

A CUP OF COFFEE WITH THE THERAPIST by Xyln

It had been a bad idea not to take the umbrella. Very bad idea, indeed.

Fosk looked at his reflection on the elevator mirror, feeling a lump in his throat. His black fur was totally soaked, from head to toe and under his clothes. When he shook his head in a vain attempt to dry himself, lots of little water drops flew off his head and tapped on the glass noisily. The black wolf looked at the distorted reflection once again, lowering his ears and trying to hold the urge to scream. He couldn't think of a time he had looked more ridiculous than at that moment, with his fur all wet and messy due to the rain, the wind and his stupid shaking. He'd never forget to take the umbrella again.

Well, I guess it could be worse, he thought as the elevator stopped and he got off, taking slow steps out. *I guess I could have left my pants home*. He rubbed his eyes, trying to dry the fur around them so that he could see where he was walking, at least. Had it been any other day, he wouldn't have cared about being wet or dry. Damn, in other circumstances, he would have just walked home, grabbed a warm blanket and a hot mug of chocolate.

But no. Things like that had to happen in *days like those*.

Fosk glanced around, looking for the correct door. It took him a few seconds to spot the letter C on the top of a door, right at the other side of the landing. He sighed and walked in that direction as he felt water fizzing in his shoes with each step he took.

I hate Sophia so much, he thought.

She had spoken wonders of that therapist, though. She insisted that sending Fabio there had improved their relationship a lot, even in bed, and she certainly couldn't be... or rather, look happier. The black wolf had the urge to roll his eyes again when he remembered her saying "You should give it a try, too. You know, ask him about your little problem. Might help you".

Of all the things Fosk had done during his life, telling Sophia about his 'little problem' was one of those he couldn't regret enough. Since that day, his friend had been asking him to seek professional help as if he was in some kind of terminal condition, as if he was sick in an utterly horrifying way. When she had brought Fabio to their meeting last night and both had banded together in order to convince him, the wolf had finally agreed to go visit that stupid therapist. Sophia had booked him in advance, anyway.

Dr. Kenneth Shimmel. Freelance therapist and sexologist, read the small business card. It was one of the most untrustworthy things Fosk had seen in the last year, or his entire life.

Yet there he was. At least, judging by the sound of the voice he had heard through the hallway entryphone, this wasn't some kind of perverted old guy willing to take advantage of a gullible, maybe slightly undersized wolf.

Holding his breath and trying to pretend he wasn't as nervous as he really was, Fosc rang the doorbell and waited patiently. It didn't take long for someone to open the door and the black wolf looked up, faking his best smile and trying his best not to look as if someone had just used him to mop the floor.

However, he was slightly taken aback by what he saw.

Standing right in front of him, leaning slightly onto the door frame, was one of the most handsome white tigers he had ever come across. If Fosc had to make a list with the traits the perfect guy would have in his opinion, the feline that stood in front of him would definitely take most of them. To begin with, he had the most beautiful blue eyes the wolf had ever seen, not too dark, not too light, not greenish; just deep, pure blue that stood out in the middle of his snow white fur. He wasn't particularly muscular either, the way most tigers looked on the internet when Fosc was looking for pictures at night. He only stood half a head taller than him, but he had that kind of body that radiated strength with every move, even though he wasn't extremely muscled. He looked strong, though. And he didn't look like he was much older than the wolf himself; two years, three at most.

It took Fosc a few seconds to realize he had been staring at the white tiger for more than was socially acceptable.

"Oh, sorry," he said, feeling more and more ridiculous with each passing second. "I was looking for Dr. Shimmel. Is he in there?"

"You're standing right in front of him," the tiger said, giving him a warm smile.

At first, Fosc thought he hadn't heard well. Unless he was utterly wrong, the feline standing on the doorstep couldn't be older than twenty-five. The wolf could feel his skepticism growing stronger again as he tried to measure the kind of experience that so-called therapist could possibly have.

"You can call me Kenneth, though," the tiger continued, reaching out to Fosc with the same friendly smile in his face. "And you must be Fosc. I see the rain caught you in your way here. Quick, come in and I'll give you a towel."

"Oh, thanks! I could use one," the wolf said, shaking the tiger's paw and then wiping his shoes on the welcome mat. He left it completely soaked.

At least he doesn't seem to think I'm stupid, he thought as he followed the tiger in. He then closed the door at his back and took a look around, curiously. It was just the kind of flat a group of students would

live in; narrow corridors, a small kitchen just next to the entrance, and a couple of disorganized rooms that seemed to have been built randomly. Most doors were closed; in fact, only the one in front of Fosk was wide open. From his position, the wolf could see a few chairs and a desk, but nothing more in the room. It looked quite empty, to be honest.

His thoughts got interrupted when Kenneth gestured for him to go into that room and then went to look for a towel. The black wolf walked in almost immediately. In case that was really a student flat, he wasn't sure he wanted to know the rest of the students who lived there.

"So," the white tiger said, coming back with a towel and closing the door behind him. Fosk noticed he seemed to pay close attention to keeping doors shut. "Sophia already told me a few things about you, but I'd rather ask you personally."

The black wolf nodded. He also thought that was probably the best option; after all, Sophia tended to exaggerate things. As soon as Kenneth handed him the towel, Fosk began wiping his fur dry, or at least trying to. It turned out he was even more soaked than he had thought. As he did that, he saw the white tiger pointing to a chair and he sat down, feeling a bit tired after all the running in the rain.

When he had finished drying his fur, he looked up and found out the white tiger wasn't sitting on a chair, but on the desk corner, with one leg crossed on the other. It was then when he noticed that Kenneth wasn't wearing shoes and his white paws were perfectly at sight. Not that he was going to complain, though; his blue, slightly loose jeans made a perfect contrast with the white fur, and...

The wolf's train of thought stopped there, as soon as he realized the white tiger was looking straight at him, waiting for an answer. He realized he was getting too distracted and that wouldn't help him give a proper impression.

"Oh, yeah," he said, as he started wiping his fur again, trying to buy time to find an answer. "I... well..." He fought to say the words as his paws closed nervously around the towel. "I guess I might have a little... uh... sex problem."

"That's usually why everyone comes here," the tiger replied, with a smile. Fosk understood the tiger wasn't making fun of him, just trying to reassure him.

"I know, I know," the black wolf said, smiling back at him and biting his lower lip for a few seconds.

"Anyway, you said *might*," Kenneth remarked, raising an eyebrow. "You don't look so sure about it."

"To be honest, I'm not." Fosk put the towel on his lap, looking at the tiger with apologetic eyes. "It was Sophia who made me come here. I don't really think my thing is... well... so important to bother a therapist, sexologist or whatever..."

The tiger's smile got wider.

"Ah. So she did it again. It was the same situation with Fabio back then. He didn't really want to come here, but in the end she convinced him to do it. And I think he's glad she did."

"Yeah, I've heard the story like a thousand times, but my situation is not... the same," Fosk argued. "I just... well, I don't think I like sex that much. That's it, basically."

Kenneth crossed his arms and frowned. He waited a few seconds before talking again.

"See, Sophia told me you *couldn't* have sex. Between not liking it and not being able to there's a hell of a difference."

"It sure is," the wolf agreed. He made a quick mental note to kill Sophia the next time he saw her.

"And I'm with you, definitely. It doesn't have to be a problem... not necessarily," the tiger shifted on the desk corner, placing his paws between his legs and letting his gaze wander around the room. "Different people like different things. It's just the way we were born and quite often there's no reason why. If you don't like sex that much, it might just not be your thing. Simple as that."

"I know, right?" Fosk said, feeling a sudden rush of sympathy for the therapist. "But try saying that to Sophia. She just won't hear."

"Heh, I know. I know." Kenneth seemed to get lost in his thoughts for a second and then turned his deep blue eyes to the wolf, smiling again. "But you said *might*. So you still think there is a possibility it actually is a problem."

Fosk opened his mouth to answer, but he closed it again after a few seconds.

He had never truly thought about it that way, but... For the last years, and specially since Mark had broken up with him, he'd had the strange feeling that there was something not quite right with the way he... worked in bed. The wolf had tried to convince himself that it was only regret because of how the things had gone that last month, but there might as well be something more. He had tried to deny it many times, but deep inside he knew he felt guilty for not being able to give Mark what he wanted in their relationship.

"Yes," he said, quietly.

The white tiger gave him a long look, as if he somehow could know what he was thinking.

"Any bad experiences in the past?" he asked, softly.

"Yeah," Fosk answered, lowering his head as he looked down to his own paws. He wasn't going to let that thought depress him. "It was a long time ago, though."

“Good. I mean, time helps us see the things with a bit of perspective,” the tiger said. “The important thing is that you don’t blame yourself. These things happen. Now, you have to consider what you do about it.”

“What I do about it?” Fosk repeated, raising his head again.

“Mhm. As I said, this doesn’t need to be a problem. In fact, I think that highly depends on you.” Kenneth looked directly into his eyes. The tiger’s face was now completely serious. “Do you think there’s something to solve? Then, we can work on solving it. No guarantees, of course. As I said, it might be just the way you are. On the other hand, do you think it isn’t important enough, that you will be able to live with it or that there is no possible solution? Then you can walk out of my flat with no regrets. Sophia isn’t here to stop you and no one will think less of you. It is your choice.”

Fosk remained silent for a few seconds, weighing his possibilities and trying to find a good answer. Up until that moment, he had not considered the fact that if he was going there, it was to change something about his life that perhaps didn’t need to be changed at all. Had it not been for the white tiger, he would have not even realized that the choice was his from the very start. The white tiger was giving him the option to leave that place without giving it a try. *That’s really a bad way of attracting customers*, he thought.

However, the memories from his past relationship were still circling in his mind. The cold last weeks and all the resentment he could still feel. Even though he knew he’d done his best, there were some times when he thought he would have liked to fix things. To fix... his behavior, at least in that aspect that had driven Mark away from him.

Still, he wasn’t going to change things for an ex. Kenneth had been quite clear about it. It was his choice.

And there were still many things he didn’t know about the process, or what he was accepting exactly. He tilted his head and looked back at the tiger, cautiously.

“Okay. So, let’s imagine I’d want to give it a try,” he said. “How... how does this work? What would we do?”

Kenneth grinned. The black wolf wasn’t completely sure he liked that.

“Well, there are two things I must tell you before that. First of all, I’m a certified Psychologist.” He looked serious again, staring at Fosk as if trying to make sure he’d understand his words. “I’m not saying I’ll use everything I learned at college or only the things I learned there. My approach to this profession is... quite different from the standard.” The white tiger paused for a second there, as if to measure the impact of his words on the wolf. Seeing no response, he continued. “I’ve been doing this for a few years now and

I've been learning what works and what doesn't. But, for some reason, some people think they can only trust me if I have a diploma on the wall. If that is your case, you can rest assured that I'm qualified."

"Okay," Fosk muttered. The wolf himself had thought that way of the white tiger when he had seen him first. He still had his doubts about the whole thing, but at least, it seemed that he was talking to a real therapist. "What's the second thing?"

"No matter how different my methods are, I will never ever do anything you haven't agreed to in the first place. And that's important," he insisted, "because if we go along with this, we'll both sign a contract in which we both commit to that. That'll be your guarantee that I will always stick to doing what you prefer. However, always tell me if you feel uncomfortable or you don't like one of my ideas. I can't emphasize this enough: complain when you need to."

The white tiger was leaning closer to Fosk and his expression was so serious that, for a second, the black wolf felt a bit scared. He gulped, trying to clear his thoughts.

"This all sounds so... crazy," he said, trying to smile. He almost managed to do it. "I mean, it seems so mysterious and... well, and dangerous. I'm not selling my organs, right?"

"I hope not," Kenneth said, as he again smiled. Fosk was about to sigh in relief when that dead-serious expression faded from the feline's face. "Say, have you ever read one of this really bad NSFW fics? You know, main character goes to visit a so-called sex therapist but it's just a poor excuse for having an orgy?"

"Er... well, I..." Fosk blushed a bit, trying to hide his embarrassment. It would have been absurd to lie at that point. "Yeah, of course I've read those."

"Well, this is basically like it. Only, not orgies. And a bit more carefully-planned, I'd say."

The tiger spoke so casually that, at first, Fosk thought he was kidding. However, as seconds went by and the therapist kept staring at him with those blue eyes and the same warm smile, the black wolf understood that he was being serious. His face could only get redder as he realized the implications of that.

"B-but..." he started, looking at the white tiger in disbelief. "What are you saying then? Are you saying you'd... have sex with me!?"

"Remember my second point?" the white tiger asked. He seemed partially interested in the wolf's reaction, as if he was secretly enjoying it, but at the same time it almost looked as if he had gone through that conversation many times. "I'll just do what you ask me to do."

"I... I can't believe it!" Fosk exclaimed, outraged. "Wait! Does that mean you had sex with Fabio?"

“Whatever I did with Fabio is between us. And maybe his girlfriend, if he wants to let her know.” Kenneth crossed one leg on the other again, looking at the black wolf with a smirk. “And it’s not as simple as *having sex with*, silly thing. In fact, I highly doubt that’d help us with your problem.”

“Well, still!” The black wolf felt tempted to stand up and leave. He hadn’t been ready for that kind of revelation and, at that point, he couldn’t believe Sophia had sent him to a therapist that basically fucked his clients. “You haven’t denied it, either! So basically, your clients pay you to have sex! Where I come from, that’s not called therapy.”

“It worked for your friend Fabio, though,” Kenneth said, tilting his head. At that moment, and even though Fosk was still quite angry, he could tell that the white tiger was making an effort to be kind. “Look, as I said, I have my diploma in case you don’t trust me. And you don’t have to accept this therapy either way. It’s up to you. I think there’s no reason for you to be so outraged.”

The black wolf tried to calm himself down. The white tiger was right. He was being rude and making assumptions, again. Fabio and Sophia had spoken wonders of that therapist and he was constantly refusing to believe them.

And there was that chance to fix his problems, too.

“Well, it’s... It’s difficult, you know. As you said... it’s a thing you’d only see in stories,” he replied, quietly. “I’m... sorry.”

“You don’t need to. It’s okay. I get that kind of reaction quite often.” Kenneth’s expression softened again. “I told you my approach to this profession is not the most common. It helps some people, though.”

“It sure helped Fabio,” Fosk said, biting his lower lip.

Both remained silent for a short while.

The black wolf was still trying to take a decision. On one hand, it seemed as if that would be a good chance to try to fix past problems and ghosts that he had been carrying around for quite some time. But on the other, that whole situation still seemed too absurd, too surreal.

“You said sex wouldn’t help with my problem,” he reminded, after a short while. “What would?”

“Well, we’d have to see that together. I still need to make you a few questions, if you’re okay with that. Hope you won’t be too embarrassed to answer?”

There was a subtle playful tone in his voice. Fosk tried to ignore it. If that alleged therapist thought he was going to be too ashamed to talk about sex-related things, he was wrong.

“Sure, go ahead.”

“Good. Do you masturbate?” Kenneth question came so suddenly that the wolf barely had any time to feel embarrassed anyway.

“Yeah, I mean, everyone does, right?” he answered, maybe too fast.

“How many times a week?”

“Er...” the wolf took a while to answer, even though he knew the answer perfectly well. “Once every other day... more or less. I don’t keep track of how many times I... do it.”

“No one does, right?” Kenneth smiled. The playful tone in his voice was even clearer now and Fosc could tell he was clearly making fun of him now. “So, important question. Ever done that with someone?”

“Huh...?” the wolf asked, a bit confused. “Masturbating?”

“Well, yeah. You know. Handjobs and such. Do you like that?”

The tiger’s face was completely serious, but behind that mask, Fosc could tell he was enjoying his embarrassment. *Maybe this is his revenge for what I said earlier*, he thought. *Alright, then.*

“I’ve done that,” the wolf said, trying to relax a bit. “With my former boyfriend. That was... okay.”

“But did you enjoy it?” the tiger asked, insistently.

Fosc opened his mouth to answer, but just nodded. At that point, he wasn’t sure if he’d been able to say anything that made him feel less stupid. Kenneth, however, seemed to relax a bit on the table and looked at him with a friendly face.

“Well, then you *do* like sex, Fosc.”

“Do I?” the wolf asked, a bit confused.

“Yeah. People usually tend to overlook the fact that sex is more than oral or anal,” the tiger explained.

“Masturbation is also a way of having sex with your partner. Different way, but in the end, just as valid.”

Fosc thought about that for a few seconds. He had to admit that, even though he wasn’t particularly sure whether that talk with the therapist was going to help him or not, the tiger had already made him reconsider a few things he had never seen that way before.

“So, why don’t I like oral or anal sex?” he asked.

“There could be thousands of reasons,” Kenneth answered, waving his paw. “And as I said before, maybe there isn’t a single reason. And that would be perfectly alright, too.”

“So you’re telling me again that I might be wasting my time here,” Fosc reasoned, raising an eyebrow.

“That’s exactly what I’m telling you,” Kenneth replied, giving him a playful smirk. The black wolf was still a bit angry and flustered, but at that point he could just think that the tiger in front of him looked terribly handsome when he smiled like that. He hated him for that reason. “But I’m also telling you you won’t know until you try.”

“That’s not fair!” Fosk complained.

“Well, no one said it was. I’m just being honest with you. And as you see, it could be bad for my business. So I think you should be thankful that I’m telling the truth as it is, instead of making up a silly excuse to keep you around,” the tiger answered. He sounded as if he was trying his best to be patient.

The black wolf sighed.

“Okay, I guess you’re right again.”

“Thank you,” Kenneth smiled again. “Now, I have a few more questions. So, even though you’re not attracted to those specific acts of sex, do you have any... let’s say... weird preference?”

“Huh?” Fosk asked. He wasn’t sure he understood what the tiger meant.

“Kinks. Fetishes. That kind of thing.”

It still took the black wolf a few seconds to understand what Kenneth meant, but when he finally did, he could feel his face turning completely red. His heart started beating faster as he understood the implications of that question and he no longer tried to hide his embarrassment. It would have been useless, anyway.

“Er... well... I...” he mumbled, looking away. “...I guess I do.”

“Alright. What is it?” the tiger asked, speaking so naturally that it would seem he was just asking Fosk his name.

The black wolf gulped.

“It’s quite weird, to be honest,” he said.

“I’m pretty sure I’ve seen worse,” Kenneth replied, shaking his head. “Believe it or not, in this job I see a lot of that.”

He was making fun of him again. Fosk closed his eyes and decided it would be better to just answer straight away.

"It's... well... huh." He had never told anyone about it, and he was feeling more nervous than he believed possible. The wolf clasped his paws together as he tried to stop them from shaking, but it didn't help. "...hyp... hypnosis."

"Sorry, what?" the tiger asked, perking up one of his ears. "What did you say?"

Fosk was completely sure he'd heard him, and he hated that stupid therapist even more for forcing him to go through that again.

"Hypnosis," he said, more clearly now, as he looked up to meet the tiger's eyes.

They seemed to hide a gleam of interest, for some reason.

However, Kenneth quickly broke eye contact, moving one of his feet in small circles as he crossed his arms on his chest and seemed to think about it. Fosk wondered whether that was a good signal or a bad one. He could still feel his whole body trembling. He had never opened himself that way to anyone, and he was honestly starting to regret it.

"It's not that weird," the tiger said, finally. He quickly turned to look at the wolf and frowned, a shadow of worry in his face. "Hey, are you alright? You look like you're about to collapse."

"Yeah, sorry. I'm... I'm just silly," Fosk said, trying to smile. "It shouldn't be so hard to say this, it's just... I'm not used to..."

Kenneth listened carefully, looking a bit sorry. It almost seemed as if he regretted having teased the wolf so much. Fosk wished he would. After a few seconds, the tiger stood up and walked towards the door.

"I'm going to bring you something warm to drink," he said. "Would you rather tea or coffee?"

"Coffee," the wolf answered quickly. He cleared his throat and added "Thanks."

Kenneth left the room and left Fosk alone, still sitting in that same chair and too embarrassed to think properly. His paws were still clasped together as he tried to stop shaking, with cheeks completely red.

Why was it so difficult for him? People did that all the time. Speaking about the things that turned them on, sometimes in ways that were *too* obvious. Why couldn't he be more open about it? Why did he have to embarrass himself like that? It probably had something to do with how he couldn't have normal sex with anyone, the wolf told himself. There had to be some kind of relation between both things. Even though the therapist had clearly said that it might not... he knew there had to be something. Everyone *loved* that kind of sex. Why couldn't he?

He knew perfectly well that was the reason why Mark had lost interest in him.

And probably the reason why he'd never find a compatible partner. Ever.

“Here.” The firm, yet soft voice of the tiger startled the wolf. He hadn’t noticed the tiger had walked back into the room and was holding the big cup of coffee in front of his face. “I poured some milk in it because I wasn’t sure how you liked it.”

“This is fine. Thanks,” the wolf said quietly.

He sank his muzzle in the warm coffee and drank in silence, as he watched how Kenneth walked to his table and sat on the corner again. He too was holding his own cup of coffee. For some reason, Fosc thought that wasn’t something he’d usually do with the rest of his clients.

Then again, he wasn’t a client yet.

“Sorry if I was too hard on you,” the white tiger said, after a while. “I just needed to know. You’ve been really brave, if you want to know my opinion. I had a bull a few months ago... one of those men that can’t get rid of their macho facade, you know? It took him three weeks to admit he was into leather and bondage.”

“Really?” the wolf asked, raising his head. The warm drink was working; he was slowly starting to feel a bit calmer.

“Yeah. It can be very difficult sometimes, making a client open up about the things they like. Guess it’s just what we’ve been taught.” The tiger again crossed one leg on the other. Fosc was starting to see that as his usual pose. “Hide whatever you like. Show only what’s acceptable. Yeah, I get that a lot. Lots of customers whose problems come from not being honest enough with themselves. Not that you seem to be that kind of person, though,” Kenneth added quickly, turning to him.

“Well, I’ve told you, haven’t I?” Fosc said, trying to smile.

“Yes, you have.” The tiger smiled back at him, warmly. “And let me tell you, I really appreciate your trust. I know this isn’t easy for most people. But if we’re going to do this, I need you to trust me. And I need you to be open about the things you like and the things you don’t, so that we’ll get somewhere.”

“It’s funny,” the wolf said, looking away. “Since Sophia told me to come here, I had imagined millions of possible scenarios, but not this one.”

“Oh, that happens all the time,” Kenneth said, still smiling. “But no worries. As I said, hypnosis is not that bad. And... well, it’s not something I’m completely unfamiliar with.”

“Re... really?” the wolf said, as he felt his cheeks burning again.

“Mhm. Well, I first learned about it in Psychology, you know. But it’s proved a valuable tool for this job, so I studied it... more thoroughly, once I started working on my own. I’ve used it a few times since then,” he explained.

“...oh,” Fosk muttered, trying to calm himself down. He was starting to realize that the tiger’s spontaneity helped him feel less embarrassed about those things... even though his own shyness was still too strong to ignore.

Kenneth shook his head. He seemed to be deeply thinking about the possibilities.

“Okay. I’ll tell you what,” he said, turning back to the black wolf again. His deep blue eyes shone mysteriously with that gleam of interest. “We can use that to find out more about you.”

“W-what? Really?” the black wolf asked, closing his paws around the cup of coffee a bit nervously.

“Yeah. The way I see them, kinks are like doors. But specifically in your case... it’s more than that.” The tiger moved one of his feet again, thoughtfully. “Hypnosis can help you find out more about yourself, as you know. And if it’s something you like, and we’re going to explore your sexual appetites anyway... I think we could use it. To learn more about you, see where your borderlines are, if you know what I mean. Needless to say,” he added, looking seriously at the wolf, “we won’t do a thing unless you want to.”

Fosk held the tiger’s gaze for a few seconds, then looked back down to his half-empty cup of coffee.

He didn’t know what to do. Up until that point, he had thought he was okay with not really liking what the rest of people saw as normal sex. He could see now that it had been a burden he had carried without even knowing, something that had made him feel less valid for a long, long time. Mark’s rejection was a shadow that affected him way more than he thought.

How could a total stranger have made him reconsider so many things in just an hour? Maybe Sophia and Fabio were right after all. Maybe he was better at that than he thought.

But everything was too strange. The way Kenneth had talked about what he did there with his clients, it almost seemed some kind of professional brothel. Besides, the fact that the white tiger in front of him was particularly attractive didn’t make him feel safer. The fear of falling in love with that total stranger, the terrifying possibility of establishing some kind of relationship that wasn’t related to the therapy... Developing feelings for that tiger and then being rejected in those circumstance would be too embarrassing...

Those thoughts stopped there, however. Embarrassment. That was exactly what had always stopped him. The reason why Mark had decided to dump him. Wasn’t that what he wanted to get rid of? And what if things were too embarrassing? No one would know, after all. Kenneth had said he never talked about what happened with his clients.

The black wolf hesitated and sipped at his coffee.

“Take all the time you want,” Kenneth said, then. “In fact, why don’t you come to a first session for free? We’ll see if you want to continue when it ends.”

“Really?” the wolf asked, looking at the tiger in surprise. “Would you do that for me?”

“For you?” the tiger chuckled, as if he found that question funny. “Do you think everyone trusts me in our first session? If I didn’t let them have the first session for free, I wouldn’t have any clients.”

Fosk bit his lower lip, still hesitant.

“...alright.” He said, after taking a deep breath. “I’ll come next week, then.”

“Good!” Kenneth said, standing up again to shake his paw. The wolf was a bit surprised by that gesture at first, but shook the tiger’s paw nonetheless. After the informal talk they’d had, it felt a bit out of place to formalize things like that. “I’ll see you next Sunday, then. Oh, and thanks again for trusting me, Fosk.”

“You’re welcome,” the wolf said, still a bit surprised. He finished his cup of coffee and looked into the tiger’s blue eyes one more time. “Thank you. I know this wasn’t a proper session, but I think you really helped me with a few things.”

“I’m glad to know that, but the whole process of thinking and admitting things was yours. Never forget that,” the tiger said, blinking an eye.

He’s too handsome, the black wolf thought, as he walked towards the door with the therapist. *It’s going to be really hard not to fall in love with him.*

Fosk said goodbye to the tiger and left the small flat. He still waited in front of the door for a few seconds, thinking about everything that had just happened. He couldn’t know if those sessions were going to help him or not. At least, he told himself, it would help him fight his shyness a bit, and maybe that way he’d finally get somewhere.

With his fur still slightly wet, Fosk shook his head and turned to the lift. He couldn’t help thinking about next week; he was curious to see how a session with that kind of therapist would be.

Meanwhile, at the other side of the door, a white tiger was rubbing his forehead with a thumb, immersed in his own thoughts. He remained motionless apart from that single movement, still looking at the door through which the black wolf had left just a few seconds ago. The cup of coffee remained in his table, untouched. He hadn’t taken a single sip from it.

Damn, Kenneth thought, a bit worried. *This is going to be hard. He’s definitely cute.*

And he’s into hypnosis, too.