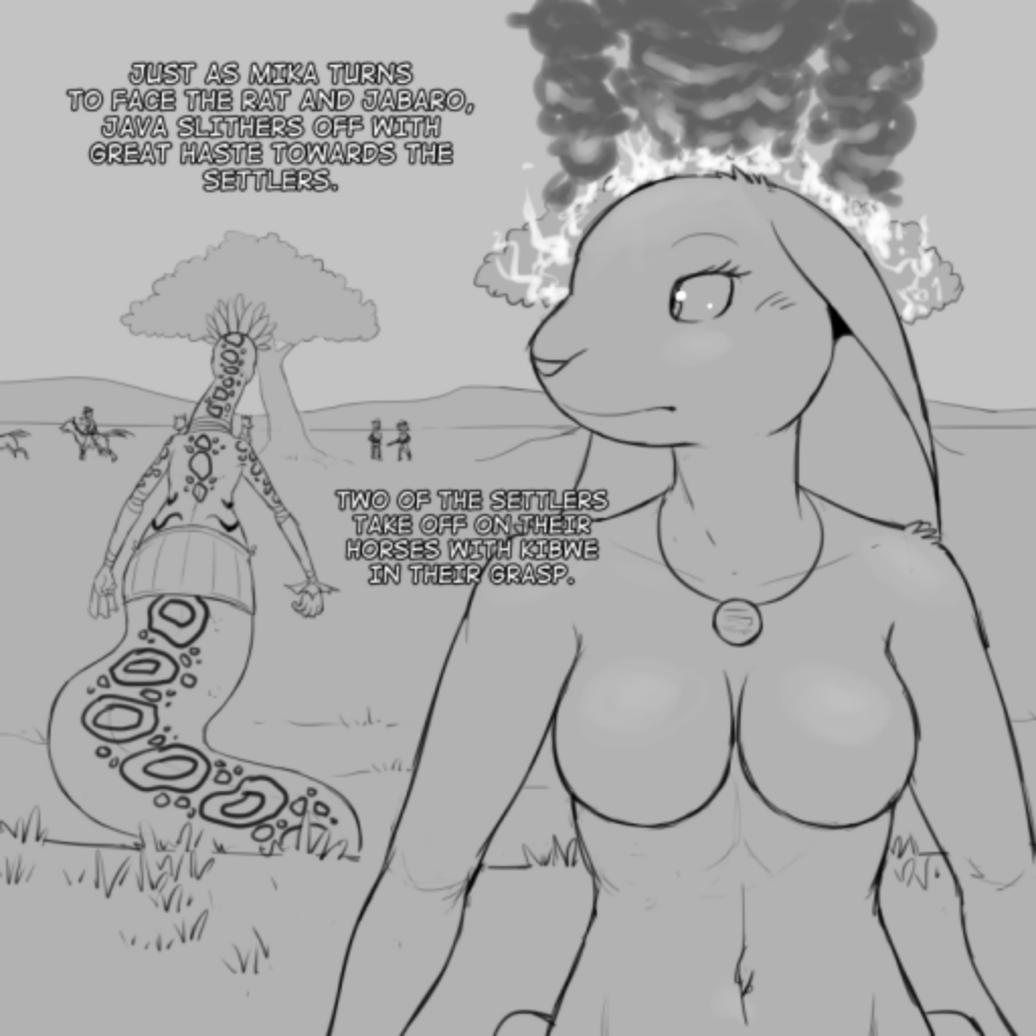


JUST AS MIKA TURNS
TO FACE THE RAT AND JABARO,
JAVA SLITHERS OFF WITH
GREAT HASTE TOWARDS THE
SETTLERS.

TWO OF THE SETTLERS
TAKE OFF ON THEIR
HORSES WITH KIBWE
IN THEIR GRASP.



JAVA HAD RELEASED KUVA
IN HER RUSH.

THE CHEETAH SCREAMS
FOR HER SIBLING, ALMOST IGNORING
THAT THE RAT HAD BOUND HER
WITH SOME STRANGE TENDRIL.



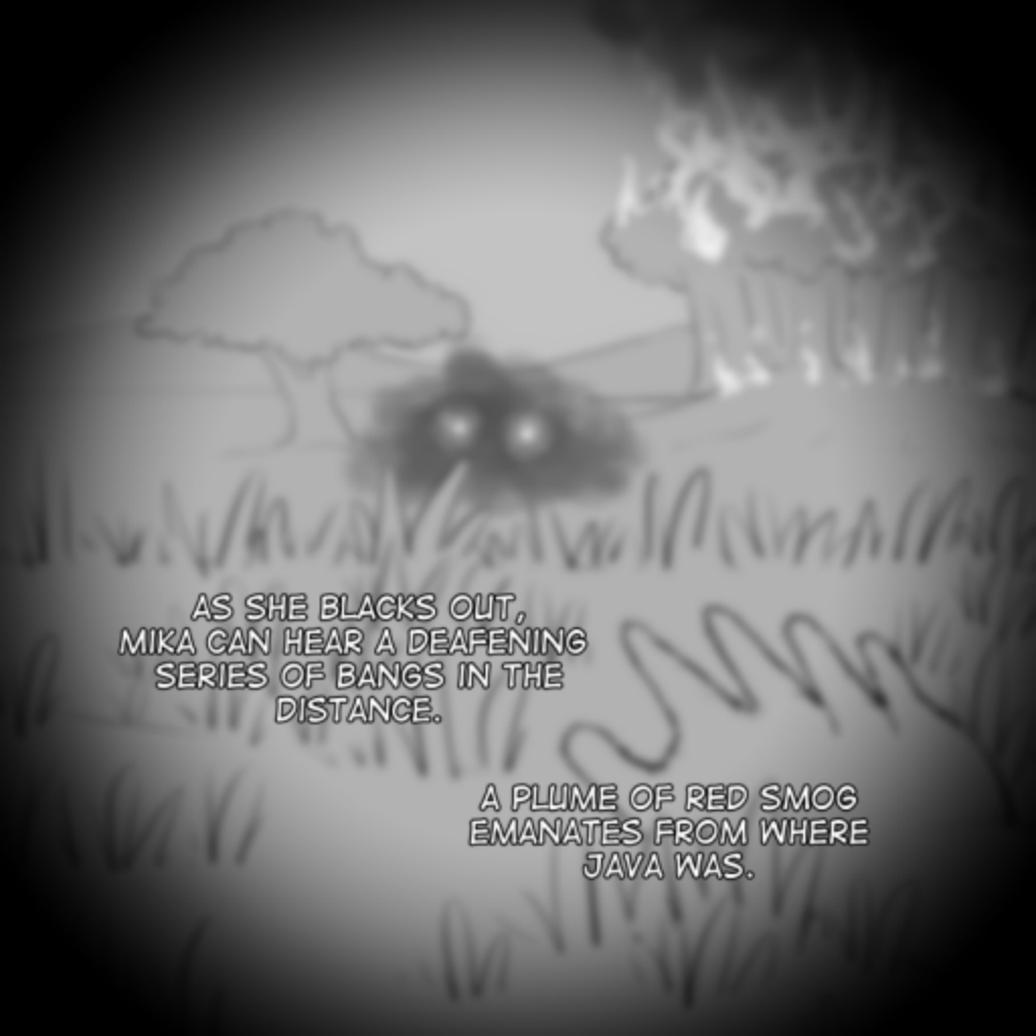
MIKA CONCEALS THE POISON
DART AS SHE TAKES KUYA'S BRA
AND TOSSES IT.

IT WAS A CARELESS
THROW, AS IT HITS KUYA
RIGHT IN THE FACE.

MIKA USES THIS
OPPORTUNITY TO LUNGE
AND STICK THE DART
INTO THE RAT.



JUST AS MIKA DOES
THIS, A SUDDEN BLOW HITS
THE SIDE OF HER HEAD,
KNOCKING HER DOWN
WITH EASE.

A dark, blurry scene with a bright, glowing object in the center and a plume of red smoke in the upper right.

AS SHE BLACKS OUT,
MIKA CAN HEAR A DEAFENING
SERIES OF BANGS IN THE
DISTANCE.

A PLUME OF RED SMOG
EMANATES FROM WHERE
JAVA WAS.

A black and white illustration of a room. In the foreground, a table with two drawers holds a lit candle in a glass holder. The candle's light casts a glow on the table. In the background, there are vertical lines suggesting a wall or door frame.

MIKA REAWAKENS
IN AN UNFAMILIAR
PLACE.

AT FIRST GLANCE, IT
APPEARS TO BE A SETTLER'S
HOME.

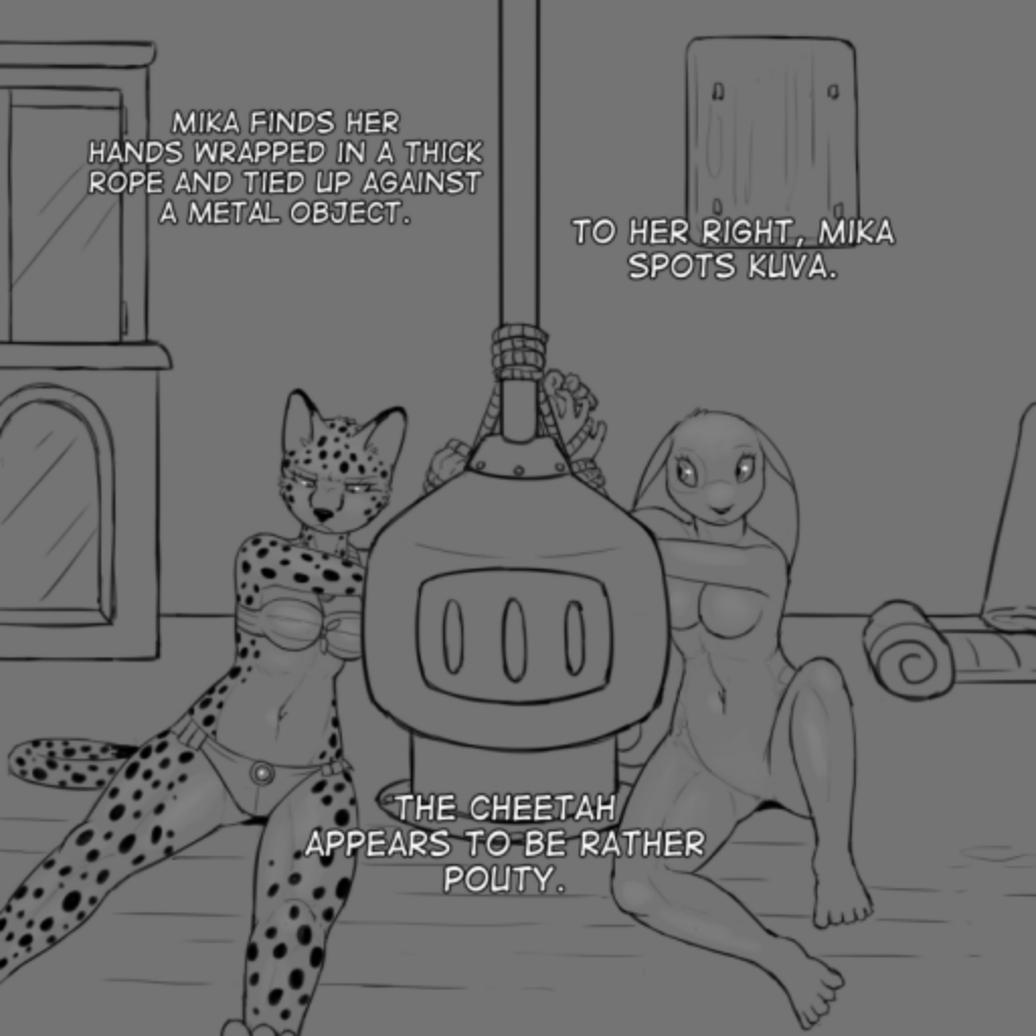
A STRONG, BITTER
SCENT FILLS THE AIR.

A black and white illustration showing a person's legs and feet from a first-person perspective. The person is sitting on a wooden floor, with their legs spread out. The floor has a distinct wood grain pattern.

MIKA REAWAKENS
IN AN UNFAMILIAR
PLACE.

MIKA FINDS HER
HANDS WRAPPED IN A THICK
ROPE AND TIED UP AGAINST
A METAL OBJECT.

TO HER RIGHT, MIKA
SPOTS KLUVA.

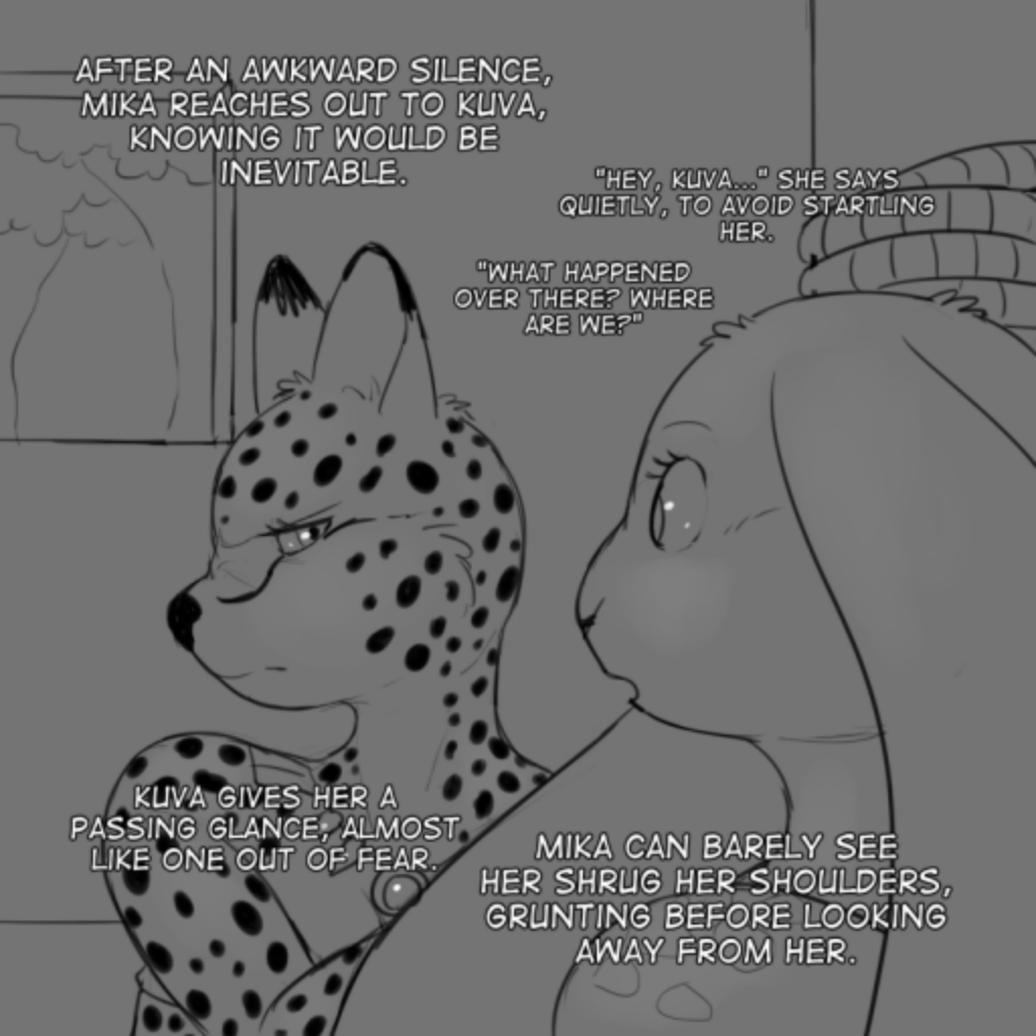


THE CHEETAH
APPEARS TO BE RATHER
POUTY.

MIKA ATTEMPTS TO BITE
THROUGH THE ROPE, BUT IT'S
VERY TOUGH.

SHE ESTIMATES IT
WOULD PROBABLY TAKE AN
HOUR TO GET IT ALL OFF.





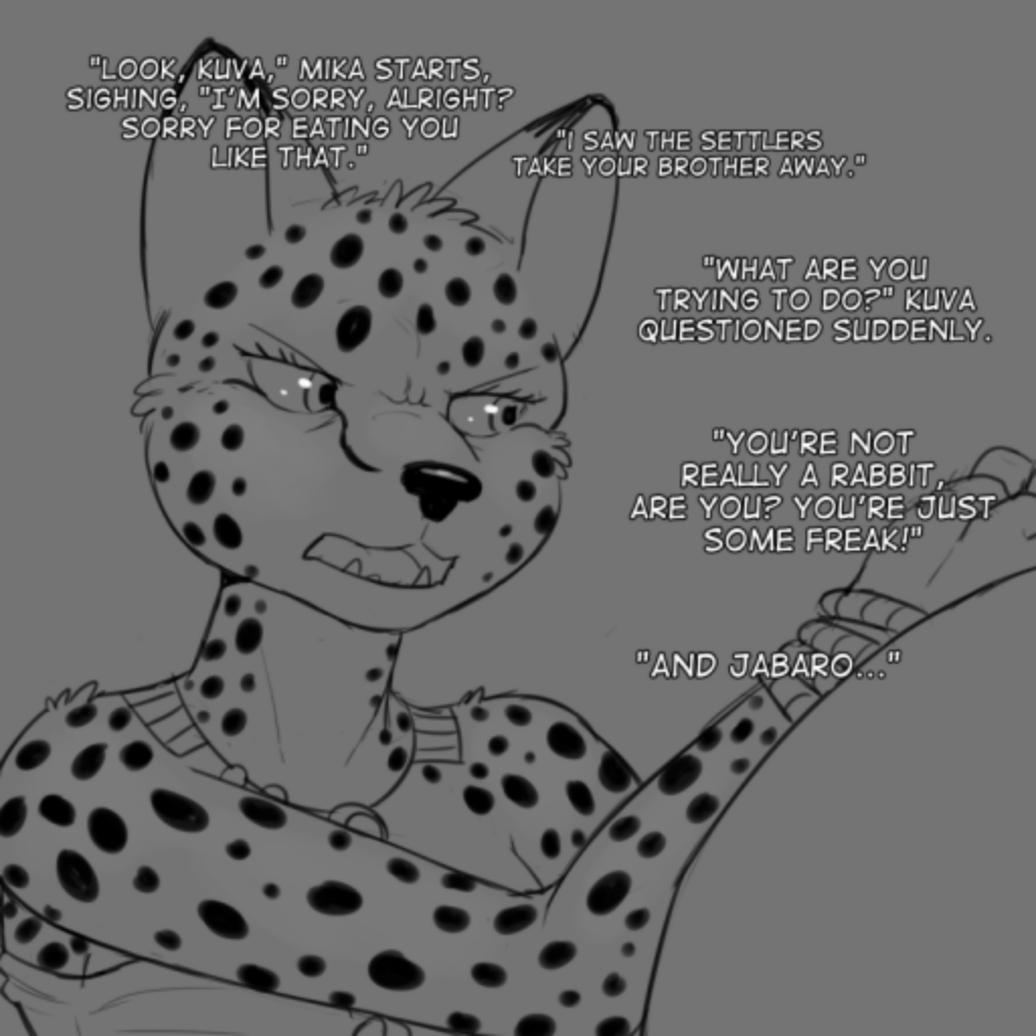
AFTER AN AWKWARD SILENCE,
MIKA REACHES OUT TO KUVA,
KNOWING IT WOULD BE
INEVITABLE.

"HEY, KUVA..." SHE SAYS
QUIETLY, TO AVOID STARTLING
HER.

"WHAT HAPPENED
OVER THERE? WHERE
ARE WE?"

KUVA GIVES HER A
PASSING GLANCE, ALMOST
LIKE ONE OUT OF FEAR.

MIKA CAN BARELY SEE
HER SHRUG HER SHOULDERS,
GRUNTING BEFORE LOOKING
AWAY FROM HER.



"LOOK, KUVA," MIKA STARTS,
SIGHING, "I'M SORRY, ALRIGHT?
SORRY FOR EATING YOU
LIKE THAT."

"I SAW THE SETTLERS
TAKE YOUR BROTHER AWAY."

"WHAT ARE YOU
TRYING TO DO?" KUVA
QUESTIONED SUDDENLY.

"YOU'RE NOT
REALLY A RABBIT,
ARE YOU? YOU'RE JUST
SOME FREAK!"

"AND JABARO..."

"JABARO..."

"I TRUSTED HIM. AND HE
JUST IGNORED ME..."

"ACTED LIKE WE
NEVER MET."

"NOW THOSE
SETTLERS HAVE KIBWE
AND I JUST..."

"DON'T KNOW
WHAT TO DO. I DON'T
KNOW WHAT'S GOING
ON ANYMORE."





"LOOK, MAYBE I'M A
FREAK, BUT THAT DOESN'T
MEAN I'M A MONSTER,"
MIKA STATES.

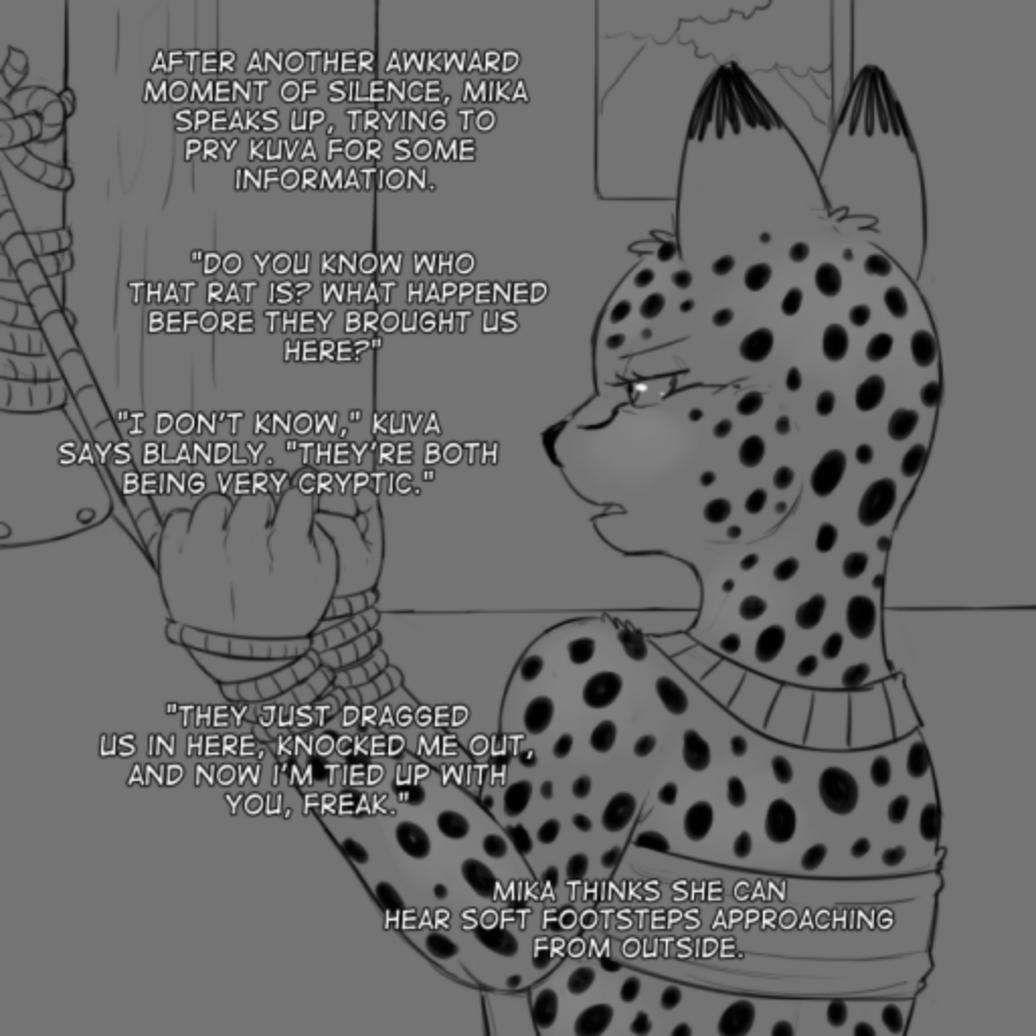
"I GET HOW YOU FEEL.
I NEVER EVEN KNEW MY
OWN PARENTS WELL
BEFORE THEY
DISAPPEARED."

"I DON'T KNOW
WHAT'S HAPPENING
EITHER, BUT AFTER WE
GET OUT OF HERE, WE'LL
FIND KIBWE. I DON'T
HAVE ANYWHERE ELSE
TO GO."

"THIS HAS NOTHING
TO DO WITH YOU," KUVA
POINTS OUT.

"MAYBE NOT. I
COULD HAVE TURNED
TAIL AND JUST RAN
AWAY FROM ALL THIS,"
MIKA EXPLAINS.

KUVA SIGHS AND
DOESN'T SAY MORE.
IT SEEMS SHE IS
DONE ARGUING.



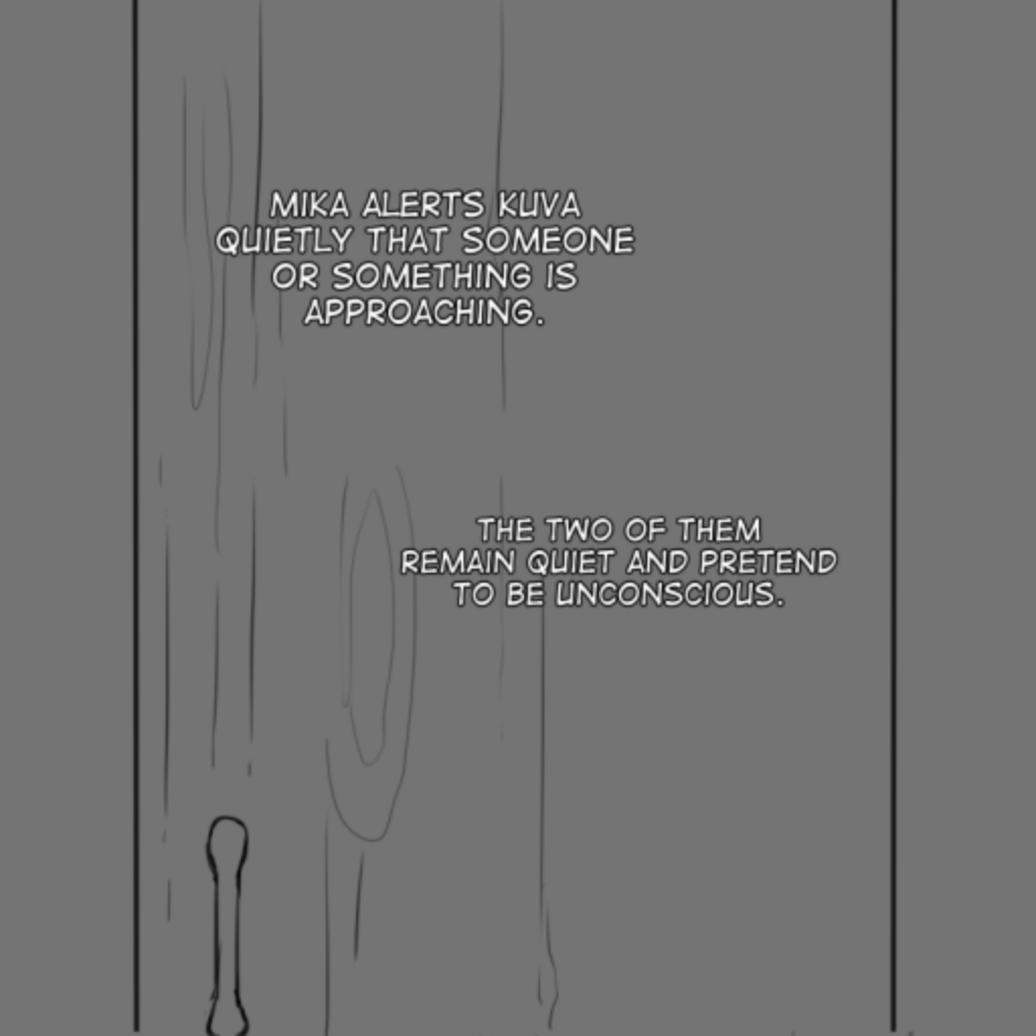
AFTER ANOTHER AWKWARD
MOMENT OF SILENCE, MIKA
SPEAKS UP, TRYING TO
PRY KUVA FOR SOME
INFORMATION.

"DO YOU KNOW WHO
THAT RAT IS? WHAT HAPPENED
BEFORE THEY BROUGHT US
HERE?"

"I DON'T KNOW," KUVA
SAYS BLANDLY. "THEY'RE BOTH
BEING VERY CRYPTIC."

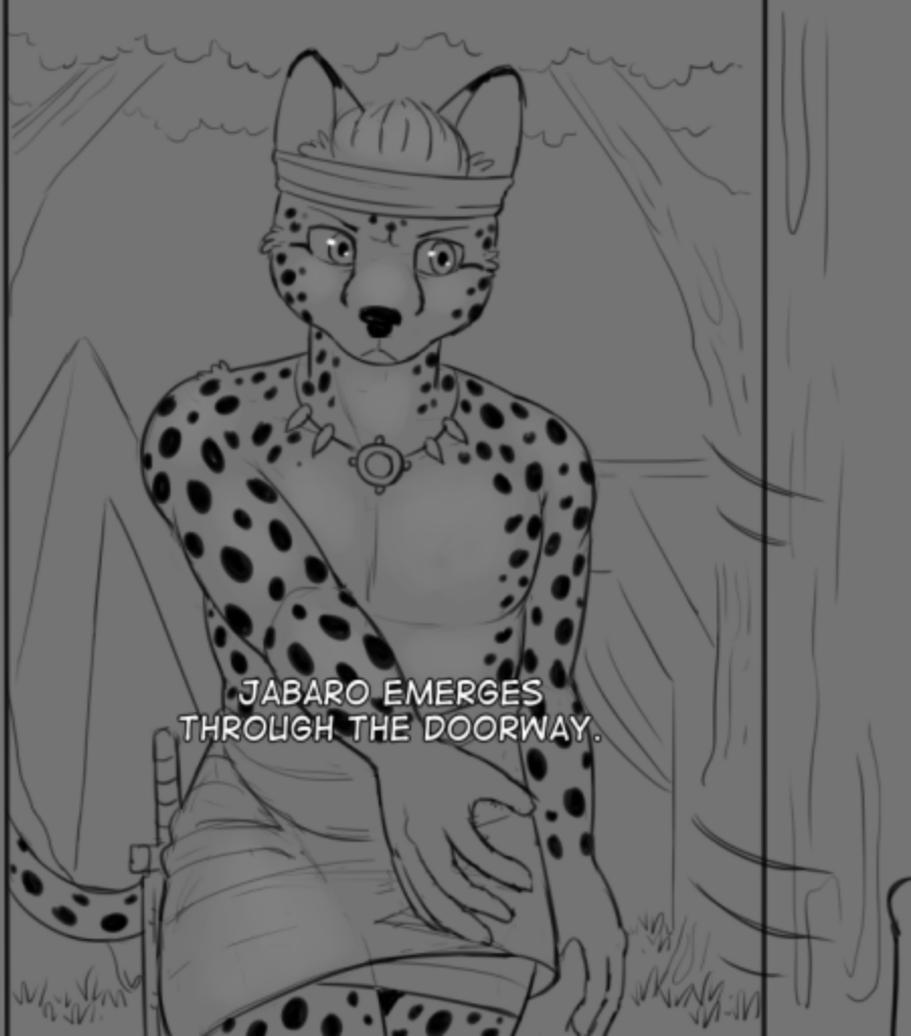
"THEY JUST DRAGGED
US IN HERE, KNOCKED ME OUT,
AND NOW I'M TIED UP WITH
YOU, FREAK."

MIKA THINKS SHE CAN
HEAR SOFT FOOTSTEPS APPROACHING
FROM OUTSIDE.

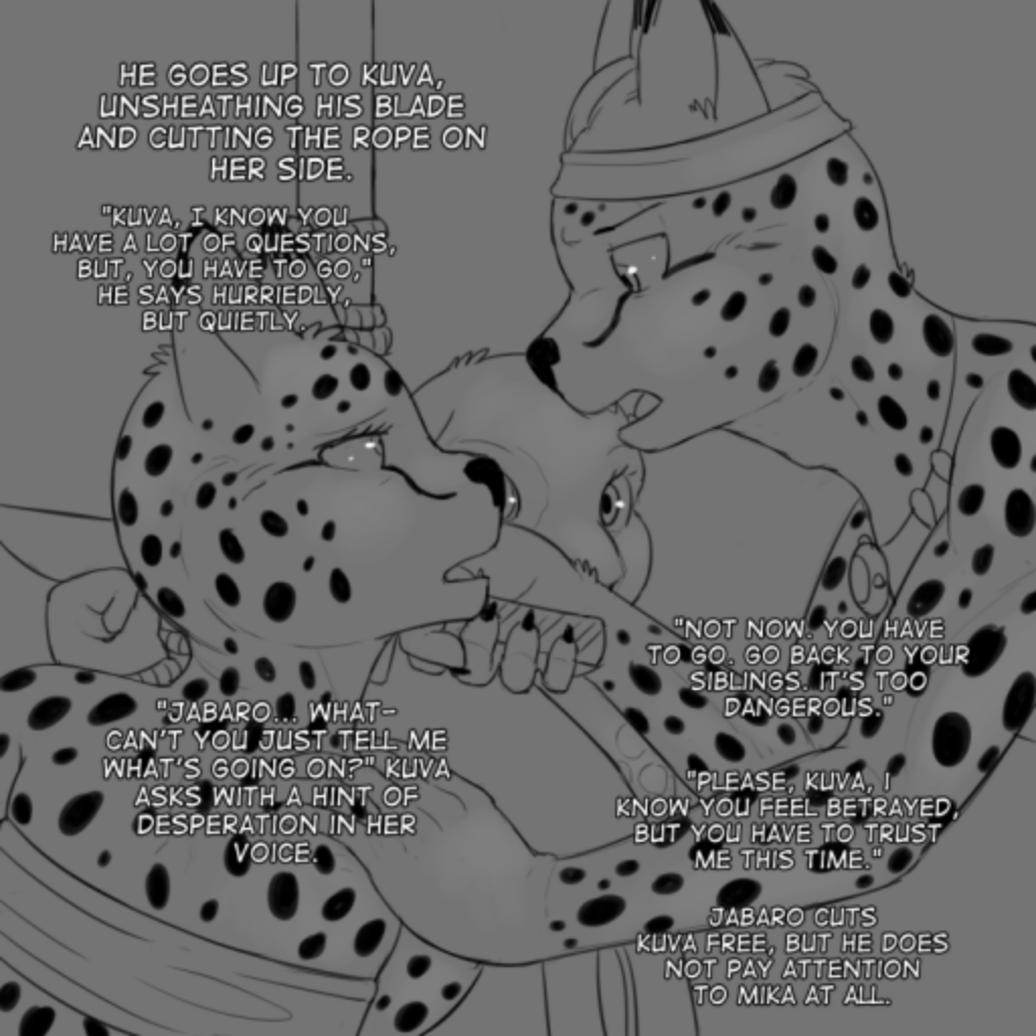


MIKA ALERTS KUIVA
QUIETLY THAT SOMEONE
OR SOMETHING IS
APPROACHING.

THE TWO OF THEM
REMAIN QUIET AND PRETEND
TO BE UNCONSCIOUS.



JABARO EMERGES
THROUGH THE DOORWAY.



HE GOES UP TO KUIVA,
UNSHEATHING HIS BLADE
AND CUTTING THE ROPE ON
HER SIDE.

"KUIVA, I KNOW YOU
HAVE A LOT OF QUESTIONS,
BUT, YOU HAVE TO GO,"
HE SAYS HURRIEDLY,
BUT QUIETLY.

"JABARO... WHAT-
CAN'T YOU JUST TELL ME
WHAT'S GOING ON?" KUIVA
ASKS WITH A HINT OF
DESPERATION IN HER
VOICE.

"NOT NOW. YOU HAVE
TO GO. GO BACK TO YOUR
SIBLINGS. IT'S TOO
DANGEROUS."

"PLEASE, KUIVA, I
KNOW YOU FEEL BETRAYED,
BUT YOU HAVE TO TRUST
ME THIS TIME."

JABARO CUTS
KUIVA FREE, BUT HE DOES
NOT PAY ATTENTION
TO MIKA AT ALL.



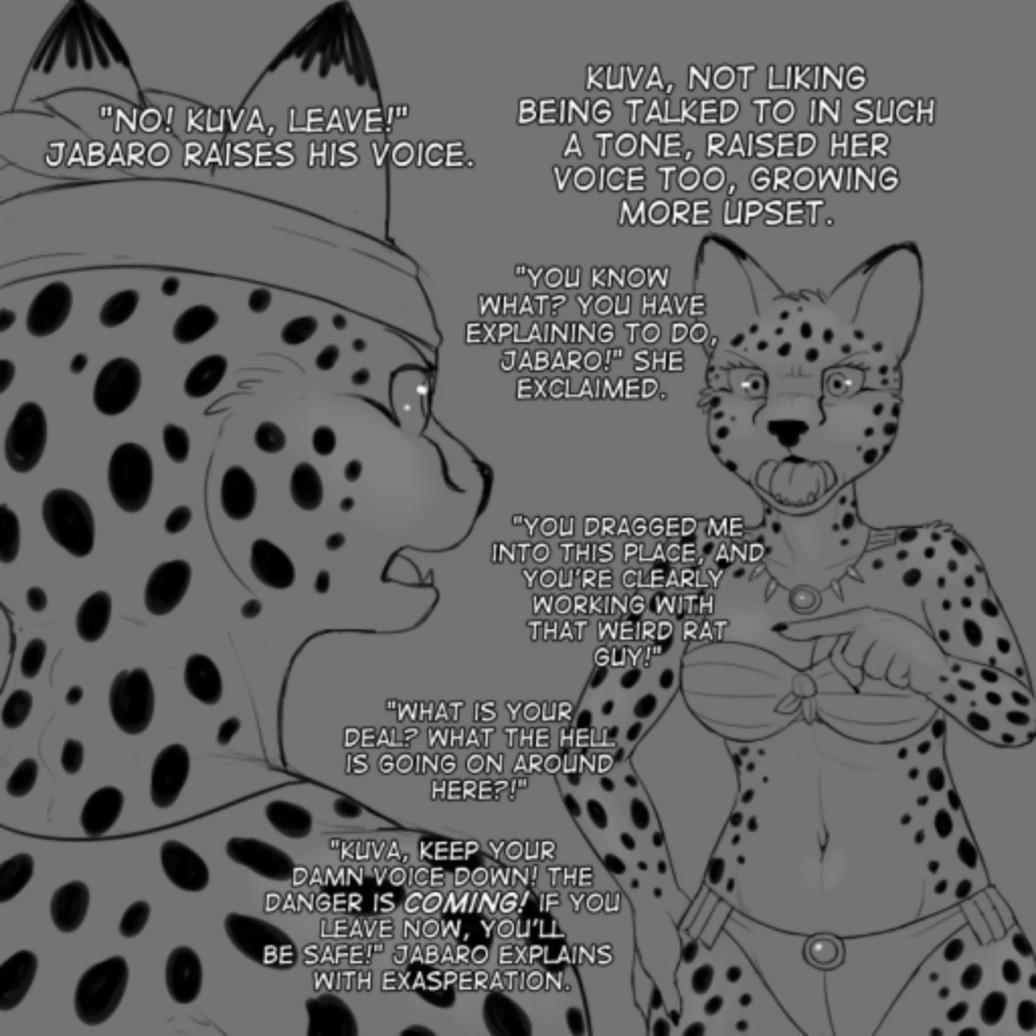
KLIVA IS FREED FROM HER BINDS AND AMBLES TOWARDS THE DOORWAY HESITANTLY.

"WAIT!" MIKA CALLS OUT. "DON'T YOU THINK I SHOULD GO WITH HER IF IT'S DANGEROUS?"

"M-MAYBE SHE'S RIGHT," KLIVA ADDS NERVOUSLY. "IT MIGHT BE GOOD TO JUST GO TOGETHER."

"KLIVA, THERE'S NO TIME TO DISCUSS THIS. JUST GO NOW," JABARO SAYS WITH A FIRM TONE.

"B-BUT...WELL, MAYBE YOU CAN COME WITH ME?"



"NO! KLIVA, LEAVE!"
JABARO RAISES HIS VOICE.

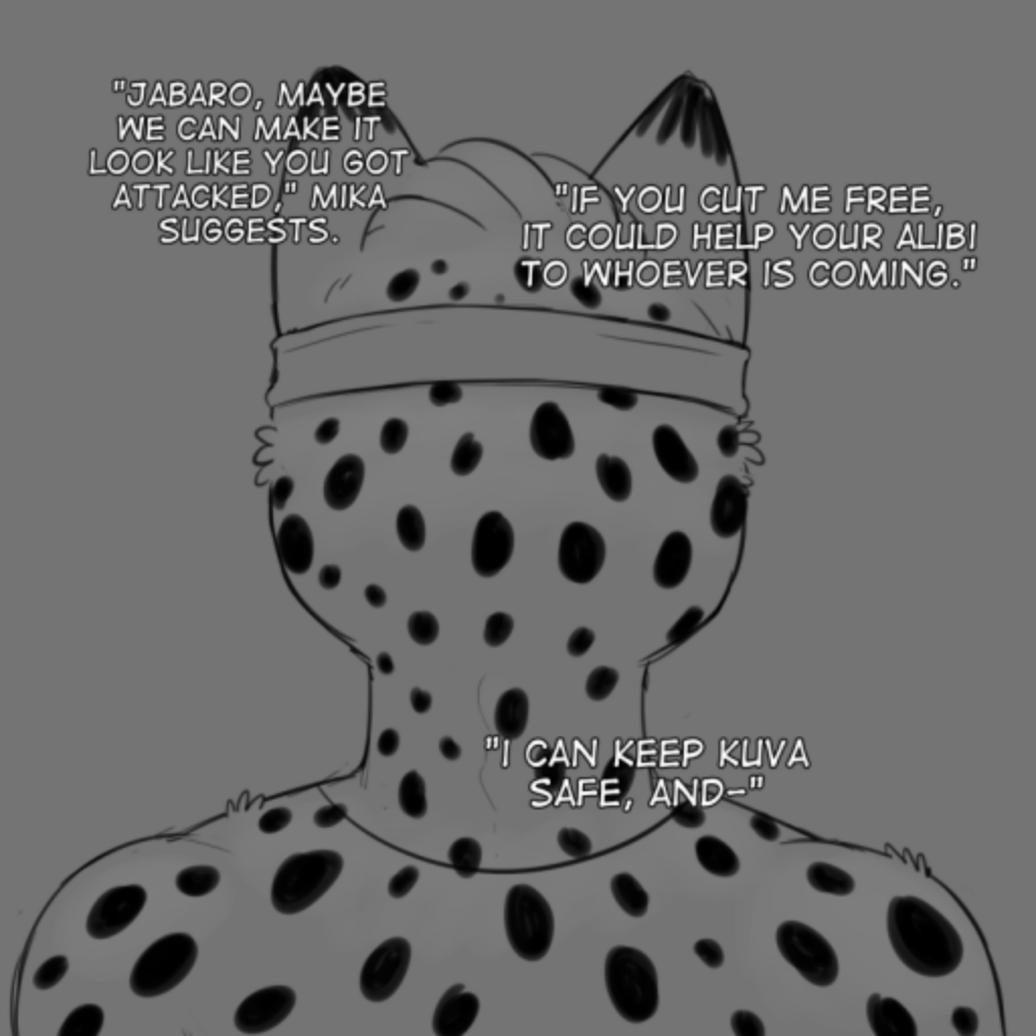
KLIVA, NOT LIKING
BEING TALKED TO IN SUCH
A TONE, RAISED HER
VOICE TOO, GROWING
MORE UPSET.

"YOU KNOW
WHAT? YOU HAVE
EXPLAINING TO DO,
JABARO!" SHE
EXCLAIMED.

"YOU DRAGGED ME
INTO THIS PLACE, AND
YOU'RE CLEARLY
WORKING WITH
THAT WEIRD RAT
GUY!"

"WHAT IS YOUR
DEAL? WHAT THE HELL
IS GOING ON AROUND
HERE?!"

"KLIVA, KEEP YOUR
DAMN VOICE DOWN! THE
DANGER IS *COMING!* IF YOU
LEAVE NOW, YOU'LL
BE SAFE!" JABARO EXPLAINS
WITH EXASPERATION.



"JABARO, MAYBE
WE CAN MAKE IT
LOOK LIKE YOU GOT
ATTACKED," MIKA
SUGGESTS.

"IF YOU CUT ME FREE,
IT COULD HELP YOUR ALIBI
TO WHOEVER IS COMING."

"I CAN KEEP KUYA
SAFE, AND--"



"YOU AREN'T
GOING ANYWHERE,
MIKA!"

"YOU AND I ARE
GOING TO STAY IN THIS
HOUSE!"

"NOW SHUT YOUR
DAMN MOUTH AND
KEEP QUIET!"

"I'M NOT LETTING--"



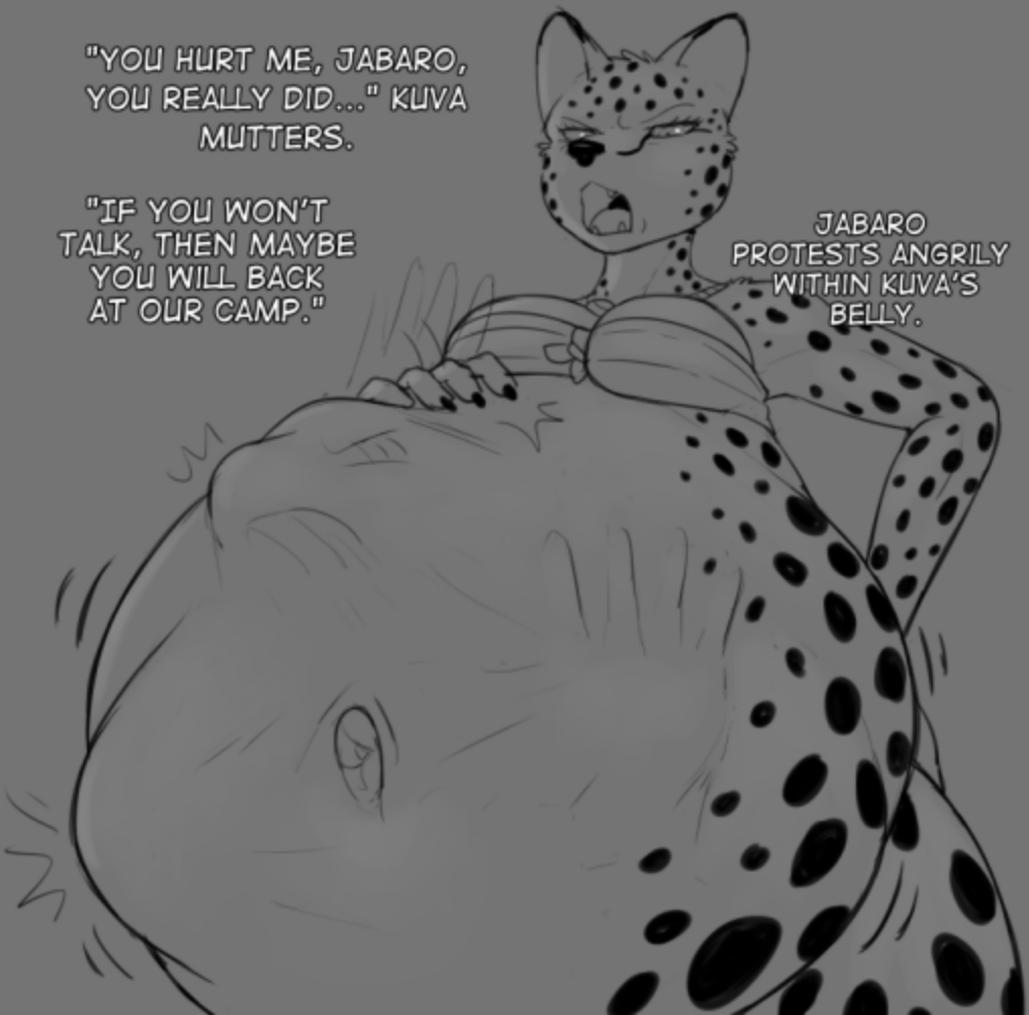
"NOMF!"



"YOU HURT ME, JABARO,
YOU REALLY DID..." KUIVA
MUTTERS.

"IF YOU WON'T
TALK, THEN MAYBE
YOU WILL BACK
AT OUR CAMP."

JABARO
PROTESTS ANGRILY
WITHIN KUIVA'S
BELLY.



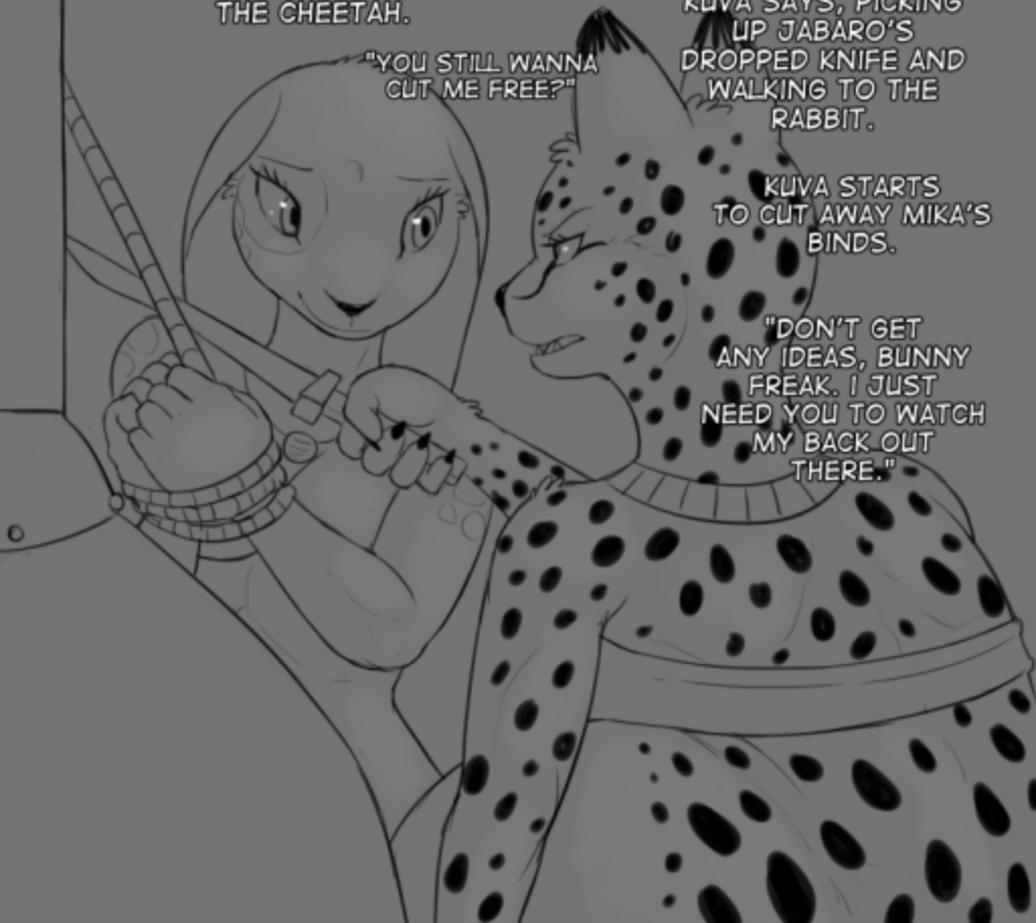
"THAT WAS...IMPRESSIVE,
KUIVA," MIKA COMPLIMENTS
THE CHEETAH.

"YOU STILL WANNA
CUT ME FREE?"

"AH, SHADDAP,"
KUIVA SAYS, PICKING
UP JABARO'S
DROPPED KNIFE AND
WALKING TO THE
RABBIT.

KUIVA STARTS
TO CUT AWAY MIKA'S
BINDS.

"DON'T GET
ANY IDEAS, BUNNY
FREAK. I JUST
NEED YOU TO WATCH
MY BACK OUT
THERE."



MIKA ASKS TO RUMMAGE
AROUND THE HOUSE A BIT
FOR SUPPLIES, AND KUVA
LETS HER, ALBEIT
RELUCTANTLY.

AFTER LOOKING
AROUND, MIKA FINDS
HER BANDOLIER IN
ONE OF THE TABLE
DRAWERS!



MIKA CAN'T SEEM
TO FIND MUCH ELSE IN
THE HOUSE, AS IF IT
WERE STRIPPED CLEAN.

AS SHE CONTINUES HER SEARCH, KUYA SPEAKS UP, NOTICING MIKA'S WANDERING EYES...

"OY, I SEE YOU LOOKING THIS WAY. YOU LIKE WHAT YOU SEE, HUH?" THE CHEETAH SAYS PLAYFULLY.

"YOU WERE IN HERE ONCE, Y'KNOW."

SHE WAS, OF COURSE, RIGHT. MIKA COULD NEVER RESIST GAZING AT A LARGE BELLY.

MIKA FEELS HER HEART FLUTTER AT THE SIGHT OF IT.



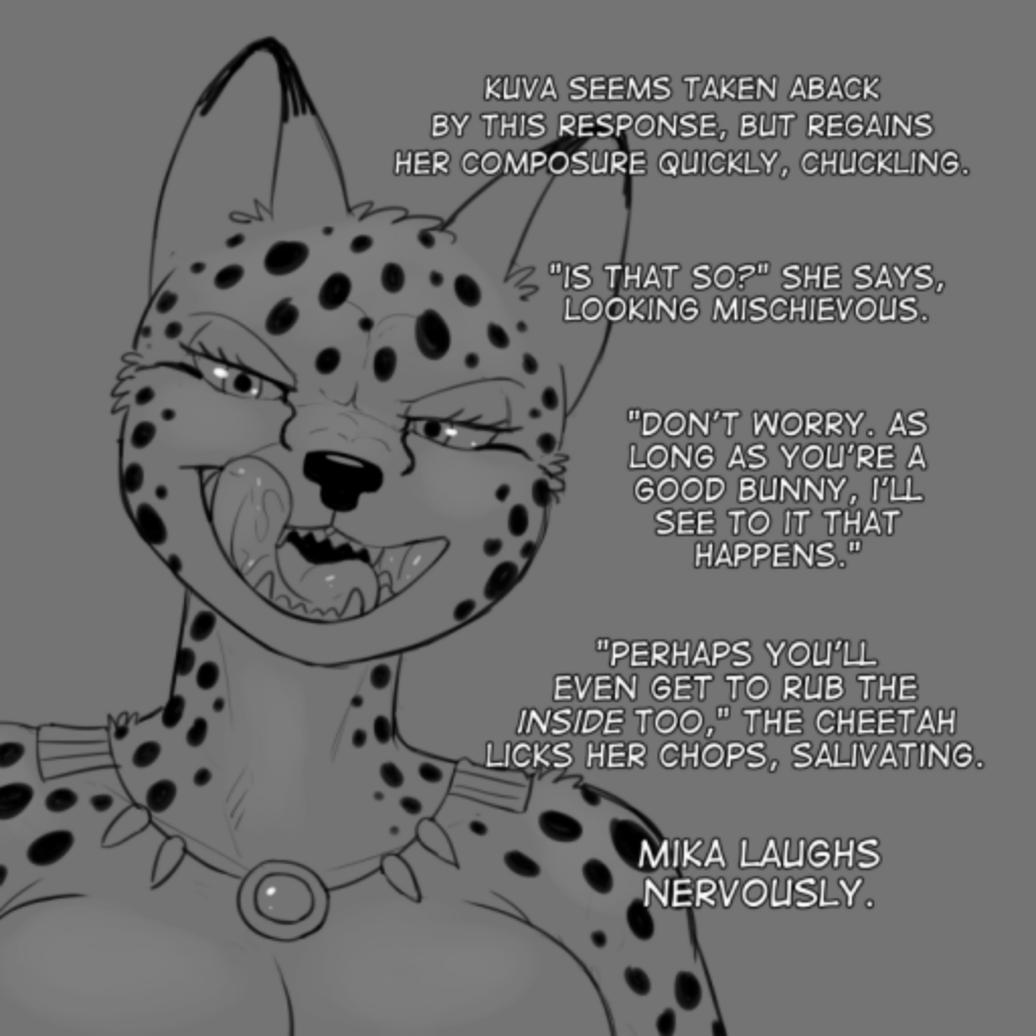
MIKA RESISTS THE STRONG
URGE TO GO OVER AND PAMPER
THE CHEETAH GUT, KNOWING
THAT THERE WOULD BE NO
TIME...

"WELL, OKAY, I'LL
ADMIT," MIKA STARTS
TIMIDLY.

"I DO HAVE A
SOFT SPOT FOR
BELLIES. YOURS
LOOKS QUITE
NICE ALL FULL AND
ROUND LIKE THAT," MIKA
EXPLAINS.

"MAYBE I'LL
EVEN GIVE IT A LITTLE
RUB WHEN WE'RE
OUT OF HERE..."





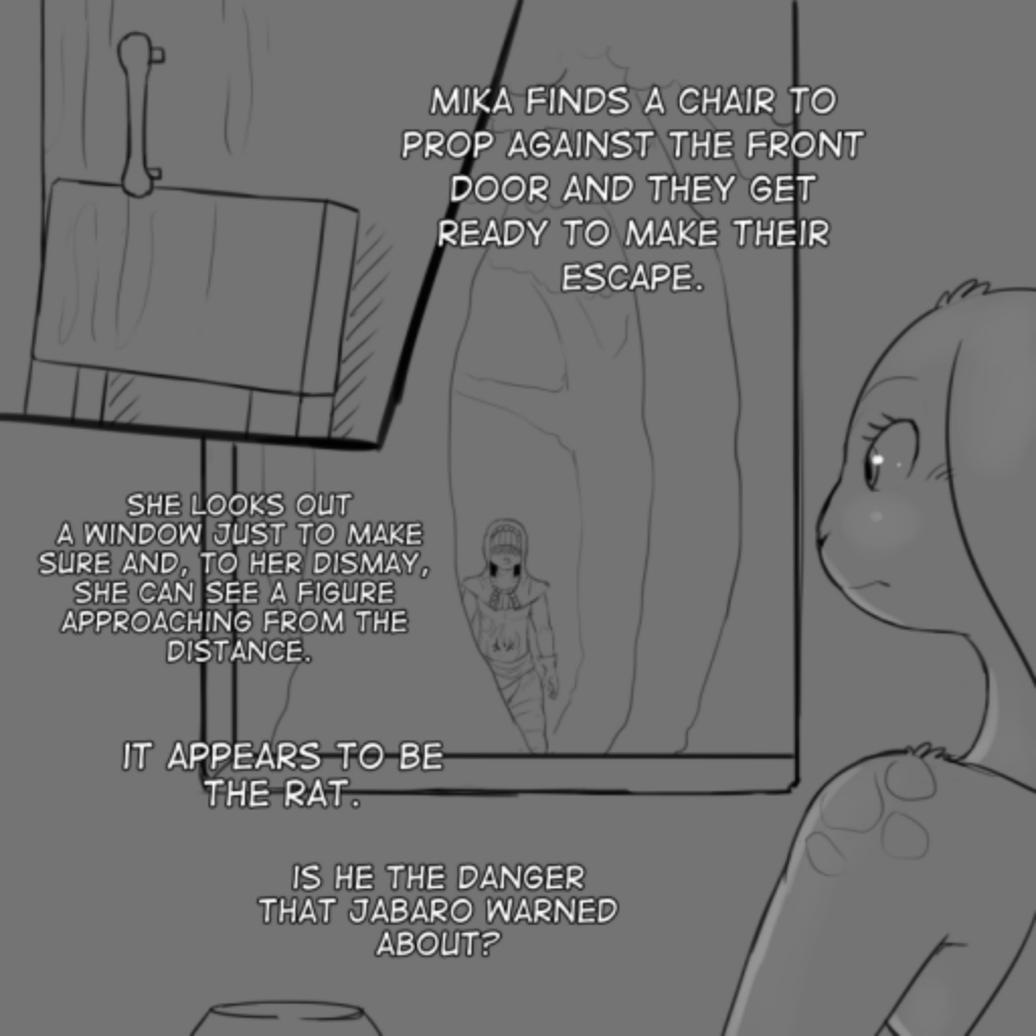
KUVA SEEMS TAKEN ABACK
BY THIS RESPONSE, BUT REGAINS
HER COMPOSURE QUICKLY, CHUCKLING.

"IS THAT SO?" SHE SAYS,
LOOKING MISCHIEVOUS.

"DON'T WORRY. AS
LONG AS YOU'RE A
GOOD BUNNY, I'LL
SEE TO IT THAT
HAPPENS."

"PERHAPS YOU'LL
EVEN GET TO RUB THE
INSIDE TOO," THE CHEETAH
LICKS HER CHOPS, SALIVATING.

MIKA LAUGHS
NERVOUSLY.



MIKA FINDS A CHAIR TO
PROP AGAINST THE FRONT
DOOR AND THEY GET
READY TO MAKE THEIR
ESCAPE.

SHE LOOKS OUT
A WINDOW JUST TO MAKE
SURE AND, TO HER DISMAY,
SHE CAN SEE A FIGURE
APPROACHING FROM THE
DISTANCE.

IT APPEARS TO BE
THE RAT.

IS HE THE DANGER
THAT JABARO WARNED
ABOUT?



THE TWO DECIDE TO
TRY AND ESCAPE THROUGH
A WINDOW.

WITH JABARO IN HER,
KIVA PREDICTABLY GETS
STUCK.

MIKA COULD HELP
HER THROUGH, BUT IT
MIGHT TAKE A BIT OF
TIME.

AND IF THE RAT
COMES IN WHILE SHE'S
DOING IT, THEY COULD
BE IN A REAL STICKY
SITUATION...



"KLUVA, I'M GOING TO
UH...SHOVE YOU OUT,
ALRIGHT?" MIKA WARNS
THE STUCK CHEETAH.

"OKAY, OKAY,
JUST HURRY UP AND
GET ME OUT OF HERE!"

MIKA GETS HER
OUT OF THERE.

- VIGOR

MIKA HURRIES TO JUMP
UP AND STAND ON TOP OF
ONE OF THE WOODEN
BEAMS ON THE CEILING.

JUST AS SHE IS
TRYING TO FIND HER
FOOTING THOUGH,
THE DOOR SMASHES
OPEN.

SHE WAITS
AND HOLDS HER
BREATH, BUT NO
ONE COMES THROUGH
FOR A WHILE.



CLOSING HER EYES, MIKA
USES HER SUPER HEARING TO
LISTEN FOR ANY SORT OF
TROUBLE.

FROM OUTSIDE, SHE
CAN HEAR THE RAT CHUCKLING...
AND ALSO...

"GET THE HELL AWAY
FROM ME!"



MIKA DASHES OUTSIDE
TO THE SIDE WHERE KUVA
EXITED.

SHE FINDS THE RAT
SITTING ON TOP OF
A DOWNED KUVA.

"AH, NICE OF YOU
TO DROP BY, SWEETHEART,"
HE SAYS WITH AN OFF-PUTTING
SMOOTHNESS.

"WHY DON'T
WE HAVE A CHAT?
I'M SURE THERE ARE
SOME THINGS YOU'RE
CONFUSED ABOUT."





MIKA TRIES TO
LOOK UNIMPRESSED AND
CERTAINLY **NOT** INTIMIDATED
BY THE RAT.

"ALRIGHT, I'LL
HEAR YOU OUT, BUT
LET'S UNDERSTAND
EACH OTHER REAL
QUICK..."

"I'M MIKA, A
BUNNY YOU SHOULD
NOT MESS WITH.
GOT IT?" MIKA
SAYS GRUFFLY.

"HA, THAT
MUCH IS TRUE,"
THE RAT REPLIES.

"AFTER ALL, YOU'VE
DEMONSTRATED SOME
BALLSY APPROACHES
BACK THERE."

"BUT ANYWAY, IF
WE'RE GONNA BE
INTRODUCING EACH
OTHER, I'D MIGHT AS
WELL GO NEXT."

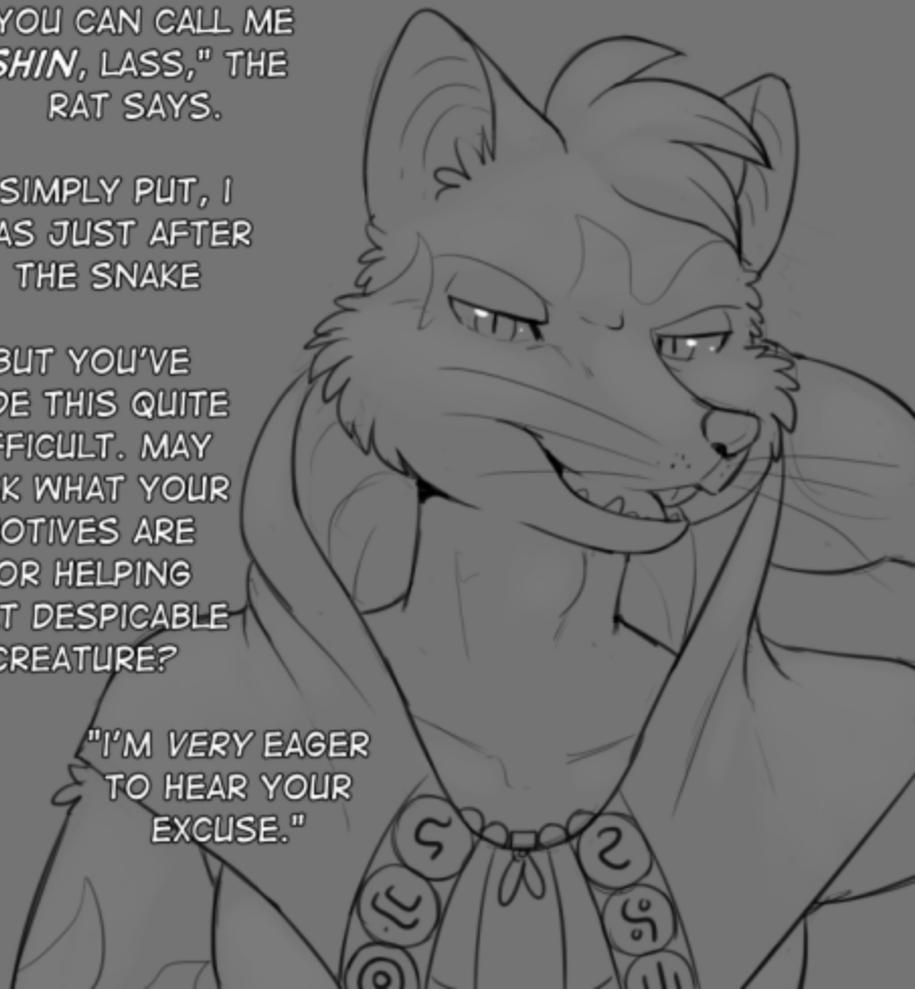


"YOU CAN CALL ME
SHIN, LASS," THE
RAT SAYS.

"SIMPLY PUT, I
WAS JUST AFTER
THE SNAKE

"BUT YOU'VE
MADE THIS QUITE
DIFFICULT. MAY
I ASK WHAT YOUR
MOTIVES ARE
FOR HELPING
THAT DESPICABLE
CREATURE?"

"I'M VERY EAGER
TO HEAR YOUR
EXCUSE."



MIKA OPTS FOR HONESTY, FILLING SHIN ON WHAT HAPPENED.

"...AND AS WE WERE LOOKING FOR THE KID," MIKA EXPLAINED, ALREADY TELLING HER SIDE OF THE STORY, "THE SNAKE LADY TOOK KUVA. I FOUGHT HER, BUT SHE TOLD ME SHE WAS BEING HUNTED. SHE DIDN'T WANT TO HURT ANYONE."

"AHH, YES, THAT IS EXPECTED," SHIN SAID. "LET ME GUESS. YOU THINK I AM MIS-UNDERSTANDING THE CREATURE?" HE LAUGHS.

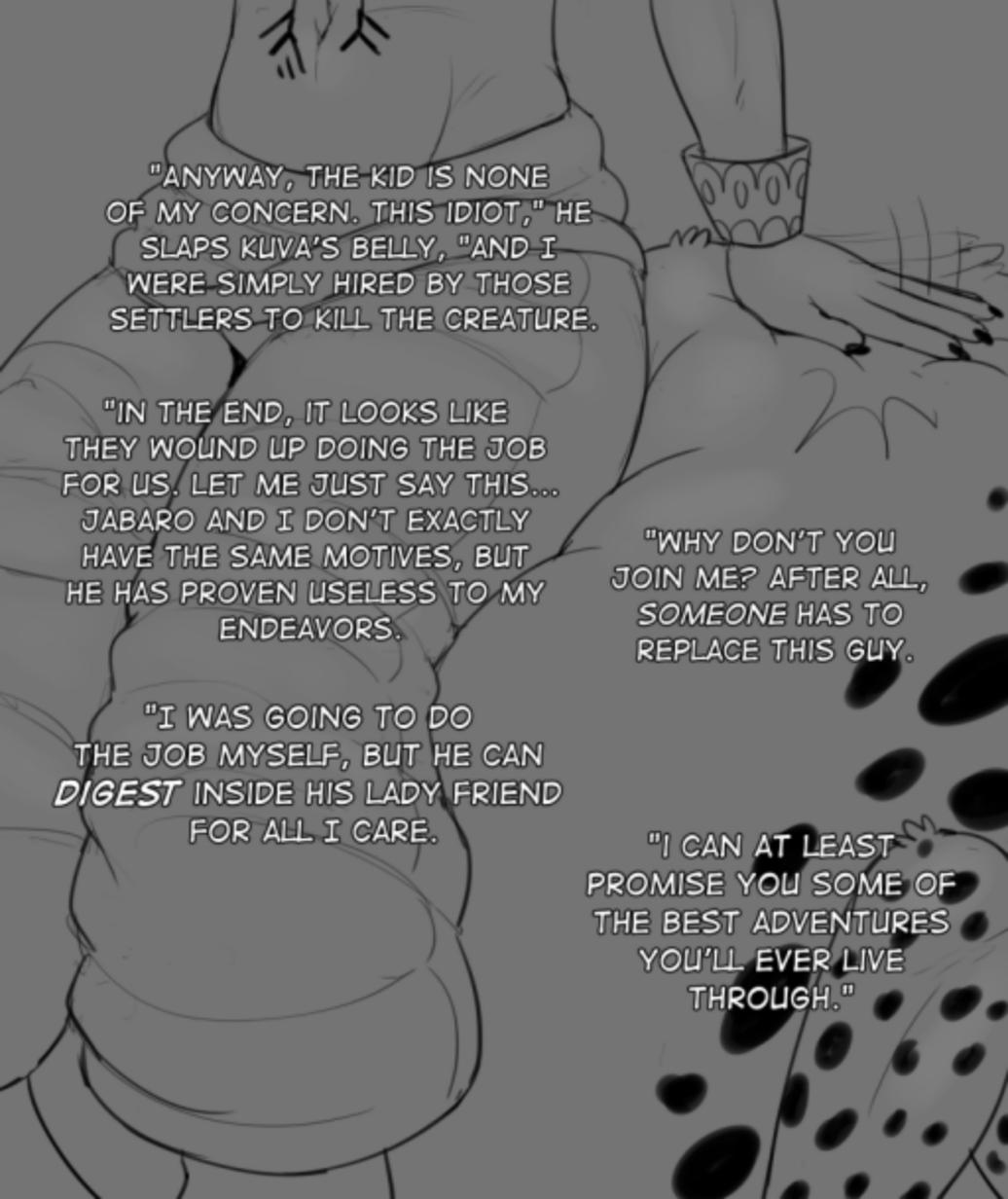
"NO, I KNOW WHO SHE IS. YOU, HOWEVER, WOULD NEVER TRULY UNDERSTAND HER. FROM WHAT YOU TOLD ME, YOU NOTHING BUT THAT... A RABBIT ASTRAY, LOOKING FOR ADVENTURE. NONE OF THIS IS YOUR BUSINESS, YET YOU STICK YOUR CUTE LITTLE NOSE WHERE IT DOESN'T BELONG."

"MAYBE I DO," MIKA SAYS. "MAYBE I'LL MAKE IT MY BUSINESS. I'VE GOT NOTHING ELSE."

"I UNDERSTAND THAT MENTALITY," HE SAYS WITH A CHUCKLE.

"YOU'VE PROVEN TO BE QUITE RESOLUTE."





"ANYWAY, THE KID IS NONE OF MY CONCERN. THIS IDIOT," HE SLAPS KUVA'S BELLY, "AND I WERE SIMPLY HIRED BY THOSE SETTLERS TO KILL THE CREATURE.

"IN THE END, IT LOOKS LIKE THEY WOUND UP DOING THE JOB FOR US. LET ME JUST SAY THIS... JABARO AND I DON'T EXACTLY HAVE THE SAME MOTIVES, BUT HE HAS PROVEN USELESS TO MY ENDEAVORS.

"I WAS GOING TO DO THE JOB MYSELF, BUT HE CAN *DIGEST* INSIDE HIS LADY FRIEND FOR ALL I CARE.

"WHY DON'T YOU JOIN ME? AFTER ALL, SOMEONE HAS TO REPLACE THIS GUY.

"I CAN AT LEAST PROMISE YOU SOME OF THE BEST ADVENTURES YOU'LL EVER LIVE THROUGH."

"SORRY, BUT I WANT TO STICK WITH KUVA. I SAID I WOULD HELP HER FIND HER BROTHER," MIKA EXPLAINS.

SHIN SMILES AND LIFTS HIS REAR OFF OF KUVA'S BELLY.

"ADMIRABLE," HE SAYS. "YOUR POLITENESS IS A RARITY OUT IN THESE SAVAGE LANDS."

"TELL YOU WHAT. I'LL LEAVE YOU LADIES TO YOUR BUSINESS. I HAVE NO PROBLEM GOING AT THIS ALONE."

"WHAT ARE YOU PLANNING? YOU SAID THE UH...SNAKE IS GONE, RIGHT?" MIKA QUESTIONS.

"WELL, TO REPHRASE, I DON'T KNOW FOR CERTAIN, THOUGH IT IS NOWHERE IN SIGHT.

"I'LL CATCH YOU AROUND. DO WHAT YOU WANT WITH JABARO, HE'S REALLY OF NO USE TO ME ANY LONGER."





"REMEMBER TO
SMILE OFTEN,
LASS

"A BRIGHTER
FUTURE IS IN STORE
FOR US ALL, NO
MATTER WHO
WE ARE."

THE RAT OUT OF VIEW,
MIKA GOES OVER TO HELP
UP KUVA.

SHE SAYS GROGGILY AS
SHE LIFTS HERSELF, "UGGH, HOW
LONG WAS I OUT...?"

"NOT VERY LONG
AT ALL. HERE, LET ME
HELP YOU-" MIKA OFFERS
HER HAND, BUT KUVA
DOESN'T TAKE IT.

"WHATTAYA THINK
YOU'RE DOING? I
DON'T NEED HELP
FROM YOU, SNACK!"
KUVA RETRACTS HER
OWN HAND AND
STRUGGLES TO
LIFT HERSELF."

"WHAT HAPPENED TO
THAT DAMN RAT? I SWEAR
IF I WAS MORE ALERT, HE'D
BE JOINING JABARO."

"DON'T EVEN KNOW
HOW HE KNOCKED ME
OUT..."





AS KUVA GETS UP ON
HER OWN (AFTER A FEW TRIES),
MIKA EXPLAINS WHAT HAPPENED
BRIEFLY, BUT DOESN'T SAY
ANYTHING ABOUT JABARO.

"IS THAT RIGHT?" THE CHEETAH
ASKS. "HE JUST UP AND
LEFT?"

"YOU THINK WE
SHOULD FIND SOME-
PLACE TO MAYBE WASH
UP AND TALK TO
JABARO?" MIKA
QUESTIONS.

"HMPH, I GUESS
SO," KUVA REPLIES.
I DON'T FEEL HIM MOVING
AROUND IN HERE. BUT IF
WHAT YOU SAID IS TRUE,
HE SHOULD STILL BE
FINE. PROBABLY JUST
PASSED OUT."

"THERE'S GOTTA BE SOME
WATERING HOLE NEAR
THIS PLACE."



LUCKILY, THE DUO
FIND A WATERING HOLE WHICH
IS NEAR SOME TENTS.

IT SEEMS THE AREA
IS EMPTY.

KUVA DIPS HER HEAD
DOWN TO THE POND AND
DRINKS HUNGRILY, HER
BELLY SLOSHING AS IT
EXPLANDS.

A HAND PASSES AGAINST HER
WALL AND A MUFFLED
CRY SOUNDS FROM WITHIN
THE CHEETAH'S STOMACH.

"THERE YOU ARE."
KUVA BREATHE A
SIGH OF RELIEF.

"SEE? TOLD YA
HE'D BE FINE."

MIKA WASHES HERSELF,
BUCKETS OF WATER ALREADY
CLOSE BY.

THE WATER HELPS MIKA
FEEL MORE REFRESHED.

KUVA WALKS OVER TO HER
WITH A HEAVY, SLOSHING GUT,
JABARO STRUGGLING STILL.

"NOW THAT I HAVE SOME
WATER IN THERE, THE ACIDS
SHOULDN'T BE AS STRONG,"
KUVA SAYS.

"THAT'LL GIVE US
ENOUGH TIME TO GET BACK
TO CAMP WITHOUT ME
BREAKING HIM DOWN."



+ PERCEPTION
+ CHARM



"ALRIGHT, LET'S
HEAD BACK TO CAMP. YOU
KNOW THE WAY?" MIKA
ASKS.

"OF COURSE I DO!
DOES THIS PLACE NOT
LOOK FAMILIAR TO YOU?
THIS HAS GOTTA BE
THAT SAME ABANDONED
VILLAGE FROM BEFORE."

"JUST FOLLOW
ME AND DON'T SLOW
ME DOWN."

AS THE DUO PROCEEDS TO TREAD THROUGH THE FOREST, MIKA BRINGS UP A TOPIC OF DISCUSSION.

"SO HOW DID YOU AND JABARO MEET ANYWAY?" SHE ASKS CURIOUSLY.

KUVA SCOWLS AT HER.

"WHAT MADE YOU SO INTERESTED IN MY LIFE, FREAK?" SHE ASKS CURTLY.

"WELL, I NOTICED YOU THINKING A LOT. MAYBE IT CAN HELP GET YOUR MIND OFF THINGS FOR A BIT WHILE WE'RE GOING BACK."

KUVA SCOFFS, BUT PAUSES FOR A BIT, APPEARING PENSIVE.

"WHATEVER. IT'S REALLY NOTHING SPECIAL. HE WAS JUST WANDERING OUT IN THE SAVANNAH. JUST SOME RANDOM CHEETAH IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE."

"HE JUST DECIDED TO HELP US OUT. I WAS ALREADY STRUGGLING TAKING CARE OF MY THREE BRAT SIBLINGS... SO I COULDN'T RESIST HIS HELP."

"I GUESS IT'S PREDICTABLE THAT I FELL FOR HIM. HE'S NOT A BAD LOOKING GUY EITHER... IT'S JUST." SHE SIGHS.

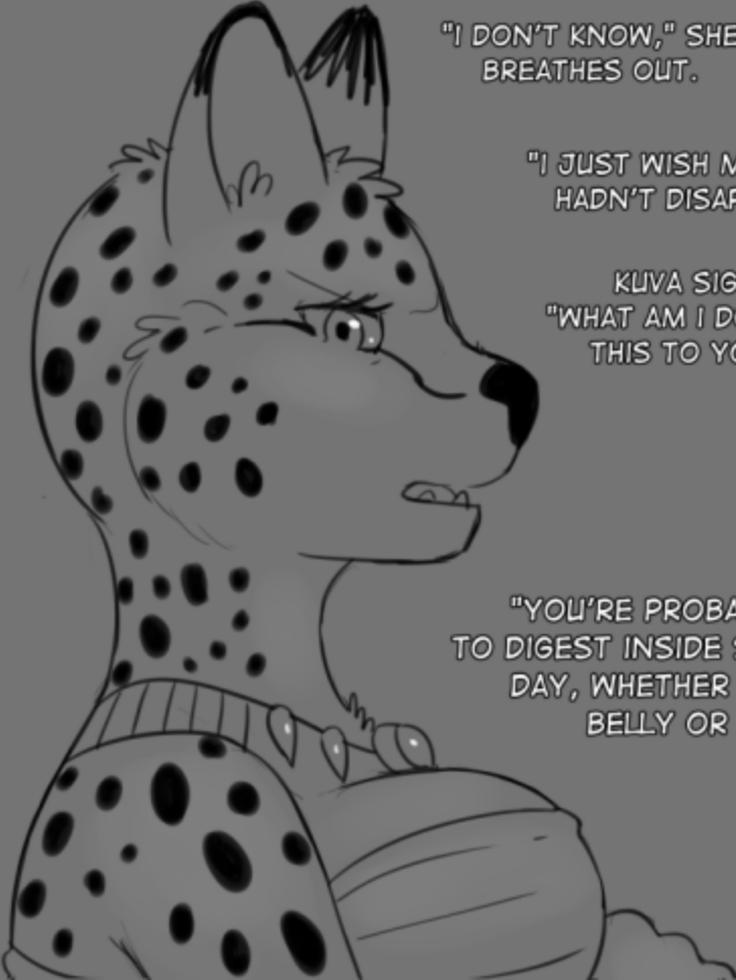
"THE WAY WE MET WAS PRETTY SUDDEN AND ALL, BUT I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN HANDLE LOSING HIM..."

"IF I'M BY MYSELF AGAIN, TIMES WILL BE HARD. I FEEL LIKE I'M JUST WASTING A HUGE OPPORTUNITY HAVING HIM CLOSE TO ME."

"DO YOU FEEL THAT WAY EVEN NOW?" MIKA ASKS SOFTLY.

KUVA JUST GRUNTS.





"I DON'T KNOW," SHE
BREATHES OUT.

"I JUST WISH MY PARENTS
HADN'T DISAPPEARED."

KLIVA SIGHS LOUDLY.
"WHAT AM I DOING TELLING ALL
THIS TO YOU, ANYWAY?"

"YOU'RE PROBABLY GOING
TO DIGEST INSIDE SOMEONE ONE
DAY, WHETHER IT'S IN *MY*
BELLY OR NOT."

AFTER WHAT FEELS
LIKE HALF AN HOUR,
KUVA STARTS TO
SLOW DOWN.

SHE STOPS AND LEANS
UP AGAINST A TREE,
PANTING AND
GROANING.

"HOLD ON, BUNNY."
SHE MOANS, RUBBING
HER BELLY.

"I HATE TO SAY
IT, BUT MY STOMACH
KINDA ACHES.

"I NEED TO
HAVE A SHORT
REST."



MIKA APPROACHES TO
GIVE KUVA SOME BELLY
RUBS. "MAYBE I CAN HELP
SOOTHE IT."

"OY! I KNOW YOU
LIKE MY *CUTE* BELLY,
WEIRDO, BUT THAT
DOESN'T MEAN YOU
GET TO TOUCH IT!"



"HMPH," MIKA GETS UP, A LITTLE FLUSTERED.

"AND YOU SAY YOU KEPT DOWN TWO WHOLE GAZELLE."

"I *DID*, SNACK. WHAT I DIDN'T DO WAS WALK AROUND FOR MILES AND WATER DOWN MY ACIDS TO KEEP THEM ALIVE," KUVA RETORTS.

MIKA TRIES TO CALM HERSELF DOWN, CHANGING THE SUBJECT. "FINE. I'M GOING TO GO HUNTING FOR A BIT."

"HUNTING? WHAT'RE YOU HUNTING FOR? GRASS? THERE'S PLENTY ALL AROUND HERE, Y'KNOW," KUVA SNEERS.





MIKA LEAVES TO
HUNT FOR ANY ANIMALS
NEARBY.

THE CLOSEST SHE
CAN FIND THAT PIQUES
HER INTEREST IS A
GENET HANGING OUT ON
A TREE BRANCH.

FURTHER AWAY SHE
CAN SEE AN OSTRICH, WHICH
WOULD BE VERY FILLING
INDEED.



IF SHE WERE TO GO
AFTER IT THOUGH, SHE
WOULD BE FAR ENOUGH
TO LOSE SIGHT OF
KUVA.

MIKA CHOOSES TO CATCH
THE GENET, AS IT MIGHT BE TOO
RISKY TO GO AFTER THE
OSTRICH.







AS THE MEAL SETTLES
INSIDE MIKA, HER STOMACH
SUDDENLY CLENCHES AND
GURGLES NOISILY...
DEMANDING MORE.

MIKA FEELS GREATLY
TEMPTED TO LOOK
AROUND FOR SOME
MORE PREY.

GROOOAN~!

+ STOMACH

MIKA USES HER SUPER
HEARING TO MAKE SURE KUVA
IS STILL IN PLACE.

"CRAZY RABBIT.
'HUNTING.' *PEH!* GOTTA
BE THE WEIRDEST THING
I'VE EVER HEARD."



THE RABBIT LOOKS
FORWARD TO SHOWING KUVA
SHE HAS THE GUTS TO BE
AS GOOD A PREDATOR
AS HER.

USING HER EARS, MIKA
LOCATES A RUSTLING SOUND
NEARBY AND FINDS...



A SNAKE!

ITS EYES ARE
STRANGE, AS IF IT
WAS AWARE OF
HER PRESENCE.



MIKA BELIEVES THIS
SNAKE MIGHT BE CONNECTED
TO JAVA.

"HEY, LITTLE GUY. CAN
YOU UNDERSTAND ME?"



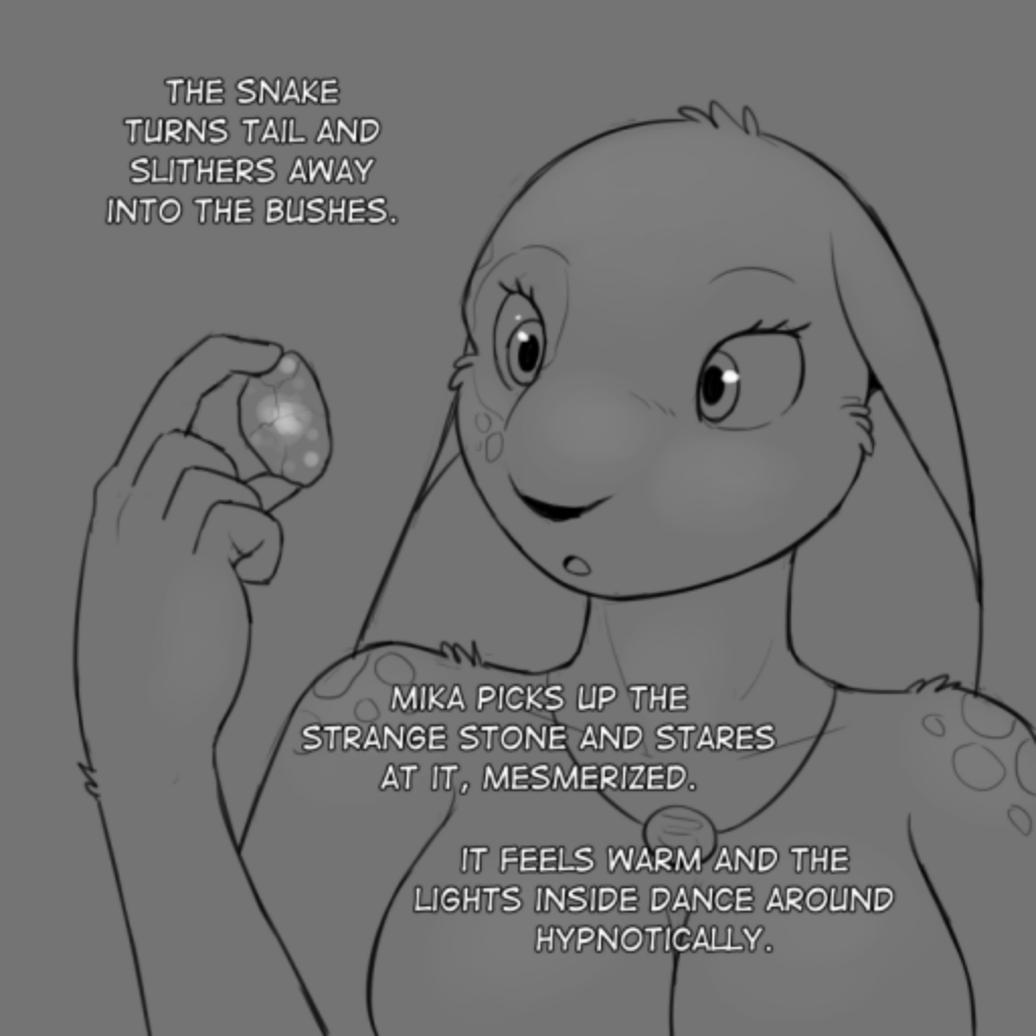
MIKA SLOWLY
INCHES A FINGER
TOWARDS ITS
SNOUT.

"YOU AREN'T VERY
AGGRESSIVE ARE YOU?"



THE SNAKE SUDDENLY
RECOILS AND COUGHS SOME-
THING UP.





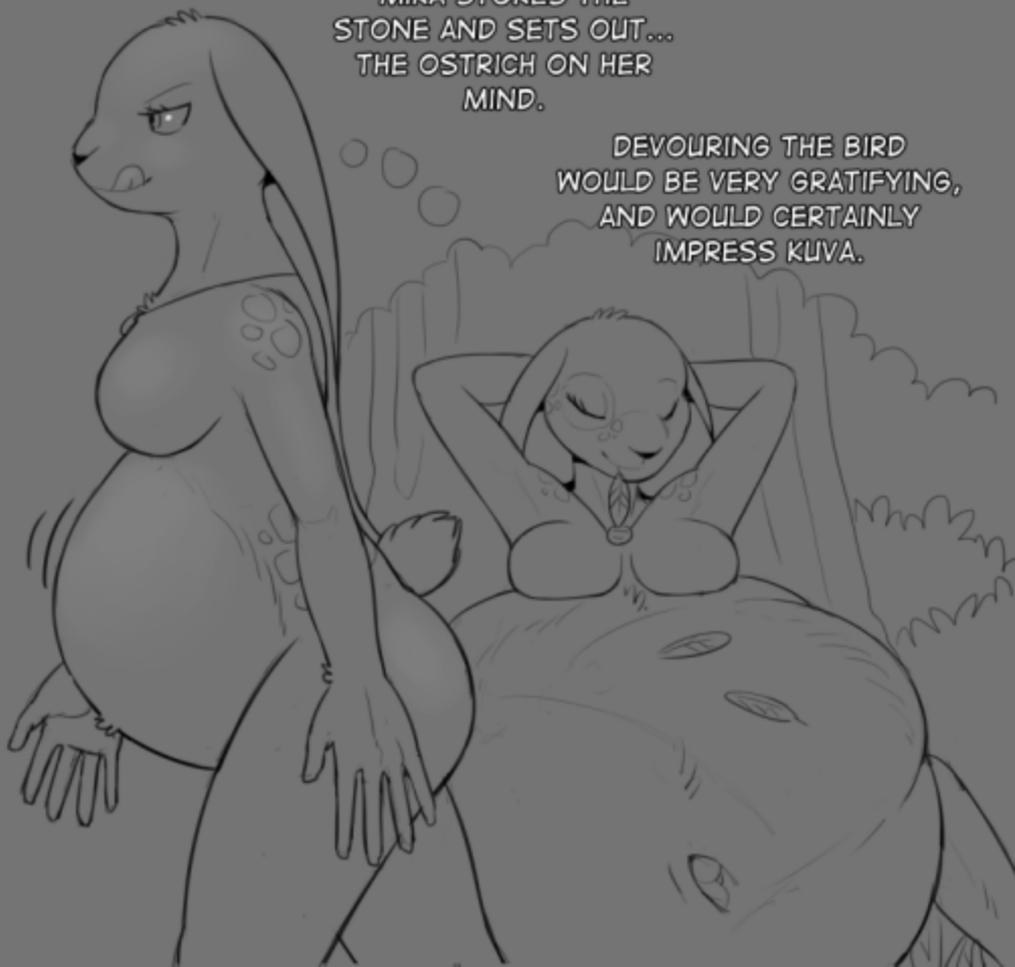
THE SNAKE
TURNS TAIL AND
SLITHERS AWAY
INTO THE BUSHES.

MIKA PICKS UP THE
STRANGE STONE AND STARES
AT IT, MESMERIZED.

IT FEELS WARM AND THE
LIGHTS INSIDE DANCE AROUND
HYPNOTICALLY.

MIKA STORES THE
STONE AND SETS OUT...
THE OSTRICH ON HER
MIND.

DEVOURING THE BIRD
WOULD BE VERY GRATIFYING,
AND WOULD CERTAINLY
IMPRESS KUVA.







MIKA DOESN'T
HEAR ANYONE
ELSE WITH HER
SUPER HEARING.

SHE TRIES TO
CAPTIVATE
THE LIONESSE.

"O-OH! WHO
ARE YOU?"

"COULD YOU
HELP ME
PLEASE? I
DON'T KNOW
HOW TO GET
OUT OF THIS
DREADFUL
FOREST..."



"A RABBIT THAT
DOESN'T PRANCE
AWAY. THAT'S A FIRST,"
THE LIONESSE CHUCKLES
MENACINGLY.

"YOU ARE QUITE
MEATY FOR A BUNNY
TOO..."

THE HUNTRESS TOSSES
HER SPEAR, IT BARELY
MISSING MIKA AND
SINKING INTO A TREE
NEXT TO HER.



MIKA IGNORES THE
SPEAR.

SHE CLENCHES
HER STOMACH HARD,
FORCING UP THE
GENET.



...AND SPITS IT
OUT WITH GREAT
FORCE!



THE LIONESSE WAS
ALREADY DASHING TOWARDS
MIKA, BUT THE RABBIT
WAS QUICK ENOUGH.

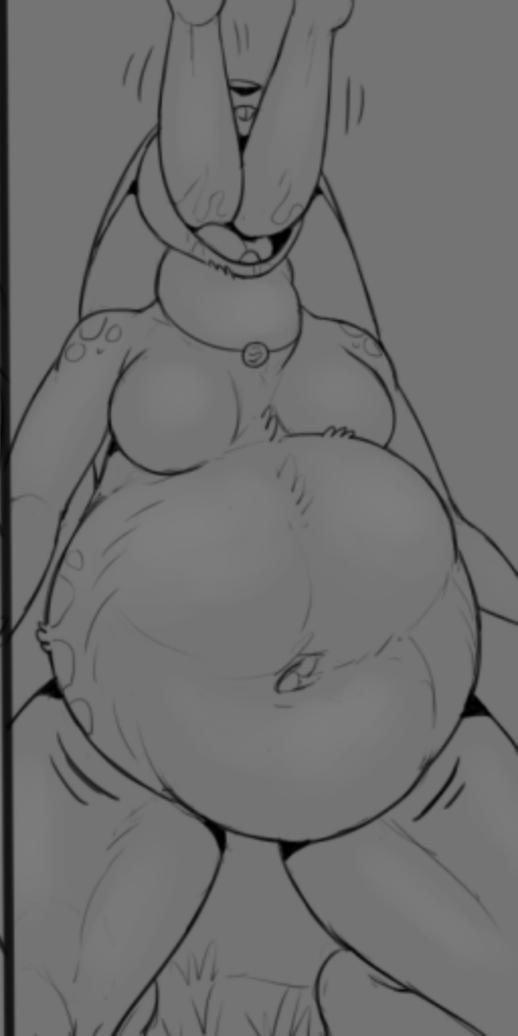
THE SLIME-
COVERED GENET HITS
THE HUNTRESS RIGHT
IN THE FACE.



THE GENET
SCURRIES AWAY IN
A HURRY.

THE LIONESS IS
STUNNED BY THE BLOW,
LYING ON THE GROUND
IN A DAZE.

MIKA QUICKLY
CHOWS DOWN ON THE
LIONESS AS SHE IS
STILL DAZED.



HER STOMACH
RELEASES A HEARTY
BELCH, HAPPY WITH
ITS FOOD.



MIKA TAKES THE
LIONESS'S SPEAR
FROM THE TREE.

IT WAS SUNK IN
THE TREE QUITE DEEPLY.

IF SHE HAD TRIED TO
REMOVE IT EARLIER, THE
HUNTRESS MIGHT HAVE
EATEN HER.





THE RABBIT HEADS
BACK TO KUYA, WHO IS
THANKFULLY SAFE.

THE CHEETAH IS
SHOCKED AT THE
SIGHT OF HER.

"WHAT THE... WHAT
THE HELL DID YOU
...CATCH? AND WHERE
DID YOU GET THAT
SPEAR??"



"OOH, YOU KNOW,
JUST GOT MYSELF SOME
GRASS..."

"CAUGHT ME A LIONESS
ALONG THE WAY, TOO."

KUVA LOOKS STUNNED,
SAYING, "EXCUSE ME,
WHAT!?"

"YOU THINK YOU'RE
BEING FUNNY OR SOME-
THING, FREAK?"



"NAH," MIKA SAYS PRIDEFULLY, "SHE WAS PRETTY EASY TO TAKE DOWN, HONESTLY."

"HEY!" KLUVA SAYS, GETTING UP. HER FACE LOOKS GRAVELY SERIOUS. "NO MORE JOKING AROUND. YOU ATE A LIONESS?"

"WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?" MIKA ASKS, A BIT IRRITATED.

"YOU'VE NEVER HEARD OF THE SEKHMETS?" KLUVA QUESTIONS.

THE NAME SOUNDS A BIT FAMILIAR TO MIKA. IT MUST BE SOME TRIBE.

"LOOK, WEIRDO, I THINK YOU MADE A MISTAKE."

"WHAT'S WRONG? YOU SCARED OF SOME LIONS?" MIKA TAUNTS.

"YOU DON'T KNOW HOW POWERFUL THEY ARE, YOU DUMB RABBIT! IS THAT SPEAR HERS?"



"YEA IT IS. LOOK," MIKA BREATHES OUT IN EXASPERATION, "NO ONE WILL EVER KNOW IF I JUST DROP THE SPEAR."

KUVA SCOFFS. "WHAT ARE YOU IMPLYING? YOU SAYING YOU CAN *DIGEST* HER?"

"I KNOW YOU, PEH, *ATE* ME, FREAK, BUT YOU STILL HAVEN'T SHOWED ME YOU CAN ACTUALLY DIGEST MEAT."

"I CAN DIGEST HER, TRUST ME," MIKA SAYS, PATTING HER BELLY.

"HARD TO BELIEVE, I KNOW, BUT I'LL SHOW YOU EVENTUALLY."

KUVA SHIVERS, TROUBLED BY MORE THAN JUST WHAT MIKA IMPLIED.

"EVEN IF YOU DO," KUVA STARTS, "THEY'RE GONNA NOTICE SHE'S MISSING, AND THEY'RE GONNA BE PISSED."

"DIDN'T EVEN KNOW THEY SET UP CAMP NEARBY. WE DEFINITELY HAVE TO MOVE AGAIN..."

"HURRY, LET'S GET OUT OF HERE..."

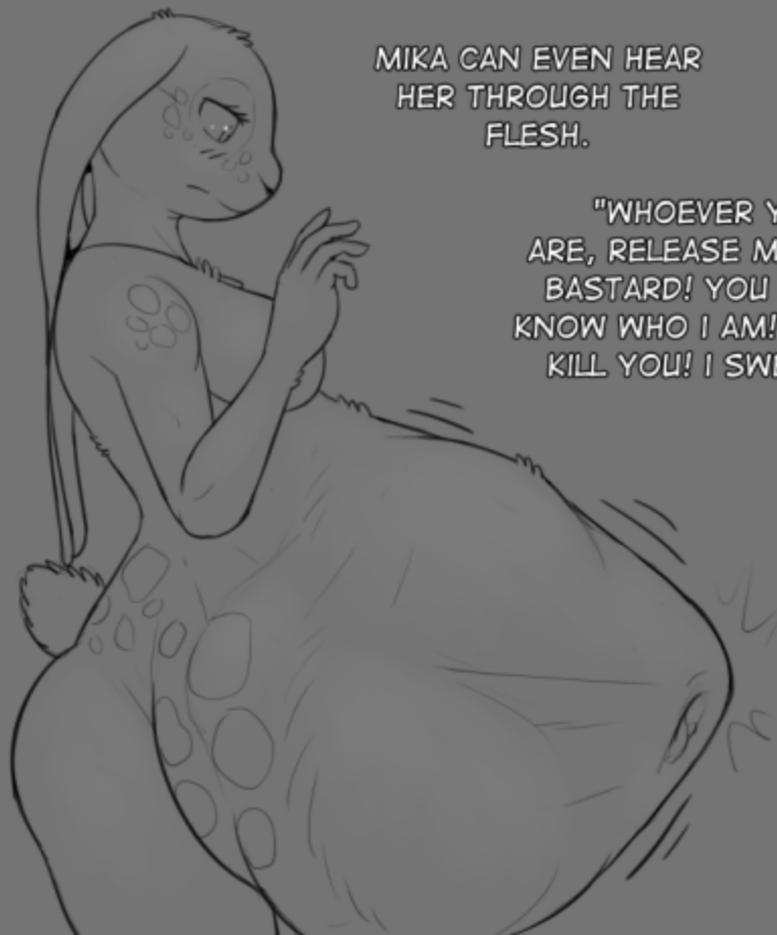


THE TWO TRAVEL A
SHORT DISTANCE UNTIL
MIKA'S BELLY LURCHES
FORWARD VIOLENTLY.

SHE CAN FEEL THE LIONESS
BEAT AGAINST HER STOMACH
WALLS.

MIKA CAN EVEN HEAR
HER THROUGH THE
FLESH.

"WHOEVER YOU
ARE, RELEASE ME NOW!
BASTARD! YOU DON'T
KNOW WHO I AM! THEY'LL
KILL YOU! I SWEAR..."



"YOU'VE BEEN
EATEN BY A BUNNY.

"AND YOU'RE GONNA
BE *DIGESTED* BY HER
TOO..." MIKA SAYS
WITH A GIGGLE.

THE LIONESS
PROCEEDS TO SHOUT
MORE EXPLETIVES.



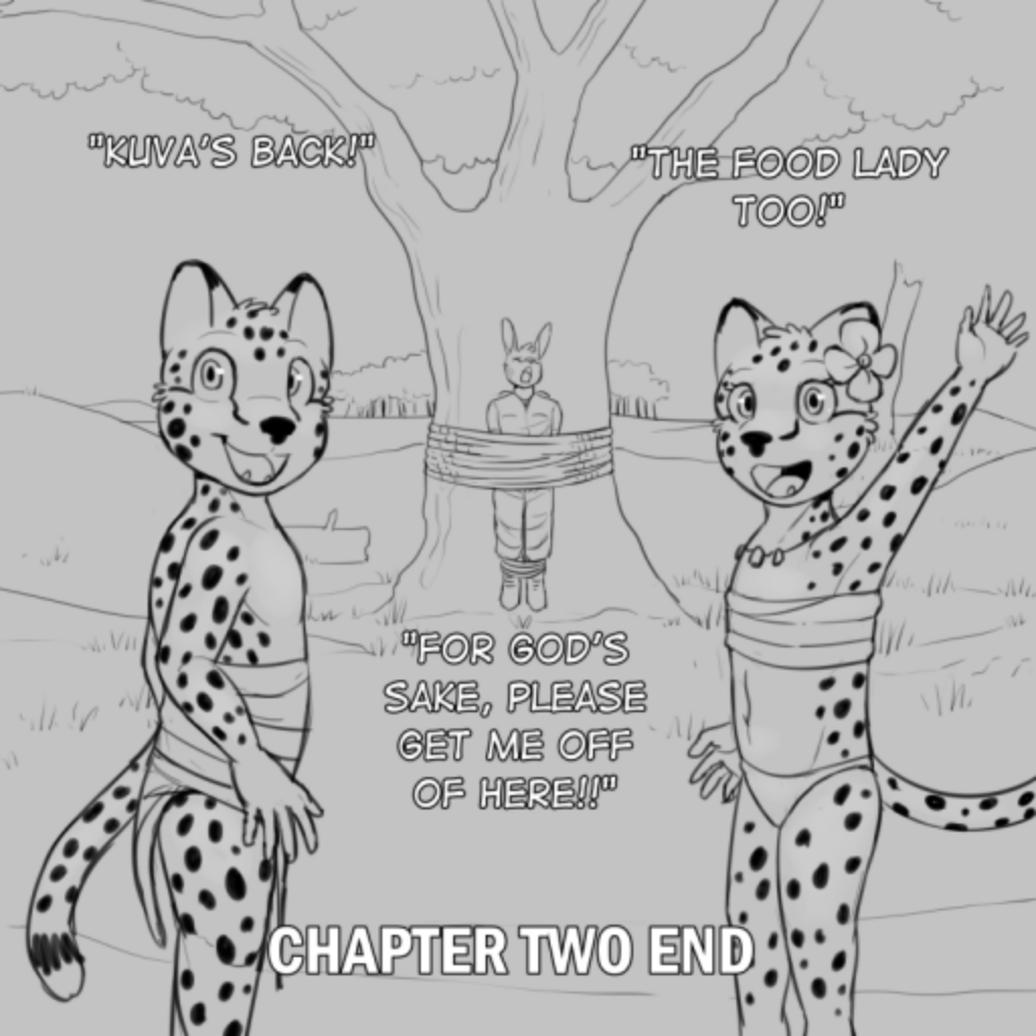
"THE HELL IS UP
WITH YOU?"



THE DUO FINALLY
ESCAPE THE FOREST AND
MAKE IT BACK TO CAMP.

"OY! WHAT'S GOING
ON HERE?"





"KLUVA'S BACK!"

"THE FOOD LADY
TOO!"

"FOR GOD'S
SAKE, PLEASE
GET ME OFF
OF HERE!!!"

CHAPTER TWO END