

## **The Four-Year Gait (Perverts Put Out! Mix)**

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It's pushing ten o'clock, Thenandra is still getting Mustang into his gear, Tenebris has finished with his volunteer shift and is getting into his fursuit so he can go downstairs to get their yiff on, and Marta suggests it's time for us to take our leap. I'd hoped that there would be a few other ponies around, ones who were perhaps a bit closer to my skill level than Mustang's, but even the two girl ponies who'd been involved in the classes earlier have not returned for the party. It's called the Roundup, but there's mostly puppy play going on. The pony presence was much stronger when I'd been here as a cat in 2007, when the event was called the The Dog and Pony Show.

We decide to gear up in the pen with Mustang and Thenandra, though still giving them plenty of space. Marta arranges my hair into four down-the-middle-ponytails, and I apply a thick band of black eyeshadow across my eyes from temple to temple, the Daryl-Hannah-in-*Blade-Runner* look that I've gotten far too much mileage out of over the years. Human ponies tend to go very light on the eye makeup--including all the ones pictured in Rebecca Wilcox's book *The Human Pony*, which has served as an invaluable guide to us as we've prepared this past month--but just because nobody else does it doesn't mean that *I* can't.

I take off my plaid schoolgirl skirt, leaving me in my Fluevog boots, PVC leggings and a long velvet tank top. It's not all as shiny as I might prefer, but comfort and flexibility are my priorities, and this combination does the trick. I'm mildly

concerned about bulge and/or cameltoe, but not *too* concerned because it's a very small risk, and it's not like I'll be walking down Mission. I'm at a animal-themed play party at the Citadel, for pete's sake. While it's natural to be turned on when a longtime fantasy is finally being fulfilled, and I certainly got aroused in anticipation more than once as Marta and I were out shopping for fabric and gear bits. Tonight, that's not the direction my blood is going to go.

Marta puts a tall, shiny black choker she made around my neck, and then the harness which she constructed from bits of belts and O-rings. Next is the belt with my tail, a black-and-red hair-fall I haven't had any need for since going blonde. Then the hooves, which are shiny black and go halfway up my forearms and were made from scratch by Marta. Well, not from *scratch*, because if you wish to make hooves from scratch you must first invent the universe, but close.

Now the *pièce de résistance*, the bridle: a hard rubber bit to which Marta has added a chinstrap and over-the-head-straps and ears, all handmade by her except for the bit. When the bit goes in my mouth and the straps are tightened, I go nonverbal. It's mostly because I can no longer speak in anything other than grunty vowels, but I also *like* being nonverbal. It has its own power. Marta and I barely spoke the first few times we had sex, no doubt breaking every rule of consent and negotiating beforehand and signing everything in triplicate. Instead, we figured each other out as we went along, through body language and facial expressions and a mutual intuition which bordered on the psychic. Our sex is still like that after two years, but that's not to say that we don't communicate. We communicate like mad, perhaps more clearly than if we were forced to express things in words.

Presently, the drool starts to back up and spill out. It's inevitable with this kind of a bit, which I bought at Leather Etc in 2007 as part of my desperate attempt to show my then-girlfriend that I was serious about getting into pony play with her, even though she didn't *want* me to get into it with her. Indeed, during his presentation earlier Mustang had warned against using bits designed for humans, saying that they were no substitute for the actual equestrian design.

Marta frequently wipes the corners of my mouth where it's overflowing, but a fair amount still makes it to the ground. If you're looking to disassociate from your human brain, you could do worse than to be unable to speak or regulate your saliva levels. Besides, like being nonverbal, our sex life tends to involve copious amounts of saliva.

There's still a struggle in my head: I try to get into the headspace, go pony and primal, but my writerly instinct is trying to take everything in, knowing from experience that if I'm not already putting my more abstract thoughts into sentences as they're happening and basically already writing the first draft of the eventual story, they may evaporate before I have a chance to put them on paper. But is that necessarily a bad thing? Does *everything* have to be documented? Answer: yes. Yes, it does, at least this first time out. If I don't write it down, before long, it's like it never happened. If I had the slightest aptitude for fiction that might not be as much of a problem, but the fact of the matter is that I'm a compulsive writer who can't make things up, so that leaves real life as my subject.

This is a birth of sorts, and nobody knows how to walk at birth, not even a pony. I know enough to know to bring my knee up high with each step, like when we're doing high-knees in the bootcamp class at the Stonestown YMCA, but less cardio-intensive.

When I forget to properly bring up my knees, Marta demonstrates to remind me. Alas. This is the third time in my life that I've had to learn to walk. (I learned to walk for the second time when I was five years old. Long story, that.) I try to interpret how and where Marta wants me to move and turn based on how she pulls the lead rope, which is latched to an O-ring on the chinstrap.

My pony name is Kurah. I had asked Marta to name me, that's what she chose, and I like it a lot. It's the Arabic name for a star in the constellation Cepheus, and it translates as "the white spot on the forehead of a horse." Terribly appropriate. Not that I have a white spot on my forehead, but then again, this is the very first time I've been fully tacked up and I haven't looked in a mirror. I honestly have don't have a concrete image in my head of what I look like at this moment, nor do I care. What I look like is of no more concern to me than it would be to a biological pony.

Mustang is finally all geared up, enclosed from head to toe in more layers of latex and metal and rubber than I can even begin to hazard a guess at, with an elaborate, ornate headpiece complete with a long snout. Thenandra starts marching him a few paces behind me as Marta is leading me in circles inside the pen. That right there, *that's* the validation which I'm too shallow not to crave, *that's* a sign of being welcomed into this world, being in a two-pony parade with Mustang.

Marta also takes me out of the pen and through the rest of the first floor of the Citadel, including over to the food table, where she loosens my bridle enough to take the bit out of my mouth, allowing me to eat hand-fed veggies and drink water through a bendy straw. I don't speak, though. It's not even tempting. I'm nowhere near close to being verbal again, though I am circularly conscious of the fact that I'm still thinking too

deeply, that I'm simply not headspacing properly. Blinders. That's what's missing from my bridle, what I need for next time. My peripheral vision is doing me no favors right now.

I remain largely upright, as human ponies are wont to do, except for the times Marta sits me down on my knees in the pen for various bits of grooming. She looks into my eyes and I look into hers as she strokes and brushes both with her hands and with a \$1.99 brush we got from the pet supply aisle at Walgreens that afternoon, her telling me what a good pony I am as she combs my bangs—the hair in front of my eyes, the only part of my body I'm conscious of because it's the only part aside from my front hooves that I can see, I'm strangely fascinated by the fact that it's blue.

I find myself zoning out. It's late and I'm physically tired, but my brain also wants to close my eyes and go in other directions, and it's difficult to keep my hooves upright. I have no idea how long we've been doing this, it may have been twenty minutes or it may have been an hour. Marta asks if I'd like to walk around again, and I shake my head. She asks if I'm ready to be untacked, and I nod.

Because it was the last part to go on, the bit is the last to come off. It's always strange to speak again when coming out of animal mode. Even from my limited experience, I know that *that's* the threshold, and it's always crossed with a little sadness, because who knows when I'll get to go there again? If nothing else, I know I won't have to wait another four years.



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