

A Very Third Earth Christmas

By Shay Leona

Chapter 1: A Few Creatures Were Stirring Part 1

On a cold, over exaggerated winter's night, a few days after Thanksgiving, Jason-ra and Emma aka Homie gathered at Shay's house for their monthly card game. Jason-ra did his famous Beavis and Butthead impression and Emma laughed whole-heartedly.

"Oh Jay, you sound just like them."

Jason-ra stood up and bowed as Shay came in with a plate of homemade chocolate chip cookies and a kettle refilling everyone's hot chocolate.

"Thanks Shay! These cookies are delicious!" Emma exclaimed.

"Yeah, you should really consider selling your recipe." Jason recommended.

"That recipe will stay with me until I DIE!" she shot back seriously then erupted with laughter, "No I'm kiddin'. I really don't have a special recipe for it, I kinda just put everything together."

Emma took another sip and smiled. "You really should consider, they're wonderful!" she looked around Shay's cottage and squealed with delight. "Oh Shay I love how you decorated the place. I'm gettin' the Christmas spirit already."

"Thanks, I thought I'd start early this year on the decorating." Shay explained wiping a few sweat beads from her forehead. A huge wave of heat suddenly came over the room. She walked over by the thermostat and saw that it was on 75 degrees, the normal temp she has it during this time of the year. She looked over at Jason-ra who had his long-sleeves pulled up and was tugging on to his turtle neck. Emma took a few cards and began to fan herself.

"Geez Shay, Did it get hot in here all of a sudden or is it just me?" the wild-cat asked.

"It's not you darling, it's me." a familiar, evil voice bellowed out of no where. As if on cue, a huge flash of flames erupted in the middle of Shay's living room followed by a huge cloud of smoke. Everyone waved the smoke and coughed and saw piercing blue eyes and horns peaking over his black cloak with a right eyebrow raised.

"Oh Sin, it's just you." Shay said with relief.

Sinistral dramatically pulled back his cloak revealing his infamous evil smirk, "Evening mortals!"

Emma rolled her eyes, "You would be late just to make a showy entrance."

Sin sat down between Shay and Jason and grinned at Emma who sat directly across from him, "Cranky today are we?"

"That's because certain wanna-be devils always has to make an unnecessary, over-dramatic appearance." Emma shot back.

"Oh Emma, you amuse me so..."

Shay raised a hand to cease the argument, "Nu-uh, not tonight. Let's keep the bicker down to a minimum.

Emma relaxed her posture and unfolded her arms, "Okay fine."

The dark lord looked at the wildcat/cheetah and sighed, "Perhaps...."

The jester shuffled the cards in a pro-like fashion and looked around the room, "Soo.....are we ready for a game?"

"I'm always ready to defeat..." Sin joked.

"Hmmm, I don't know Sin." The leopard said popping her knuckles." I'm feelin' lucky tonight. You might have to play your cards right." she bluffed.

"Shay my dear, you of all should know that I do." he said confidently grabbing the pile of cards Jason passed to him.

"No powers guys!" Emma said looking at Sin and Shay.

Shay picked up her stack of cards and looked around innocently, "Powers, what powers?"

Jason laughed putting the rest of the deck in the middle of the table, "Shay, we all know you can slightly read minds."

Shay scoffed, "Oh that? You know how I can't do that voluntarily. It just pops in my mind unannounced, and it drains me if I force it. So trust me, I'm harmless. Besides....." she pulled two cards out of her deck to trade out and smirked, "It's Sin ya'll need to worry about."

"Why am I always accused as the bad guy?" he questioned as if he were hurt.

"Um, because you are the bad guy." Emma responded.

"And don't you forget it!" He said lighting a random cigar with the snap of his fingers.

"So what do ya'll want for Christmas this year?" asked the leopard.

"Hmmm, I dunno. I haven't really thought about it." Jason said trading everyone's old cards for new ones.

"I want Third Earth to be joined together in love and harmony." Emma replied warmly.

"Geez, that wasn't a typical Emma response." Sinistral said sarcastically, taking a huge puff from his cigar.

Shay and Jason exchanged looks while Emma glared at the dark one from across the table.

"Well Mr. Sin, what would you like for Christmas?" the leopard asked.

"To have all of Third Earth under my power." He muttered under his breath.

Shay raised a brow, "What?"

Sin cleared his throat, "Er, Um I mean... uh, oh look, some cookies...."

Jason shook his head and looked at his new hand of cards, "I fold." he said throwing his cards in the middle.

Emma sighed and tossed hers in the pile, "Me too...."

Shay smiled and looked Sin dead in the eye, "I'm ready when you are dah-ling."

"By all means...." he motioned the leopard to go first."

"I have 4 aces and a joker. BEAT THAT!" Shay slammed down her deck victoriously.

"Impressive, but.....I have 5 Aces, all spades! SO YOU LOSE!" he exclaimed slamming his deck on top of hers.

"Hey, how can you have 5 Ace of spades?" Shay called out.

"Using your powers, cheating, like always." Emma said shaking her head.

"Oh Emma lighten up and pull that stick out your a----"

"AAAAAAAnyways." Jason cut off Sinistral's obscenities, "It looks like this game is a scratch. I'll deal again."

Sin laid back in his chair smoothly and took another puff of his cigar blowing it right in the wildcat/cheetah's face, causing her to cough. "So Shay, what are you wanting to receive on "Anti-Satan-mas"?"

Shay giggled, "It kills you **THAT** much to say that word?"

Sin flicked an ash which disappeared in mid-air. "Yes, yes it does." he said simply.

"Well I don't want anything for Christmas really. Maybe to get everyone together for a party or something." The leopard explained.

"Oh that should be fun." Jason exclaimed, "I like parties."

"Yeah, I think it's something we could all use, even the evil ones." Shay said looking at Sin who seemed not amused.

"I'll have to have Elektra check my schedule to see if I have a clearing. If I do, I might accept your invite."

"Oh well don't bend over backwards Sin. I know you're a busy man with a lot of **evil** duties on your plate. I don't want you to feel **obliged** to show up." Shay teased grabbing a homemade chocolate chip cookie. Sin rolled his eyes let out a small chuckle as Shay continued

"It would be nice to have a very attractive, male specimen at my door step." she joked

Jason began passing out cards when a loud knock made everyone but Sin jump. Shay rose from her seat, "Funny I don't remember inviting anyone else."

Emma became worried, "Oh no, it could be a Mutant or a Lunatack or even MUMM-RA!"

"Yeah and you think they would just boldly come up the front door and knock?"

"Shut-up Sin!" Emma shot back, "I was just saying...."

Shay turned around and shssed the bickering two and slowly opened her door to find a handsome male snow leopard in a black hoodie with faded jeans and sneakers, shivering from head to toe.

"Hey Sh-sh-shay...." he finally said.

"Oh my goodness Josh! Honey what are you doing out here! It's snowing ferociously out there?" Shay asked pulling him in the house and sat him down on the couch. Emma poured him a glass of hot chocolate and handed it to him.

"Thanks Em!" he said taking a sip, "I'm sorry to bother you guys, but I didn't know the weather was going to be like this tonight, so when I went skateboarding, I got caught in the storm."

Shay wrapped a blanket around him and rubbed his back, "You poor thing, you could've froze to death!"

"Oh I'm fine, really." he looked up and saw Sinistral and Jason-ra still sitting at the card table.

"Oh Hey Jay, hey Sin."

"Hey Josh!" Jason exclaimed.

"Hello Mr. Frost...a very random time to be skateboarding." Sin pointed out.

"Hey dude, I skate all the time. It's just this time I skated right into a blizzard. I can usually handle the cold though. I don't know why it affected me this time."

"It's okay Josh you don't have to explain yourself. You're fine as long as you are here!" Shay said ogling over the skater boy.

Emma smiled and rolled her eyes simultaneously at the female leopard's antics. Shay's usual crush on Josh was so obvious, but he still didn't get it. It didn't seem like he showed interest, but then again, Joshua Frost is very shy. A light bulb went off on her head and her eyes lit up.

"I have the perfect idea to get those two together. And I have until Shay's party to do so!" she thought to herself and smiled brightly. She was so into her thoughts she didn't notice Shay and Josh staring at her.

"Um Em...."

Emma shook her head and looked at Josh, "Yeah?"

"Whatcha smilin' about?"

"Oh er, um nothing! Just happy about the holidays. 'Tis the season right?"

Shay nodded her head slowly, "Riiiiiiiiight...."

"Um excuse me, are we gonna finish our poker game or just sit here and start singing Christmas carols? I have things to do other than this, you know." Sin complained looking at his watch.

"Um, I think I'll pass on this one...." Shay said still dreamy-eyed at the snow leopard.

Josh perked up and walked over to the table. "Are you guys playing poker?"

"Yep, 5 card stud." said Jason.

"OH cool! Can I play in your place Shay?"

Shay tried to hide the disappointment with a smile, "Oh sure! Be my guest. I'll just start coming up with the list for my Christmas party."

"Okay cool! I love this game! Thanks Shay!" he ran over to the table and took Shay's spot next to Sin and Jason. Emma looked over at Shay who she could tell was disappointed.

"Are you sure you don't wanna join us Shay?"

"No, I'm fine guys, really. I'll be in the backroom setting up for my party. Have fun!" she walked to the back room and sat at her desk next to the window and sighed heavily.

"Josh still doesn't notice me, geez.....oh well. I guess it just wasn't meant to be." she thought to herself then said out loud, "Now on with party list....."