

I wasn't the first one to realize just how bad I smelt. I could see Añem regarding me differently within the past few days and only behind my back did he present a bath, which I immediately recognised was for me. Under different circumstances, I would have considered this passive aggressive and been offended, even if I did smell myself, but I knew this was the only functional way we could both communicate. Añem even slashed the water a bit to show that it was safe, and I didn't have the heart to tell him that humans have sanitation as well. I decide to join him and strip myself, no longer finding any reason to be reserved in my nudity. Not to say we were both numb to it, I could always still see him staring at me and my penis but it was more because we have nothing to really do about it. Apparently his species goes through a time of the year where they grow their own genitalia and discard it once the time passes. So from his mindset, I'm just a perpetually horny alien that stumbled into his home. As terrifying as they thought it was, he seemed compliant in helping me in more ways than one. I would thank him, but he wouldn't understand it anymore than if I swore at him.

Stepping up to the stone tub I was able to feel the steam off the water. I had seen them use this before and I know it can get much warmer. Añem even seemed proud of himself for reducing it to *only* boiling temperatures for my sake. I take a single foot and dip it in slowly, instantly seizing my foot back in pain as he leapt to catch me, letting out a series of hisses and chirps that I couldn't interpret.

"I'm fine, I'm fine..." I try to reassure him, putting my arms up and keeping a smile on my face. One of the things we're lucky enough to have in common is expressions. At the very least, smiling and frowning. I'm sure he could tell I was putting on a brave face, picking me up effortlessly and setting me down a few steps away from the tub. He was already a head or two taller than me but sometimes it truly felt like I was a kitten to a lion based on how he handles me. Turning his back to me, I could see his scaly tail thump against the ground and lazily slide back and forth, a clear sign of his irritation. Being his naturally cold blooded self, I'm not surprised he doesn't know how to handle a creature like me, who would seem like I'm hypersensitive to the basic necessities. Usually the additional warmth is nothing

bad, but when it's warm everywhere you go without fail it can get rather draining. My guess is that my body was only sweating overtime due to this change in atmosphere. Once again, I feel lucky that he has so much patience for me and my less than ideal anatomy when compared to him. There are times I simply wish I could learn the language, but with the many months I've been here, I've only been able to pick up tones and names of a lot of people, hence how I was able to learn his name was Añem and learning that his name for me was something like Ki-shay?

With his back turned to me, I could see just how confused he was, feeling the water again and again by plunging his scaled claws into the water, as if confused on how I could be in pain by it. It was times like these I wish I could offer some words of reassurance to him, maybe even thank him. He's done so much for me and the most I've done is help him with basic household chores like some housewife in the 80s. I've tried reading their literature but the entire thing is just hieroglyphs to me and I don't know where to start. I tried to use Añem's name as a starting point, just so I could attach noises to symbols but they use different symbols for their names and their words! I felt even worse when Añem would set time aside to practice English with me. It was especially hard for him, due to the way his mouth works and the lack of similar syllables in our languages. It seems like both ends lead to a dead end.

“--- Cisha! — —” Añem called out to me as he looked over his shoulder, his claws still in the water. Although only a few minutes pass, I can see him smiling as though he accomplished something great. Adding to this, his tail is lifted from the ground and curling around my legs as I stand beside him. I followed his example and sent my arm in slowly, dipping into the burning water and feeling what was essentially a boiling pot for me to dip the rest of my body in. Whether it be the guilt or my own disgust with my smell, I give up and nod to him with another smile. He chirps happily and lifts me up by the armpits now, standing on his own and lowering us both into the bath. There comes times like this where I just let him carry me wherever he feels like, too tired and confused to really worry about my preconceived notions about him or his species, which have all been wrong so far. The water didn't

get any cooler in the last few seconds and I took deep breaths to accommodate myself to the steaming stone bowl, feeling the rough sides scrape at my skin as I tried to reposition myself. With Añem behind me, I could feel him reaching around the sides of the tub and soon lifting what looked like a massive sea sponge like the ones we have and a broken off piece of soap. One invention they have here that I found interesting is that they have one big cube made of soap in a closet close to the bath and they just chip off a piece whenever they need one. It smells like something floral and with these lizard people that checks out. I watch carefully as he dips the chunk of soap into the water before using his claws to rub the material along my back and using it to rub along the rest of my body, though leaving most of my lower waist to myself. Despite not having the same reproductive process as humans, he still seemed to understand the stigma around genitals. Luckily for me, I guess, because I have no idea how I would have handled 'no means no' against a creature 3 times my strength and no understanding of english.

After some time rubbing the soap into me, he sets the sappy brick aside and uses the sponge he had been holding in his other claw to now rub against my back. While I was initially expecting a familiar feeling of a sponge, it felt like a cheese grater made of sand paper uprooting my skin. I practically jumped away from the sponge and splashed some more hot water on my face, the added soap mixed in also helped to create a delightful experience.

"--! Cisha? ---? ---!" I heard Añem called out in confusion, both of his claws on my shoulders as I tried to rub away the soapy water.

"Sorry. Uhm.. It hurts...? Uhm... Too rough." I try to simplify between eye rubs, though even with hazed vision I could see his head tilt to the side. He then seemed to catch an idea, which gave me some relief. He grabbed the sponge again, then rubbed it on his arm in demonstration with a smile and some explanatory dialogue. I assume he saw my unimpressed scowl and went back to confusion after realizing I knew what it was for. I think for a second on how to demonstrate this, suddenly grabbing the sponge carefully, which he watched closely. I use the sponge to rub against his arm once more, smiling before petting his arm smoothly. He

watched closely, not yet sure of what I'm trying to demonstrate here while still being compliant in my game. I then pressed the sponge into my own arm, not wanting to scrape it against myself and making an exaggerated frown as my hand previously stroking his arm now pinched some of his scales together. While I was worried that the pinch wouldn't display anything, he spoke to himself as he seemed to realize it, taking back the sponge carefully. He then looked at me and exchanged looks with the sponge as if contemplating something. In resignation, he took a deep sigh and set the sponge to the side, grabbing me and pulling me back to him in the tub and scraping me against the bottom of the tub. I had half a mind to mention how irritating a porous stone tub was to me but I already cashed in my complaining ticket today so I'll just leave it there. With me now back against his form, now facing in, I saw him look me over, as if debating how to go about this. I point to the shirt I have been wearing and pantomime scrunching it into a ball and demonstratively rubbing it against my arm but he shook his head no, shutting down the idea. He then smiled as he got an idea, reaching over to rub my shoulders slowly, similar to how he would every other day for any number of reasons. I look at his paw and look at him in confusion, wondering if he thought I was still in need of comfort or something.

He seemed to take my silence as compliance, chirping happily as he dipped his claws in the water and used his own hands to get the soap off. Admittedly it was a much more comfortable feeling, due to him already holding me in such a way out of the bath made me even take a second to register what his goal was. He was surprisingly effective, his scales on his claws were somewhat softer when compared to his back and tail but still much rougher than any human's hand should be. It works rather well for a placeholder, but the position I was in left some to be desired.

I had no idea where to look.

He seemed preoccupied looking over my head and lifting my arms whenever he needed to, not really paying me any mind but I don't think I should just be making eye contact with him the whole time. I could try to look down but at this distance I could just be looking between his legs, which may be ok but I don't know how he would react if I just stuck to that the entire time. I could just look to the side

but his arms are mainly blocking the way so see anything else. I need something to do, but what?

Seeing the remains of the soapy brick on the side, I slowly reach over it. Añem seemed to notice this and offered his claw as if to take it back from me. What? Did he think I would eat it or something? In a manner similar to how he applied it to me, I tried to do the same to his chest. He watched me in confusion for a while, at first making me nervous that I had done something wrong, but soon he cooed out something sounding like a poem with my name at the end of it. That's... Good, right? I think that's good. I continued to do that, rubbing along the same areas he had done for me and we sat there for a while. He left most of my lower waste undone, as I his, but I was left to use the sponge on him while carefully gripping it for the sake of my nerves. He looked to be enjoying this, leaning back with the end of his tail hanging out from the tub behind him as he looked at the ceiling, allowing me to scrub him. He wasn't exactly smiling or making noises like purring, so I didn't have much to go off of aside from his lack of stopping me. Presumably if he found any discomfort in it, he would have done something at least, but here we are, sitting in silence as I clean the chest of the lizard who basically made me not homeless in a whole new world. Wow he really does a lot for me. I can't even cook for him, being all the new food and him basically just being a pescatarian. I tried watching him cook but it all looks so precise that I'm not sure I could safely replicate it, especially not when I don;t know how grocery shopping works.

"Cisha?" I heard the lizard above me, suddenly realizing that he had looked down at me in a look of mild confusion. I remember where I am and realize that in my mindlessness, I had been scrubbing down one of his inner thighs, which was already a no-go area that we had nonverbally decided on. I practically drop the sponge on him, leaning back with my arms up as I struggle to find the words.

"I-I'm sorry, I'm sorry! I uhm got in my thoughts, I just... Uhh fuck." Being that no one here speaks English besides me, I get to swear whenever I want. Score! Aside from that though, how do you apologize in a bathtub with another person? I can't exactly now or else I would drown myself while headbutting his crotch which

wouldn't exactly help at all. He seemed to understand the intentions behind my words, smiling gently as ever and slowly guiding my hand back to his claws in front of his chest, grabbing the sponge from me and grabbing my from my armpits again, standing slowly and stepping out from the tub, soon setting me back down next to it. A major benefit of having stone floors everywhere is that I'm no longer afraid of slipping whenever I walk. It's also part of their engineering to have heated floors as well, making me reconsider just how far back these guys are to humans.

I look down at my legs and groan about the lack of cleanliness. Despite the lizards taking excellent care of themselves, the legs weren't paid much attention. I was about to try and pay some mind to it but I was met with the same lizard who had just taken me out of the bath was on his knees and rubbing more soap along my legs, not leaving much more space compared to when we were in the tub, fearlessly scrubbing along without much of a care. I was about to step away, confused by the sudden change in familiarity and why he wanted to apply soap completely along my lower form without the water we had just left. He seemed to revel in my shock, acting much faster than in the tub and not wasting a second of my compliance. After only a few seconds of rubbing the bubbly soap in, he turned his back once more to a different bucket nearby, lifting it over his head and approaching me with a smile on his face. I could see the steam coming from the top of the bucket and the familiar sounds of sloshing and splashing as some water spilled over the top. Realizing what he was planning, I instantly tried to brace myself and imagine the coldest place in the world, hoping that my thoughts could counteract what was sure to be scalding hot water.

I was right.

He dropped a massive wave of essentially boiling water over the top of my head and doused my body in a crashing wave of water. My mental image of smoothies in Antarctica shattered the instant I felt the water wash over me. If it was any consolation, there felt like less water than it looked, causing me to grow slack with relief, stepping away from the puddle around my legs as Añem held the bucket at his waist, reeling back his arms as if... I could barely process the entire other half

of the water before it splashed over my form and splashed around me, a rush of pain from the sheer temperature making me wish I could leave my skin to cool off before walking around again, but I instead just stood there, jittering. Añem found much joy in this, walking up to me and holding me in an embrace, not caring for my reddening skin and instead using this opportunity to sniff along my head. It was a split second here that I wasn't sure if he'd force me to do it all again if I wasn't clean enough.

“---, — --! — Cisha?” He happily chirped, lifting me once more under my armpits to face him with a smile across his face. I most definitely need to find a way to remind him that I have fleshy skin and don't need as hot of water to feel comfortable but I suppose I'll cross that bridge when we get to it.