head in Roz’ lap, looking up at him. “You know how you said you wanted me to pass your genes to…well…I thought about it and…I think I’m ready.”

Roz looks down at her, surprised and happy. “Are you sure? We don’t have to do it now if you don’t want to!”

“Yes, I’m ready!” Fexa gets up and stands in front of Roz, who follows shortly after. Roz hugs Fexa tight and then leads her back into his bedroom.

Even after Roz successfully passes his genes onto Fexa, the two remain together. Roz completely disregards the tradition of swordsmen not having lifetime partners and decides to stay with Fexa and even goes so far as to retire from combat to help raise their two children. Roz and Fexa end up dealing with a great deal of discrimination because of Fexa’s nature, however Roz’ status as a swordsman quickly quells any potential conflict.

Fexa eventually gives up her dreams of going back into space and sells the ship for scrap, and Roz surprises her one day with a full set of armor, custom tailored to fit her, as well as a brand-new Type-51 Carbine! Roz trains her in combat as is tradition for all Sangheili, so that she may help to defend the home. They lead a happy home life despite the occasional dirty look or mean sayings from others, and their children manage to grow to become hardy warriors. Arguably hardier than any of their peers given how much discrimination and bias they faced growing up.

Roz and Fexa remain at home for the remainder of their lives, loving each other dearly and taking good care of their home, while their children go on to become great warriors on the front lines, defending Sangheilian interests throughout the galaxy, although their advancement is severely limited due to the fact that they are not truly of a clan’s bloodline the same as others. They face constant discrimination and hardship, constantly being placed on the front lines, and sent on suicide missions. However, they always come back alive, defying commanders’ expectations. This frustrates the commanders, and they shuffle the two around from unit to unit, often separating them. Their resolve and will to prove everyone wrong means that they come out on top every time.