

It's another beautiful day today, the sun is out shining in a blue sky as clear as the water gently crashing onto the pristine beach. It's one of those picture perfect days that all those fancy beach resorts portray in commercials. Except the heat is oppressive, the sand is so scorching hot that my pawpads burn if I leave them sitting in one spot too long, there are children running around yelling and screaming, the smell of sun lotion undermines everything, and I'll be brushing sand out of my fur for weeks.

My beach towel under the umbrella is my only safe haven, my lonesome island in this sea of burning sand. I try to make the best of my situation, lying there with my eyes closed. I keep my tail close, pulling it back every time I feel it flick into the sunlight. A sudden, unexpected downpour startles me followed by giggles.

"You ready to get out there?" the grinning golden Labrador Retriever asks shaking more water from his fur. He's panting like he just ran a marathon, he's not in the best of shape, not that I am either, but his tail is wagging and he keeps looking back at the waves like he's itching to get back in the water.

"Don't worry, I'll watch our stuff," the Cocker Spaniel says lying down on one of the other beach towels. She's already brushing the brown, curly fur of her ears.

I knew I could only get away with saying, "someone has to stay and watch our stuff" for so long. It's not that I hate water, I'm just not big on the whole beach thing. I'd rather be at that cafe drinking an iced latte and avoid all the sand, sun, and sea. It could also have something to do with me being out of shape, but as my friend pointed out, so are a lot of other furs at this beach, him included. His confidence and care free attitude is infectious and my heart flutters when he beams down at me offering a paw to help me up.

I relent, I'm here now so I might as well try to enjoy it. I get up and follow him out to the shoreline. Furs turn to look at me and my self confidence starts to crash like a wave on the beach. I guess others still find white tigers a bit unusual, especially if they aren't as chiseled as that rhino or as good looking as that wolf.

Once I'm in the water, I am able to forget all that and I have fun splashing around, jumping into waves, and trying to body surf. When we get out however, I remember why I dislike beaches. Salt water is bad for the skin and fur, dripping wet like this makes it easy to see just how out of shape I am, and I can already tell I will have to spend an hour brushing to get most of the sand out of my fur.

We grab dinner at one of the restaurants in the resort because they don't want to try any of the local food joints and everything at the resort is free. After dinner we head back up to our suite. I can smell their desire and lust in the closed confines of the elevator. They are restraining themselves to just holding paws and tail flicks, but as soon as we enter our suite they say goodnight and rush to their room.

I flop onto my king sized bed, frustrated and bothered. I rollover onto my back because pressing my sheath into the mattress isn't helping. It wasn't this bad before so I can't figure out why I keep popping boners around him. I've known him since freshman year so it bothers me that this is happening now. He doesn't know though, no one does. I've kept my preferences hidden because I was scared of how others

would react. Being a white tiger is hard enough, being a white tiger that likes guys is even harder. Little comments like, "dude, that's gay" and "don't be gay" haven't motivated me to tell anyone. After awhile, it was just easier to say nothing.

My ears flick when I hear a loud bark and a couple of moans. I get up and leave. The restaurant was ate at had a bar that was empty so I head there and pick the corner seat farthest away from anyone. One of the bartenders sees me and walks over. He's a polar bear, young , and definitely not from the area.

"What can I get ya?" he asks in a deep voice.

I reach for my wallet and remember I left it in the room and I really don't feel like going back. "Sorry, I left my wallet up in my room. Can I just get some water?"

"Don't worry dude. If you are a guest at the hotel everything is free." he chuckles.

"I know but-"

" Just give me your name and room number," he says cutting me off.

"It's Derrick Mosin. I'm in the Admiral Suite B."

"Alright Derrick, what can I get you?" he asks with a smile.

I'm about to say, "a sex on the beach," but I hesitate. If I order something like that he'll think I'm gay, but I don't know what else to get that isn't sweet or fruity. "A, uh, beer," I say after a short pause.

"Any particular kind?" he asks and then rattles off a list of what beers they serve.

I pick one that I know the name of because that's what my friend always gets. It tastes like crap and I try to hide the fact that I don't like it. I keep ordering more until my nose is filled with the scent of beer reeking from my breathe. Somehow I manage to make it back to my room and as soon as my body hit the bed, I'm out.

We spent the next day at the beach, again. I spend more time staring at all the different happy couples having fun together or the different guys that make me have to sit with my knees. When I'm hanging out with my friends it's easy to forget everything until they want to go back to their room.

So I go back to the bar, by myself, and sit in the corner. The polar bear is there again, his name is Norton Baker I learn, and he's being more chatty this time. He goes to a college not too far from the one I go to. He's here for a summer internship learning about hospitality management. We talk about college for a while but he has to get back to his job and I have to get back to being depressed.

I can't blame them if they have sex every night on their all expense paid vacation. But I found myself back at the bar the next night, alone and this time Norton isn't even there. The raccoon brings me a beer and then goes back to the panther she was chatting with.

I nearly jump out of my seat when a large white paw slams down on the counter and a big fella orders two Buttery Nipples and two Caribbean Sunrises. Once my tail loosened its grip on the chair leg, I turn and see Norton. He's got on a pair of red board shorts with white stripes and a light blue wife beater that shows off his thick chest and big arms. The large polar bear took the seat next to me wearing a big grin on while I start at him dumbfounded.

"My day off and when I saw ya in here I figured you'd like something a little sweeter than beer. This one is my favorite shot," he says holding out a creaming looking concoction that smells strongly of butterscotch. I down the shot when I see him take his and I have to admit it's pretty tasty.

"So you come here even on your days off?" I ask wondering.

"Not often, but after a while there's not much to do around here and it's not often I see that many cute guys."

My voice catches in my throat, my ears are filled with the pounding of my heart, and breathing becomes a little difficult. A paw lands on my should, gently rubbing.

"Hey, relax. I won't tell anyone. You don't come off as, ya know, but after talking to you for awhile I just sort of got that feeling."

"What if my friends-"

"Aw, don't worry about them. I take it they are back up in the room going at it."

"Yeah," I sigh. I try to relax but my ears are still flat and my tail is still wrapped around the chair leg.

"Then don't worry about it. You've gotta enjoy your summer."

"I'm not a big fan of summer."

He's staring at me now like I have two heads and it's making me a little self conscious.

"How can you not like summer? No school, great weather, and lots of fun!" he says.

"I've just never been a big fan, too hot and humid. I'd rather just stay inside and wait for winter."

"Where's your sense of fun, of adventure?"

I snort at his enthusiastic love of the hot season. "For an arctic native, you sure do love summer a lot."

"First off, that's a stereotype. It gets pretty warm during the summer, even up north. Plus, the cold gets bitter and boring pretty fast."

Talking to Norton eases my nerves as the night goes on and I start to enjoy myself and his company. It's a relief, actually, to be able to talk to someone who knows. I don't remember ordering more drinks, but they keep coming and they're all sweet, fruity, and delicious. When the bar closes I try to get out of the

chair and stumble. A large white furred arm reaches out and catches me before I face plant into the floor.

The morning sun shines across my face through the crack in the curtains and I rollover into a big, fluff, warm body. I tense for a moment, not knowing what happened until the memory of last night comes back to me. I don't remember all of it, but I get bits and pieces: drinking at the bar, talking with Norton, someone helping me back up to me room, cuddling with a polar bear.

The polar bear from my memories is awake now and tosses an arm over me pulling me closer. "What are you worrying about now?" he asks.

*What happens when I leave? I don't know if I want a relationship, but how do I say I like you? What if my friends find out? What will they think? What will they do?* "Nothing," I lie because it's easy.

He chuckles and I feel the rumbles through his body. "We'll leave out the rear door and I'll have one of the room service ladies come by. And don't worry, make the most of your vacation. Remember, it's a Summer Adventure." His grin eases my worries.

We are at the beach, again, and I'm on my little sand-free island in the shade trying not to think too much about last night. My friends didn't seem to notice anything so I'm not as worried anymore. A small chime sound goes off and I dig my phone out of my backpack. It's a number I don't recognize. I unlock the device and read the message, "See ya at the bar tonight :)" and below it is a picture of two delicious looking yellow and green drinks with a note that says, "Summer Adventure".

"What are you grinning about?" my friend comes up shaking water from his fur.

"Nothing," I say locking my phone and sticking it back in my bag. "You ready to go back out?"