

Alex's brow furrowed as his brain slowly began to wake up. The bull wasn't quite ready to get up just yet so he kept his eyes closed in an attempt to stay asleep. He took a deep breath, taking in the alluring, strange, but familiar scent of his pillow. It felt really nice and soft today as he pressed his snout against it and took another breath. The pillow responded by flicking against his nose and he snuffled at it which made the pillow flick more.

The bull was never really much of a morning fur and it slowly dawned on him that inanimate objects, such as pillows, aren't capable to flicking on their own. He cracked open his eyes to see what might be causing his pillow to retaliate, but closed them immediately. The little light that filtered through the open blinds of the window was still too much to take in just after waking up. With some effort, he cracked open his eyes once more and they held fast this time. He gave his eyes a few moments to adjust from their nocturnal mode before looking around for what was flicking him. Upon doing so, he realized that it was not one of his pillows that he was nuzzling, it was something black and fuzzy and living.

He froze out of shock for a second when that black and fuzzy thing flicked him in his snout after he snorted at it. That black, fuzzy thing was an ear he realized after looking at it. The memory of last night flashed through his mind. He pulled back his arm but stopped instantly when he felt that same warm fuzziness caress his bicep. Using his other arm he lifted himself slightly off the bed to get a better look. His tail made a thud against the bed as it flicked under the covers.

The husky was still sleeping peacefully in the bed, his ears flicking involuntarily to the noises, with his back to the bull, just as last night. However, David's position on the bed had changed and the canine was lying right up against Alex, who was now facing the same direction cradling the sleeping pup.

They were sleeping right next to each other and he... he was... CUDDLING with David! Alex's heart began to race and he shifted his weight to get out of bed, slowly removing his arm from around the husky. A jolt ran up Alex's spine and his heart skipped a beat when he felt something brush against his legs. It was David's tail flicking around under the covers. The bull wondered if the canine was a heavy sleeper. The lumbering bovine wasn't the most graceful of furs, nor the quietest. The bed groaned under his movements causing the ears of both furs in the bed to flick.

Alex was able to remove himself slowly from the bed after several creaks from the mattress and a couple of rumbles from the husky. A chill ran through his body causing him to shiver as the cool morning air flowed over his bare chest. Alex made his way out of the room, David still blissfully asleep in the middle of the bed.

The bull breathed out a sigh of relief once the door to his room was closed and he was in the hall. The familiar scents of the house, his mom, and his own filled his nose, but David's scent still lingered. Alex snuffled as he made his way to the bathroom, his bladder could use some relief along with something else down there.

The wooden floor felt cool under his hooves, combined with the autumn air and the fact that his mother doesn't like turning on the heat at night, gave him goose bumps as he walked to the fridge to get a drink.

Idly, he remembered how warm and cozy it had been back in his room, in his bed, under the covers... holding David close to him... Not to mention how soft and fuzzy the husky's bare fur felt against his.

"Did you have a good sleep?"

Alex nearly dropped his glass and spat out his water. Instead, he went into a coughing fit as some of his drink went down the wrong pipe.

"My, my, I've never seen you so jumpy before," the voice behind him observed.

He turned around to see his mother in the kitchen doorway, coffee mug in paw. She was still in her scrubs and must have been sitting in the living room drinking some tea before heading to bed.

"You're still up?" Alex asked once he recovered.

"Just got back a while ago. I pulled a double shift at the hospital because one of the nurses called out and they needed someone to stay. I get to pick a day off though," she said as she walked over to the sink to clean her mug. "And what about you? You're up awfully early."

Alex glanced at the clock hanging on the wall, the hour hand was still pointing at the seven while the minute hand made its way past the ten minute mark.

"Just had to use the bathroom," was his reply.

"How's your friend, David right? Is he still sleeping."

"Yeah."

"Good, he's on some pretty strong pain killers that can make him drowsy. He should be fully awake and careful when he drives back home."

"Okay."

"Well I'm going to head upstairs and get some sleep. Try not to make too much noise now. Good morning."

"Good morning."

Alex's mom made her way out of the kitchen and Alex listened as she went up the stairs and into her room and closed the door. He filled his glass once more and sat down at the table, he didn't think he'd be able to go back to sleep even if he wanted to. He was wide awake now and then there was David, still sleeping, he assumed, up in his bed. Alex's thoughts went back to the husky and how... nice it was to lie there with him. David's fur felt really soft and he was quiet warm, like a fuzzy blanket or pillow. He snorted when he thought he caught David's scent again. Alex's tail whacked the underside of his chair. He shook his head to try and get the thoughts out of his mind.

It was the smell of bacon and a rumbling stomach that drove the husky out of the strange bed he found himself in. The bed was so big he had to shimmy under the covers to reach the edge just so he could dangle his footpaws over it. All that maneuvering caused his body to ache and his side to hurt, but it wasn't as painful as before. He sat on the edge of the bed taking in his surroundings as he remembered where he was. He twisted, carefully, to see if he could spot Alex. The bull was nowhere to be found and the smell of eggs was added to the delicious aroma wafting into the room atop the scent of bull.

David let out a big yawn stretching out his arms, despite the pain, as he stood up. He gave his tail a few wags to wake it up while he scratched his belly. His footpaws moved him towards the door as he followed the source of the smell down the stairs and to the kitchen where he stopped in the door way. In front of the stove stood Alex, clad in only blue boxers exposing his milk chocolate broad backside as he moved about. The muscles on his back danced as his arms flexed as he stirred up a batch of scrambled eggs, his tail whisking about as if it was the instrument. It suddenly felt fifty degrees hotter to the frozen husky and he was about turn around and go back up stairs when the bull looked over his shoulder and noticed him standing there.

"You want anything?" the bull said in his gruff voice.

"Oh, no. I'm okay," he said. It was then that his stomach decided to speak up for him and gave a audible rumble. His tail curled around to the front as he looked at his footpaws trying to hide the immense blush he was sure Alex could probably see. The bull gave a loud snort and told the husky to sit down.

David shuffled over to the table and took a seat while Alex went back to cooking, adding more bacon and sausage to the sizzling skillet. The husky found himself staring again, his tail wagging happily through the hole in the chair. He admired Alex's sturdy body, the way the bull's back flexed when he reached for something or how his biceps bulged when he stirred the food.

Alex suddenly turned around scratching an itch at the back of his neck to find the husky sitting at the table wagging his tail happily while he waited for the food. "Scrambled?"

David didn't even register the question Alex asked at first, he was just presented with the barrel chest of the bull with one arm flexed behind his head exposing a hairy armpit. It took the bull relaxing his arm and a snort before the husky thought to answer the question. "Oh, yes. Please," he said staring intensely at the table surface in front of him. Catching his reflection in the light made him notice that he was wearing very little clothing too. Suddenly, he became very self-conscious of his chubby self in the presences of the built bull. He wanted to run up stairs and throw on some cloths but, couldn't risk getting up, at least not for a while.

Even if David hadn't fallen behind in school, thanks to Tim who brought by any homework that was assigned and passed along any assignments the husky completed, David had to go back to school come Monday. He was a little apprehensive when Tim showed up in the morning to give him a ride. He'd come up with a cover story if anyone asked about his absence: He wasn't feeling well, had a bit of a fever and

had to be taken to the clinic, he was feeling better, but still a little sore and stiff in places. The last part was true, his side still hurt if he bent over or stretched too much and the several bruises he had still felt sore if he touched them. Though, queasiness was beating out the pain by the time he set footpaw on school grounds again. The parking lot was starting to fill up with cars and furs as they stood around in groups waiting for the bell to ring. David and Tim met up with Stacy, Justin, and a badger pair the lions like to talk to, Mark and Christian.

"Hey David! Stacy told us what happened. How are you feeling?" Christian asked.

David's whole body froze, ears perked, tail between his legs, wide eyed, maw agape. He even stopped breathing for a moment as his eyes jumped from the lioness to the badger in disbelief.

"Is your throat sore?," Mark asked the paralyzed husky. "You should gargle hot salt water. I hear that helps. Just don't swallow it, nasty as fuck."

"Oh, uh no. Just.... it was just a slight fever," David stagger through his recovery. He was so relieved the lioness had lied for him. Though, he wondered if this was any indication of how the rest of the day would be.

"That sucks. But still, glad to hear you are feeling better. I-" Christian stopped midway when she saw someone approaching. "Um, isn't that Alex coming this way."

David turned in the direction the badger pointed and his tail started to wag at the sight of the lumbering bovine walking their way. The bull was certainly turning some heads as he walked past groups of furs.

Alex parked himself besides David and was greeted with a round of 'Hello's and 'Good Morning's to which he just said hey.

"What brings you over here?" Stacy asked a little curious to the bull's appearance. Alex just shrugged to answer her question.

"Oh yeah. Let me introduce you," Stacy said flicking an ear at the pair of badgers next to her. "This is Mark and Christian."

"H... hi dude," Mark said while his girlfriend just lifted a paw.

Alex looked over at them and gave a gruff, "Hi." Mark's ears went back while Christian moved closer to her boyfriend.

"Oh don't mind him. He's always got that look on his face." Alex snorted at Stacy's teasing. "He's harmless, really."

They were able to talk for a few more minutes with the nervous badger couple before the bell rang and a mob of furs started heading towards the entrances of the school. In the shuffle David moved over to get within whisper range of Stacy.

"Thanks," David said quietly to the lioness.

"You're welcome. Though, I didn't lie to them."

"Uh?" That got a questionable look from the husky.

"I just said you weren't feeling well and had to stay home."

"Still, thanks."

"You really should tell someone though. I understand why you're scared, but it's hard to help when you don't want to help yourself." The lioness was looking him right in the eyes.

David sighed and looked down to avoid her gaze. "I know. I... I just..."

"It's alright. Got to go, See ya after school," Stacy said as she took a turn down a different hall to head to class.

"Bye Stacy."

David walked into his first period class, when the teacher stopped him and said that he needed to report to the administrative office as the principal wanted to speak with him. He knew this was coming, Stacy had told him they had to file a report on the incident, but that didn't stop him from nervously fiddling with his tail as he took the slow march to the principal's office. A large doe looked at him disinterestedly as he walked in and announced that he was her to see the principal. She pointed to a wall lined with seats for him to take a sit while she radioed to the principal that a Mr. David Smith is here to see him. Not more and a minute in the seat the doe told him that he could go and see the principal now.

David approached the wooden door with a fogged glass window that had black block letters saying, "Mr. Sharron --- Principal's Office" on it. He knocked twice and waited for a response. A deep voice told him to come in and he opened the door into the office. A wolverine, probably only a little taller than him, in a black business suit and bright red tie was behind the desk tapping away on a computer. The tapping stopped as David took a seat in one of the arm chairs and the wolverine turned to face him.

"Hello Mr. Smith. I hope you are doing well."

"Y... yes, I am. Thank you," the husky answered nervously.

"I have a report here saying that you were involved in an incident in the school's gym Wednesday last week." The wolverine brandished a couple of papers on his desk. "Care to tell me what happened?"

"I... I just hurt myself when the weight rack fell on top of me."

"I see... and what were you doing in the gym in the first place?"

"I was... just looking for something interesting for a photography assignment."

"And how did you end up hurting yourself."

"I was moving weights around on the bottom and when I lifted one out, it got caught on the ledge and I pulled the weight rack forward on top of myself."

David couldn't avoid the wolverine's gaze as he went through his fabricated story, those black eyes paralyzed and bore into him as if searching for the truth. He wonder if the principal could see through his lies and see how nervous he was or hear the pounding of his heart.

"Is that *all* that happened Mr. Smith?"

"Ye... yes."

David was started to feel hot under his fur. It was like the principal has a laser pointed at him from the gaze he was receiving.

"Very well, I'll add your statements to the report. We have received *several* calls from your mother in regards to this incident." David cringed when he heard his mother had called. It was one of the things he was most worried about and was scared at how far she took the matter. "We have closed the gym until it and all the equipment can be inspected for safety. Once it does reopen, no one will be allowed in the facility unless supervised. I will say one good thing came about all of this." The wolverine gave a deep chuckle. "Your mother managed to get the board to give us funds to update the old gym."

David wasn't too happy about that bit of news because that meant his mother was pushing the matter all the way up to the board of education. The whole state would know he was the gay clumsy kid that hurt himself in the gym at this rate.

"With that business out of the way, there is another thing I would like to address." David's ears perked up at that, what else could the principal want to talk to him about. "You and your friends appear to be getting pretty friendly with Mr. Alex Wyatt, is that right?"

"Uh, yes... I guess." David didn't know where this was going.

"That's great. I believe you guys would be a good influence on him. Are you aware of his current academic situation?"

"I think so. If he doesn't pass this year he will have to drop out?"

"That is correct. Now Mr. Laval, who is overseeing Mr. Wyatt's detention, said that you were willing to tutor Mr. Wyatt afterschool during his detention."

David wondered if the principal always referred to students by their last name. "Yes, I did offer."

"I will allow it." The husky's tail started batting the back of the seat. "On one condition. You tutor Mr. Paterson as well." David looked at the wolverine questionably, he did not know who this Mr. Paterson was. "Mr. Brian Paterson, the pit bull in detention with Mr. Wyatt," the wolverine explained.

That put a stop to David's tail wagging mood. Was this something he wanted to do, something he could do; tutor one of his tormenters? On one paw he would get to spend time with Alex and help him. On the

other, he'd have to talk to and help Brian, someone who called him names, held him down so Ben could beat up on him, someone he despised. David didn't want the silence to go on too long or the principal might suspect something. "S... sure."

"Great! Well, that is all the business we had for today. You can go back to your first period now and give this slip to the teacher."

David took the offered piece of paper and made his way to the door. Just as he was about to turn the knob the principal spoke once more. "And David, if there is something troubling you or if someone causing you trouble *please* don't hesitate to talk to me or any faculty member, you can trust us. We're here to help."

David turned around and looked over the wolverine when he said that. Maybe it was the angle of the light coming in from the window, but the wolverine looked less menacing, the previous stern features and expressions softened and he sounded sincere when he spoke. "I... I will. Thank you Mr. Sharron."

The hushed whispers and quick glances in the halls hadn't changed as Alex made his way to detention. The new rumor flying around was that he was the reason the gym was closed and that all students had to be supervised in school facilities afterschool. Stories ranged from: he vandalized the equipment to beating up Gary Michelson. Alex had no idea who Gary Michelson even was. All that mattered very little to him, he was just happy David and his friends were not mad at him. That, and he kept thinking about the past weekend: hanging out with everyone, eating, sleeping with David, playing games, watching movies, David's emotional breakdown, talking, watching more movies, cuddling a husky, huskies in boxers. Several times throughout the day Alex imagined the scent of husky in his nose or felt a tingling sensation on his arm as if soft, fluffy fur grazed it. Alex was having one of those thoughts as he walked down the hall, recalling David sitting on his bed, a big pudgy ball of fluff in boxers. He caught the scent of the husky and snorted loudly, like always, to clear his mind but the scent lingered even after three more snorts.

"Are you getting a cold?"

Alex's tail whipped his backside, startled from the voice that came out of nowhere. A glance to his side where the noise came from provided an answer as to why the scent from his daydream lingered. "No."

The pair stopped outside the classroom where Alex served his sentence, the door was still closed which meant Mr. Larval hadn't arrived yet. "Don't you have a meeting or something?" Alex asked wondering why David was still standing there.

"Oh no. I'm actually-"

"Hi there! Nice to see you boys here early, that's good. I hope you enjoyed your weekend," Mr. Larval said as he appeared to opened the door.

"Hi Mr. Larval. It was great, thanks. I hope yours went well," David said following the meerkat into the room.

"Too short," the meerkat chuckled.

Alex was stuck at the doorway wondering what was going on. *Did David land himself in detention?* The husky noticed him still standing there and gave him one of those *what?* looks. Alex huffed at the canine's expression as he walked in and took a seat. The tail wagging husky sat next to him and pulled out a notebook, calculator, and their math textbook, all the while flicking an ear at him. It was like they were at lunch getting ready to work on some math problems. Alex folded his arms over the desk and rested his head on top with his muzzle tilted in the canine's direction. In a loud whisper he asked what the husky thought he was doing.

David stared at him while opening the textbook. "Getting ready to study, what does it look like," the husky said in an *isn't it obvious* tone, but failing to hold back a smile. Alex saw the pooches' smile disappear when he heard the familiar grumbles of his regular cellmate as the pit bull entered the room.

"Good, now that you all are here you can use the display table in the back next to me so that I can keep an eye on you fellows," Mr. Laval called out from his desk in the back of the classroom.

Alex watched as the husky gather all his things and followed him to the table in the back of the classroom. He was going to sit across from him like they do in the library but he felt a little tug on his jacket so he followed the canine and sat right next to him.

"Please have a seat Ben," the meerkat said to the pit bull standing in the front of the classroom. The other canine made his way cautiously to the table and sat across from the pair, a scowl on his face the whole time.

"Mr. Sharron agreed on letting me tutor you in detention," the husky spoke suddenly. "On the condition that I also tutor him."

Ben didn't appear to like the idea and said just as much. "I don't want to be tutored by you."

David's ears went back at the snarl and menacing glare he received. Alex snorted to get the pit bull's attention and soon they were in a stare off.

"I don't hear studying," Mr. Laval called out when he started to hear growling.

The two canines took out their papers and textbooks; Alex never carried that stuff with him, but the husky always came prepared and slid him a couple pieces of papers and loaned him a pencil. It was just like they were in the library at lunch Alex thought, and with that, time seemed to fly by and his detention was over before he realized it. The only thing unpleasant about it was reminder every now and then that Ben was there across the table. David seemed to keep communication with pit bull at a minimum. Ben refused any help from them and he was sure that David was happy about that. The black, white, and tan canine was back to his chatty self as they made their way to the parking lot. He didn't

think he would, but, he was looking forward to getting to spend some time everyday with the husky, twice every other days!