



## Meet and Greet: Seraphina

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<https://youtube.com/watch?v=qy00GrRLbTI>

<https://nerdfighteria.info/v/qy00GrRLbTI>

Hi I'm Jessi, we're here at Animal Wonders, an educational outreach organization. We've been sharing some of our animals' personal stories on our meet and greet episodes and we've had a few requests to meet our foxes. I've thought it was about time to let you get to know one of our very special ambassadors, Seraphina the red fox.

(Animal Wonders intro plays)

You might recognize Seraphina from some of our adventures in the snow, but I've never really talked about her as an individual before. And you can see she looks kind of small and skinny, that's because she's in her summer coat. Now, she's actually just laying down the foundations for her winter coat, this nice dense layer underneath that's gonna keep her really warm. She's just about ready to start growing in her long guard hairs, and then she'll resemble more closely what you're used to seeing a red fox look like, the big, gorgeous mane and the poofy long tail, but you want to see something adorable?

Seraphina when she was a kit. Sera came to Animal Wonders when she was very young. She was born at a fur farm, where they raise mammals like mink, bobcat, and foxes for their fur. They then sell this fur to companies that make them into clothing like coats and hats. While this is a sad and unnecessary practice, it's completely legal and there's not much we can do about it. Except to educate about it.

We chose to save Seraphina's life so that we could educate about the fact that fur farms are a real and thriving business, and one that we don't support. Basically, we bought Sera's life for the price of her pelt. Since Sera was so young when she came to live here, she was a quick study on life as an ambassador. She actually started joining us on public presentations when she was just 8 weeks old. We had her with us as much as possible in her early life, and she was so adventurous and loved to play. We did this so she would be comfortable around humans, especially those that would be caring for her for the rest of her life.

Red foxes are not commonly used in educational programs because they can be skittish and temperamental, so I'm constantly amazed by how well Sera does during our public presentations. She loves doing our training sessions together, and to her they're just happens to be an audience watching and learning about it.

Sera was a very active kit, she loved playing with everything, and about a week after we took her in, we also rescued a young cavy. You might recognize him, his name is Chili Pepper. Since they've become adults, they no longer come in direct contact with each other, you know, for obvious reasons, strict predator/prey going on there, but when they were little, they had tons of fun together.

When Sera was about three months old, we knew that she just wouldn't do well on her own. She needed much more stimulation than we could provide, so we introduced her to her (hopeful) lifelong companion, Cas the arctic fox. Cas was a bit younger, but Sera immediately took to him as a play friend. It was obviously successful and they've spent the last four years as best buds.

Sera is not considered a pet because we don't have her for companionship, she's an ambassador for her species. In Montana, foxes are considered pest animals, they come into rural and urban areas and they raid chicken coops and tip over trash bins, so having her as an ambassador in this area helps teach our community that these guys aren't inherently mean, they're just doing what a fox does to survive. Understanding that side of things helps them get a bigger view of the world and understand how all living things are interconnected.

Speaking of connections... Sera and I have to constantly work on ours. She has taught me just as much as I've taught her. She's taught me how to do fox talk, and I've taught her how to understand and communicate with humans. When she was young, we worked on not using her teeth on my hands, by associating my hands with only massages. Today, she only uses her mouth on my hands to communicate that she's uncomfortable. She's really gentle about it, but I listen.

My experiences with Sera have taught me that relationships are fragile and they need to be constantly worked at to make sure that this trust bond stays strong. I'm proud of our relationship and I'm proud of the amazing ambassador that Sera is. On a typical day, Sera enjoys laying in the sun, ripping apart stuffed animals, digging tunnels in the dirt, and playing with boxes of all sizes. One of Sera's personal favorites is to play in the snow. Since we don't have any snow right now, she'll have to settle for a run in the grass.

Thanks for joining us and if you would like to go on an adventure every week learning about animals, you can subscribe to our YouTube channel Animal Wonders Montana, and if you have any questions throughout the week, you can find me on twitter, Tumblr, and Facebook. Thanks guys.

(endscreen)

...is a young, female, African pygmy hedgehog. She was dropped off at a pet store for boarding, well her owners never returned and after three months the pet store wanted to sell her...