

When she opened the door to her room, she found Karkachan sitting on her bed with his back against the wall, snoring.

The mysa stared for a long while before clearing her throat. “Karkachan?” she said, startling him awake.

“Oh! Um, er, hey Mai,” mumbled the tiny lio with a roaring yawn. “I was waiting for you to get home from work, and I guess I nodded off. Come, join me on the bed,” he added with a smile. He scooted over and patted the covers beside him.

But Mai closed the door behind her. She stood, staring down at him with crossed arms and angry ears.

“Mai?” he whispered, confused. He had left the windows open while he exercised this morning. It kept the room from stinking of sweat, but the trade-off was scenting the room with male mysa musk from Bucksburg, just beyond the chain link fence. Karkachan didn’t mind the smell anymore, and the pheromones lit a fire under Mai’s libido which was kinda nice too. With worried ears, he asked her, “Don’t you wanna screw?”

“What I want,” she said with a scowl, “is a story.”

“A story?” He looked down at his lap and nervously fidgeted, unsure what to do with his paws. “Oh, er, um, I’m not much of a storyteller,” he muttered.

“Yeah, well,” the mysa said, “I guess today is a day for trying something new, so give it a shot. Because, I know my roommates don’t smoke skunkweed, so I can’t wait to hear why your eyes are dilated, and you stink of smoke.”

His stomach tumbled, and he sat there under the scorching scrutiny of her glare for a long moment before he finally looked up. “That bad?”

Mai nodded.

“Sorry about that,” he sighed. “I got bored. I felt all cooped up, and so I sorta snuck out to spend a little time with a buddy. We got stoned.”

She shook her head in surprise as if she couldn’t believe her ears. “A buddy? You got a hold of Yonnet?”

“I did, actually, but I didn’t mean him. I was talking about Sanuel.”

Mai blinked and then blinked again. “Who the hell is Sanuel?”

Karkachan winced, withering under her glare. He took a second to point at her room’s single window. “He’s uh... the guy living across from us, just beyond the fence.”

Mai turned her glare to the window. For a second, there was a wide-eyed mysa face in the window across the way, but then he quickly dropped out of sight—well, mostly out of sight. His raised ears still peeked up over the windowsill.

She threw the window up and shouted. "What are you looking at?"

Ever so slowly, Samuel peeked over the sill. "Hi," he finally managed with an unsure wave. "I really, really hope that I don't play a part in whatever you two are fighting about."

"Mind your own business!" she screamed at him before slamming the window back down.

"Uh..." the lio whimpered, ashamed. "I'm really, really sorry, Mai. Please don't be pissed."

With an outstretched arm pointing back at the window, she shouted, "What's gonna happen when your mysa buddy tells all his friends that there's a shrunken lio living here?"

He cowered, waiting for her to finish before he finally looked up at her. "I don't know," he admitted. "But apparently, he's known that I'm here for quite some time. No one saw me go over, and it's not like I could make him forget I was here by refusing to come. So yeah, I hung out with him. I wanted to talk to him, find out if he was gonna tell everyone about me."

Mai grabbed the room's lone chair and plopped it down backwards in front of the bed. She sat down, straddling the backrest, her paws atop the backrest and her forehead resting on top of them.

Karkachan could tell how upset she was. He wanted to go over and comfort her, but he was still feeling weird and dizzy from the joint he'd shared with Sanuel. The chair, of course, had a large opening in its back so that Mai wouldn't have to sit on her tail when she used it normally, but with her legs straddling the opening, he felt like he was staring at a framed photo of her crotch. Whatever was in the skunkweed was definitely messing with his mind. As much as he wanted to look away, he simply couldn't.

"Let me get this straight," she grumbled. "Some guy knows you're here and has known for a while. So, you climb over the fence or something, hang out with him, get stoned, come back, sit on my bed, and like jerk off or something until you passed out?"

"Huh? What?" the lio said, finally pulling his eyes from the crotch window in her chair. She pointed at his stomach, and he looked down. He stared at his boner for a while. *When did that happen?* he wondered, but finally, he figured out what she was talking about. His normally sleek belly fur was all askew, pasted out of place with dried seed. "Oh," he whispered, drawing the sound way out as the realization dawned on him.

Karkachan's quickly reddening ears disappeared into his thick mane. "Oh, wow. No, this musta been from when Sanuel and I ... when we, um..." He didn't want to face her, but he also wanted to stop staring at his boner and the mess in his fur. "Uh, I suppose I should go take a shower."

He finally looked up, and Mai was still glaring at him. "I'd appreciate if you would," she said. "You stink of smoke."

His ears lifted as an optimistic spark lit inside his chest. “Join me?”

“No,” she growled.

“Oh, okay.”

He took the coldest shower of his life, hoping that the frigid water would cause his erection to wane, but it didn't. *Geez, he thought, this is crazy! Old guys should try smoking this crap when their libidos fade.*

When he finished toweling off, Karkachan returned to find Mai sitting on the bed, more or less where he had been. He straddled the chair she'd left behind. “I'm sorry, Mai, I was reckless today.”

Staring at him through the boner window in the chair, she said, “I worry about you, Kar. I worry about what will happen if everyone finds out you're here.” She didn't blink.

“I understand,” he said, “but I realized something this morning. I had put my life on hold, waiting for Yonnet to call back, and when he did, I realized that he couldn't help me. He doesn't know how to undo this any more than I do. Sneaking me out of here doesn't solve anything.”

“Well, no—” she admitted, still not looking up.

“My only options are to go back to the lab—which I'm not going to do willingly,” he explained, “or go on with my life like this.”

“So, that's your new life now?” she asked. “Smoking dope and screwing guys?”

He glared at her until she finally pulled her eyes from the window and looked at his face. “You really have no room to judge my sex life, Mai,” he said. “Not after you sold me off to your roommates.”

Her ears drooped. “I was trying to help keep you hidden,” she whimpered.

“I understand, but that still doesn't make it okay,” he said. “My point is that accepting my new size means that I need to plan on starting a whole new life. As much as I've enjoyed hiding here in your apartment, I can't do that forever. That's not living. Sooner or later, I'm going to have to go outside.”

“I guess,” she said, her eyes lowering back down where they had been before. “I just worry about you.”

“Yeah, I get that,” he said. “I don't know what my new plan will be, but I gotta start working on it. I can see that now. Thankfully, it doesn't cost much to fill my new mysa-sized stomach. I don't have a lot of money saved up, but what I've got ought to last a lot longer than if I was still my old size.”

“I suppose.”

The two sat there in silence a very long while before Mai finally spoke up. "Hey, Karkachan?" she whispered.

"Yeah, Mai?"

She looked up at him, her eyes big and round. "You ... wanna screw?"

Karkachan blew out a big breath, deflating, his head hanging limp from his shoulders. "I thought you'd never ask," he said. "I have no idea what's in that skunkweed crap, but it sure is potent stuff!"