

Fall's Leaves and Friends' Love

By: Monica Vix

A chilling breeze flowed through the air, disrupting loose leaves that cast themselves on the sidewalks and streets of Anima City. The falling leaves were disrupted by a jogging tanuki; the long legs of Michiru strode across the streetlamp lit sidewalk. Continuing on her path, bag in hand, the tanuki continued across town towards her friend. Her open red jacket shown off a white tank top underneath, a pair of navy-blue short shorts on the brown furred legs of the beastman. The jacket flowed behind her as if it was a cape with her quick pace!

The sunset stained sky behind the silhouetted buildings was fading slowly. Streetlights began to take up the mantle of illuminating the streets, indoor lights from the tall buildings slowly flicking on in patchy patterns. The nightlife of the city was slowly coming to light with each and every passing moment as Michiru ran through the streets. Once or twice, she would catch a streetlight coming alive in front of her energized teal eyes! Even the lively illumination of the city coming to night fall didn't slow the tanuki down, hurrying along the streets with a half step quicker to reach her home with Nazuna.

Months after the near city shattering event that was Alan and his harebrained scheme, Michiru had to move out of the Beastman Co-op at some point. Since Nazuna lived across the street in a decently sized apartment, the tanuki thought to ask her kitsune friend to move in! The two of them lived together for around a month at this point. From the ground floor of the building they resided in, Michiru could see the lights on within their window! Taking a deep breath and readying herself, the tanuki started the trek up the staircase with long strides up the stairs, almost taking them three at a time, just to get to their apartment quicker.

Pulling herself huffing and panting in front of the door, the tired tanuki stood there for a moment. Michiru fumbled with her keys while struggling to hold both of her plastic bags full of goodies, eventually managing to unlock the door and push herself in. The warmth of the apartment hit her instantly, the smell of freshly made popcorn filling the air and the tanuki's nose.

"Nazuna!" Michiru called out, stepping inside and kicking the door closed. "I'm back! And I got snacks, too!" The tanuki stepped out of her shoes and walked inside with her socks, the darker brown sock like pattern just inching out over the white socks. "What movie did you get for movie night?" She continued, setting the bags down on the coffee table.

The white furred kitsune revealed herself from the kitchen's corner. She wore a light cream over-shirt with a pastel pink rock band shirt underneath, black leggings down her slim body to her pink paws. "Welcome back! Tell me what you got first." Nazuna said, carrying out a large bowl of popcorn. She took a piece of it out of the bowl and ate it before plopping herself down on the couch, propping her bare feet up on the coffee table.

"A lot of sweets!" The tanuki said with a slight bounce in her step, sitting down next to the kitsune before digging into the plastic bags. "Got a few donuts, a few packs of pocky in all different flavors..." she continued, rummaging through the treats with her tail wagging. "Oh! I also found a necklace I thought you'd like!" Michiru said, leaning back with a silver chained necklace hanging from her fingers, the warm lamp light surrounding her and Nazuna making it shimmer like polished gold.

Clearly a little more than stunned, Nazuna's red eyes grew wide. She stared at the necklace for a moment, enthralled. A small Sakura flower dangling at the bottom of it, the rich pinks making it look like a painting. "I, uh... don't know what to say." The kitsune beastman laughed nervously, gingerly reaching her pink hands out to grasp the necklace. "Thank you, Michiru." She said with a smile growing larger on her face.

"I thought you'd like it." The tanuki laughed it off like it wasn't a big deal. Her darker furred hand reached into the bags and drew out a pack of strawberry pocky, popping open the top before slipping one into her mouth. "But I'll ask to be late on rent this month." Michiru asked with a rising nervous tone, matching Nazuna's uneasy laugh. "It was, uh... kinda a lot?" She said, almost wincing with her own words as she chewed on the biscuit end of the pocky. Half closed teal eyes stared at the vixen to see her reaction.

Nazuna's hands dropped to the grey cushions of the couch, her red eyes slowly narrowing in on Michiru's eyes. "I knew there had to be a catch." The vixen sighed, her ears twitching as her eyes looked towards the tanuki. "Well... it's rude to return the gift..." Nazuna mused for a second, leaning onto her roommate as she held up the necklace. "If you do all the cleaning this week, I'll let you off Scot-free." The sly fox altered the deal with a smirk on her face, not even looking at Michiru as she laid against her shoulder.

"Alright, alright, that's fair." The tanuki sighed out in relief that her roommate wasn't mad. She shook the little box of pocky and held one out towards Nazuna's mouth, which the fox took happily. "Wonder where Shirou is." Michiru wondered out loud, nonchalantly laying her head against the pink haired kitsune's head. "Kinda weird for him to miss movie night without saying anything."

Nazuna slipped the necklace around her neck, starting to put it on with the clasp snagging it in the back. "Eh, maybe something urgent came up as his phone died?" The vixen shrugged while chewing the yogurt covered end of her pocky, slowly pushing it into her mouth. "Think we should wait? I don't really want to see... Ghostbusters without him around!" Nazuna acted like it was a big event to see Ghostbusters in general.

"You got Ghostbusters?" Michiru perked up a little, her fluffy tail wagging as it was mentioned. "Man, I haven't seen that in forever. I guess we should just... wait." She said somewhat disappointed that Shirou wouldn't be there soon enough to watch a movie she's now looking forward to. Eating her pocky, the tanuki reached into the bowl of popcorn in Nazuna's lap, taking a few kernels out and popping them into her own mouth. "No clue what to do, though." Michiru sighed out somewhat disappointed they would have to wait.

Sliding in closer until the two of them were touching hips, Nazuna closed the small gap. The kitsune let out a soft snicker. "Maybe we can play the pocky game, like we used to? When we were kids?" She joked, starting to eat her own pocky stick, one hand on the necklace's charm and the other on her treat. "That or karaoke. Or busting out that chess board we have but, like, never use." She suggested. Laying against the tanuki, the white furred head of the kitsune rest between the fluffy cheek of her roommate and her shoulder.

“You’re too good at karaoke! You literally made a career off of being a good, entertaining singer!” Michiru commented if not praised, almost laughing it off as she draped her arm around Nazuna’s shoulders. “Technically, I’ve given you at least, like... thirty thousand yen? Just from buying some of the merch from your shows. And those tickets.” The tanuki snickered in return. She shook the box of pocky sticks in her hand, getting another strawberry yogurt covered biscuit into her mouth, this time from the yogurt covered end. Turning towards Nazuna, Michiru used the treat to gently bonk the end of the kitsune’s snout, stifling a snicker as she offered the biscuit end towards her roommate.

Drawing her hand up from the necklace towards her face, Nazuna could only groan with a weak laugh on the coattails of her mild embarrassment. “You really don’t have to buy it.” The kitsune said. She backed up just enough to look at Michiru, breaking their embrace for a moment. “I can just get you some of it if you want. And I don’t think you need a fifth shirt with my name on it.” The pale blush in her white furred cheeks shown her embarrassment. Nazuna could only roll of her eyes at the tanuki. Regardless, she bit into the biscuit end of the treat, starting to pull it closer to herself, thinking that Michiru was just being funny with a way to offer the candy.

Feeling the tug Nazuna put on the pocky stick, Michiru only leaned in. She clearly wanted to push the vixen’s joke about the pocky game, wanting to tease her and embarrass her best friend more. The tanuki narrowed her teal eyes. Leaning forward, allowing Nazuna to hold onto the pocky stick, Michiru pushed forward and took a decent bite of the treat. After getting the attention of the kitsune, seeing those bright red eyes staring back, the tanuki smiled mischievously. This only got an eye roll from her roommate, who began to take a smaller bite. The kitsune’s canine teeth bit into the yogurt as she inched closer to her tanuki friend, locking eyes with her.

Michiru took another bite closer towards her roommate’s lips. Barely an inch of the pink pocky stood between a kiss for a silly little game of chicken the two played to pass the time. Nazuna slid along the covered biscuit and bit another half inch off. The soft crunch was enough to let Michiru know it was her turn to close the gap a little more, or take the plunge all the way to smooch the kitsune right on the lips. She would opt for the later; the tanuki slid in closer, her soft lips embracing the fox right on hers! The kiss was held for a moment, each of them not exactly feeling anything. That was until they removed the treat from the equation.

Taking each half of the pocky into their own mouths, they freed up the kiss from the obstruction of food. After that, there was an instant change. It was like static in the air being released in a powerful shock! The eyes of the two beastmen lit up, cheeks growing red, and a mutual realization of what was happening. Michiru and Nazuna realized just how good this felt! The sweet taste of each half of the pocky was nice, of course, but the kiss? The sensation of locking lips and being pressed so close together? It was almost otherworldly! Like a bolt of lightning careening across the sky in broad daylight!

Nazuna’s pink hand gently lifted to cup the fluffy brown cheek of the tanuki right in front of her, leaning over and moving just a hair closer. The bowl of popcorn shifting in her lap went unnoticed. As the kitsune moved in closer and shifted on the couch, the popcorn spilled; it tumbled across their laps, onto the couch, and down to the hardwood floor. This was enough to break the concentration on the kiss, teal and red eyes in turn looking to the mess as the kiss dissipated like dust in the wind.

Silence clung in the air for a moment. The pair continued blushing, seeing how Nazuna’s knees were almost in Michiru’s lap. The tanuki let out a long, drawn-out sigh. She struggled to speak, even

though she felt like she should break the silence. “That was, uh...” The tanuki struggled momentarily for words. Her arm drifted off the shoulders of the kitsune, reaching towards the popcorn in her lap to try to clean up. “That was pretty nice. What do... you think?” Michiru asked Nazuna, an eager yet anxious tone in her voice.

“Umm...” The kitsune was equally at a loss for words. She picked up the bowl and started to push loose bits of popcorn into it. “Yea. That was... honestly really nice.” Nazuna laughed a little nervously, some of her pink hair falling into her face as she worked on cleaning up. “Do you... well...” She began, pausing for a breath, unable to continue her thought.

The tanuki set the pocky box aside on the coffee table and bent over, starting to clean up the floor from the popcorn as quickly as she could. “Want to continue?” Michiru spoke softly. She continued Nazuna’s sentence, carrying her sentiment along with it. “Yea. Yea, I think I’d... really like that.” A dumb smile crossed the brown furred lips of the tanuki, looking over towards the blushing kitsune.

Nazuna set the popcorn bowl aside on the coffee table. Her red eyes stared towards Michiru, a shimmer of anticipation and desire in the ruby red iris. As the tanuki sat up with loose pieces of popcorn in her hands, the kitsune took the opportunity and pushed herself in nice and close to the brown furred face of her best friend, turned roommate, turned... whatever this was! Now the white furred lips of the vixen instigated a kiss. Unsullied by the presence of food, the two girls smooched with a gentle, cautious embrace of their lips. It was nothing short of electrifying!

All care of the mess of snacks they made faded from mind. Michiru kissed back, pushing with equal force while dropping the popcorn into the bowl. Her teal eyes slowly closed, succumbing to the warmth of Nazuna’s kiss. A hand retreated from the bowl to place itself against the waist of the vixen, drawing the pink and white pop idol closer into the kiss. Each of them just melted in pleasure; their tails almost wagged in unison! Kitsune and tanuki snuggled close and embracing the other, dark brown and pale pink paws pressed against the cool cloth that covered them.

A soft hum of pleasure escaped Nazuna’s lips as she broke away just for a moment. Her eyes looked into Michiru’s half closed, content eyes. There was an eager gleam in the pretty fox’s crimson eyes, a smile forming on her lips. Her arms slipped over the shoulders of the tanuki, the over-shirt draping over the tank-top the brown furred beastman wore. With a slow march forward, the distance was closed as Nazuna pressed her nose to Michiru’s.

“Wow.” The vixen whispered quietly, starting to drag herself onto Michiru’s lap. “You’re... really warm.” Nazuna sighed out gently. “And a little sweaty....” Tapping her fingers against the tanuki’s back, the enthralled kitsune was unsure how to act. She was overwhelmed in every positive way! Hands nervously twitching against Michiru’s back, able to feel the decently strong muscles underneath, the latch of her sports bra. It all riled up the blushing kitsune.

The tanuki smiled and nervously laughed, sliding her bare arms around the waist of the more heavily clothed kitsune. “I mean... I did jog here.” Michiru said as a dry joke. Her arms squeezed around the vixen tighter, drawing the pale furred fox into her lap with a tug. “Fuck... this feels really nice...” She sighed out, starting to lay down on the couch with Nazuna in her arms.

With a soft yelp, the fox allowed herself to be dragged on top of the lounging tanuki. A slightly annoyed expression on her face, Nazuna laid against Michiru's warm body. She nuzzled her nose into the neck of her roommate, sharing in her warmth. It felt so comforting, just generally blissful to be snuggling and cuddling up against the strong tanuki, using the rather sporty girl as a pillow. Neither Michiru or Nazuna could shake the blush filling their cheeks, the context of just being romantic roommates not making it easy to dissuade the affection and romance.

Then, suddenly, without a single warning, the door opened! Shirou stood in the doorway, looking groggy in his human form. Pale blue eyes looked towards the tanuki and kitsune, a slight smile on his lips. Apart from his usual black shirt and pants, the wolf beastman currently in his human form was carrying a pack of soda. His eyes met Michiru and Nazuna's, the pair staring at him without saying a word. The two stacked on top of each other like Lego bricks, neither had the strength or desire to break the embrace.

After a moment of awkward silence, Shirou broke it. "The door was unlocked so I let myself in." He said bluntly, walking forward to set the twelve pack of diet, brand-less root beer upright, next to the coffee table. "I'm surprised it took me months to walk in on you Sapphos being lovey-dovey." He said nonchalantly, as if he expected it.

"... What?" Michiru asked dry as a desert. "Sapphos? What... does that mean?" The confused tanuki couldn't pull her hands away from the waist of the kitsune, holding Nazuna gently against her body. Turning her teal eyes to look at the fox, she saw more blushing from the pale white cheeks. "Wait, do you know?"

Nazuna was only able to groan, hiding her face by using Michiru's head as cover. "Shirou's saying we're gay." The kitsune stated bluntly. "I mean... I don't think he's wrong?" She said with a slight shrug. "Do you... want to be girlfriends?" Nazuna asked quietly, although it was still loud enough for the canine beastman to hear.

"Wait a minute," Shirou butted in, his sleepy eyes a little wider than usual. "I thought you two were already dating? And that's why Michiru moved out, to live with you: her girlfriend?" He was clearly confused and a little frustrated at the confusion he had. Groaning and grasping the bridge of his nose with a black gloved hand, the older man shook his head slowly. "You're telling me all of those gifts, treats, and whatever else you two have bought for each other has just been platonic? Really?" He spoke with total disbelief, a hint of disappointment from the fact neither realized this until now heavy in his tone.

Michiru was completely stunned. She looked like she just woke up from a nap in a place she didn't fall asleep in. Teal eyes darted between Nazuna and Shirou, struggling to find words for a moment. In a single sentence, she would answer them both. "I guess... we were girlfriends and didn't even know it?" The tanuki felt stupid for saying it like that. However, the reaffirming squeeze of Nazuna's arms around her neck in that loving embrace comforted her in her stupid explanation. "Wait, why didn't you let us know you were going to be late?" Michiru spoke with more confidence as she confronted Shirou.

"Oh, right." The wolf beastman dragged his phone out of his pants pocket with his black gloves. There were two bullet holes clean through it, breaking the battery and absolutely ruining the circuitry of it. "Had some trouble with work. And I wasn't going to howl across the city to let you know, before you ask about that." Shirou preemptively caught Michiru's question. Sniffing the air, the human looking

beastman fixated his attention onto the bags of treats, starting to dig into the donut box. “Anyways, had some more work down this side of the city. Just decided to drop off the drinks and grab a few snacks before getting back to it.” He said nonchalantly.

The white furred vixen laid on her side, keeping one of her arms around Michiru’s neck affectionately, almost possessively. “What about next week? Will you be able to bring a movie then?” She asked the much older man. With how she moved, it was almost like she meant to show off the necklace that the tanuki bought for her! The kitsune still blushed from laying so close to her roommate turned girlfriend, only pushing it further by resting her cheek against Michiru’s.

“The Alien trilogy.” Shirou said. He dug into his back pocket, producing a little envelope in his gloved hand. “Also, here’s your paycheck for the week.” The pale brown package was set in Michiru’s hand, a slight smirk growing onto the beastman’s face. “Take your girlfriend out somewhere nice. For a date this time.” He joked and encouraged at the same time. Lifting his hand, Shirou gave a simple wave as he started towards the door again.

Rolling her eyes and huffing loudly in embarrassment, Michiru looked to her boss as he walked out the door. “Sure, sure. If I can actually find a place.” The tanuki muttered to herself as the door clicked closed. It only got a brief jab from Nazuna, who glared at Michiru to take it somewhat seriously. “See you Monday!” She called out towards her boss, turning her attention back to the kitsune partially on her. “What? I didn’t... say no.” The glare from those bright red eyes only strengthened as Nazuna rolled back onto Michiru, pinning her down to the couch. The dangling Sakura flower necklace hung down, tapping the tanuki’s chin. The click of the door closing was all the two needed to know they were now actually private.

“Well? When are we going to go out? Officially?” There was a slight grin on the blushing vixen’s face, her long pink locks draping down the two of them, hiding their blushing faces from the rest of the unwatching world. “Damn... it feels kinda weird thinking we were just... gay without knowing it.” Nazuna groaned, laying down on the tanuki again. Her face was pressed against Michiru’s brown furred neck, lightly nuzzling into it and smelling the somewhat sweet, sweaty scent that her girlfriend gave off.

With her arms ensnaring the kitsune closer to her body, the tanuki only nodded. “Yea. It doesn’t really feel like... anything’s really changed?” Michiru asked a rhetorical question. “The only thing that really changed is saying we’re together and, like... couple shit. Which we do already.” She commented with a shrug. In turn, Michiru pressed into Nazuna’s head right between the ears, feeling the silken hair against her muzzle.

“Other than hand holding and kissing?” The vixen snickered. “We don’t really do that too much.” Sighing and relaxing against the warm mattress that was Michiru’s body, the kitsune closed her eyes and simply basked in the simple pleasure of snuggling. It was only interrupted once the tanuki started to laugh. “Hey, what’s funny?” Nazuna didn’t even open her eyes, only tilting her head until her cool nose pressed against the jawline of her partner.

Stopping herself from laughing, Michiru only squeezed Nazuna tighter. “Nazuna, what if...” She laughed a little more, “What if we got those couple pillows, you know? The ones that say, like, ‘his’ and ‘hers?’ But just ‘hers’ and ‘the other hers’ on them.” The tanuki was laughing a little too much at her own

joke, but her laughing was infectious! Laughing along with her, the kitsune shook her head with the bad joke.

“Michiru...” Nazuna had to stop herself from laughing, lifting a hand from behind her partner’s neck to muffle herself. “Just... okay. As long as you don’t buy a third plush of me.” She chastised with a roll of her eyes, getting a little serious. “Buying one was cute and two is kinda pushing it.” The vixen said. Using her now free hand, the kitsune reached behind her and peeled off one of the tanuki’s hands from behind her, trying to hold hands with Michiru. “I appreciate it, but if you want to give me money just do it directly.” She joked.

Sighing and winding down from her own laughing fit, the tanuki instantly stopped as her hand was grabbed by her girlfriend. The soft fingers and gentle hold halted all thoughts for a moment. “Oh, uh... that would be a fifth, actually.” Michiru corrected. Her fingers entwined with her partner’s firmly holding hands with the pretty pop star. “I bought one for Jackie and another for Nina a month ago.”

Nazuna pulled away, sitting up on the tanuki. Red eyes looked down at her in disbelief, almost trying to study if this was a joke or not. “Michiru...” She sighed, shaking her head with a disappointed smile. “At least you aren’t keeping them here.” The kitsune laughed softly. Laying back down into the warmth of Michiru’s embrace, Nazuna closed her eyes once again. “Do you want to watch the movie? Or just stay here and... well... cuddle?” She asked softly, as if her words would break glass.

“Who said we can’t do both?” Michiru said slyly, dragging the vixen in closer with a single arm. Her fingers squeezed tighter around the held hand, the warm grasp and gentle pressure from Nazuna’s hand giving the tanuki a sense of pure affection.

“Neither of us can put it in if we’re stuck here cuddling.” The kitsune stated bluntly. She made no effort to get up off of the lovely tanuki.

With a stupid smile on her lips, Michiru simply held her vixen girlfriend close and rubbed her back with her free hand. “I don’t think we really need the movie to cuddle. You’re entertaining enough by yourself.” She acted a little overly lovey-dovey while snuggling into her girlfriend.

Nodding and yawning softly, Nazuna rested her head against the nook of the tanuki’s neck. “Mhm. Sounds good to me.” She hesitated. There was a tension in her body with words ready to be spoken, but uncertainty on how to properly relay the message.

“Hey, Nazuna?” Michiru asked softly in a little whisper. It was clear she felt the tension in the kitsune as her hand began to roll against her back, petting her through the clothes. “I love you.” The blushing tanuki whispered out. Her entire body tensed up as she spoke, releasing and sending a wave of relief through herself. “Kinda... always have, but you know. It just... hits different saying it like... romantically.” Michiru held onto the kitsune a little tighter, feeling her comparatively cool body in her grasp and refusing to let go for anything.

Laughing softly, Nazuna felt a flutter in her heart with those lovely, dorky words. She shifted upward, laying her cheek against Michiru’s. Just looking her in the eyes, seeing the beautiful teal hue shimmering in anticipation for a moment... it made it seem like a lifetime just looking into them. “I love

you more, you silly tanuki.” The kitsune whispered out with a mischievous smile, kissing her girlfriend directly on the lips.