

MO + YAZ

By Chrono Eclipse and SpyGuy

**WEDNESDAY
5:30 AM**

Monique snores softly, curled up beneath silky sheets and a cozy comforter. The room is dark, heavy curtains drawn across the windows while the digits of a sleek alarm clock serve as the only source of light, bathing the bedside table in a dim green glow.

The tired woman turns over, reaching out an cocoa colored arm in search of her girlfriend's warm body.

"Mmmmmph?" She mumbles into her pillow as her fingers find wrinkled sheets and empty air. She opens her eyes, blinking slowly as her vision adjusts to the dark. She gently pats the mattress, looking for her missing bedmate.

"Lisa? Babe?" She whispers huskily. She touches her throat and coughs trying to clear it. She pushes back the covers and sits up, wincing as she does.

Monique may be 39 now but last night she had sex like she was 27, and it feels like it had taken more than she thought to keep up with her younger and nimbler girlfriend. As she massages her lower back, she wonders if maybe she should've stretched or something beforehand. Is that what middle-aged people do? She had so many questions.

She hears some shuffling near the door and turns over, squinting into the dark.

Lisa was attempting to get her shoes back on in the dark and collect her things so she could get back to her apartment and shower before work. She took the cash on the small table next to the door that Monique always left out to reimburse her for her cab. Lisa had tried to explain uber to Monique many times but the 50 year old hadn't understood what was wrong with good old fashioned cabs.

Monique raises a graying eyebrow at Lisa who is half out of her clothes from the night before, leaning on the wall as she tries to slip on a shoe. "What are you doing all the way over there? You trying to ghost out on your girlfriend?" She pats the empty spot next to her. "Why in a rush? You don't need to go. Why not a little 'breakfast in bed'..." Mo smiles, letting a now flabbier leg fall out of the sheets in what she thinks is a sultry fashion.

Lisa looked at Monique like she was gaslighting her. "I was just doing what you instructed..." She said and then stopped, blinking at Monique. "Huh." She said as if she discovered something.

Monique straightens in bed, confused by the sudden change in atmosphere. Was it her imagination or was Lisa suddenly getting defensive? "Instructed? Last I checked we didn't come with instructions. Am I missing something?" Lisa quickly buttoned her shirt. "Last I checked this didn't come with labels either. I don't want to get weird about this or anything. I appreciate everything you've done for me and my career... it's just a bit of a mindfuck to be your dirty little secret around the office and the your girlfriend in the morning when you suddenly decide after months of this that you want to cuddle." She says taking a breath and shutting her eyes to brace herself, expecting Monique to tell her to get the fuck out and then spend the rest of the day worried about whether she still has a job.

Monique isn't sure how to respond. She's completely blindsided by Lisa's explanation, her lover's words hitting her like a punch to the gut. "Lisa, no. You're not my dirty little secret. You've never been that." She slides out of the bed and crosses the room. "Listen, I know I was acting weird yesterday, but last night was amazing. You were amazing." She reaches out with a hand and cups Lisa's face.

Something here was off. Big time. Mo could feel that something had changed, she just couldn't put her finger on what.

Lisa melts a little. She accepts Mo's embrace and looks up into the woman's tired face – a bit jowly and haggard since she hadn't put on her makeup yet that day. And she grins, extending her arms to hug Monique's softer midsection. "You're lucky i've got a serious mommy complex, old lady." She says pressing into her.

Monique smirks down at Lisa, laugh lines appearing around her mouth as her eyes crinkle slightly. "Yeah, yeah. I get it. So I've got a couple years on you, but a mommy complex?" she mutters kissing Lisa on her forehead. She rubs her fingers along the woman's smooth cheek, surprised at how rough her own skin feels against the paralegal's much suppler flesh. Gonna have to moisturize more now, Mo thinks. Then she feels Lisa's arms wrapping their way around her thicker sides. To the newly aged lawyer the feeling was akin to wearing extra layers of clothing. She could feel Lisa's arms, but the sensation was off, like she had on loose padding.

Lisa pulls away, still smiling. "Okay fine I have a cougar fetish? Happy!" She giggles and finishes getting dressed. "Okay MS. STONE. As nice as it is to hear that you're wanting more out of our midnight rendezvous I should really take that cab you called for me and get home to clean up. You don't want all your underlings whispering about why the hot young paralegal is showing up in the same clothes she left in. But next time, if you'd like I can pack an overnight bag and give you your morning sponge bath grandma."

She said sticking out her tongue playfully. She got on her tip toes and pressed her smooth cheek against Monique's slightly lined one and kissed the air. Then she slipped on her other shoe and moved toward the door.

"First time someone's called me a cougar before," Monique replies, quietly admitting to herself that going forward the monicker for a thirsty older woman was probably going to be more accurate-- even if she thought that Lisa was just being silly. Pssh! I got a few more years before that happens she thinks, not realizing just how many years have passed for her in the night. She puts her hands on her hips and shakes her big, gray/black hair like a mane. "You better watch yourself or this cougar's gonna pounce."

Lisa bites her lip, excited by what Monique just said. "If you can find an excuse to slip down to the archives today i'll be there working and i'll be easy prey!" She says making a claw with her hand and winking. She closes the door behind her leaving Monique alone in a home that is very different than the apartment that she's used to.

The door clicks shut and Monique sighs. After that little drama session there was no way she was going back to bed, so she figures she might make herself an early breakfast. She heads towards the kitchen, bare feet tapping lightly across the floor. Weird she thinks. When did we get rid of the carpet? Monique gets a little turned around in the dark and reaches out for a light. Flipping it on, she gasps. She's standing in a comfortable office, all wood panelling, bookshelves, and leather furniture. "What the hell?!" Mo is super confused. Where the hell am I? She rushes back down the hallway-- past several hanging pieces of modern art-- pushes through a pair of doors and finds herself standing in a large living room. There's a fireplace in a corner, and a large flat screen television sitting atop an antique cabinet. Monique turns, coming face to face with a wall covered in framed photos. Photos of her, but they're all...wrong.

There's her graduating in a cap and gown with a group of friends, but her hair's in old school braids while everyone else is wearing clothes covered in

bold patterns and colors-- a timestamp in the corner reading 6/18/98. There's another of her-- older and in glasses and a pantsuit-- shaking hands with Fontaine (did he have hair?) in front of several applauding partners. All over the wall are shots of Monique and strange people -- older coworkers at the firm and strangers she doesn't even know-- doing things like drinking on beaches, posing in dresses at galas, and biking through parks. She looks up and sees herself-- gray streaked hair hanging over her shoulders as she stands in dirty coveralls holding a sledgehammer-- smiling in what looked like a gutted version of this very room.

"Holy shit. Is this... is this my house?"

Monique spends the next hour poking around her new home. Well, old home. It looked to be an antique, two-story brownstone that had been converted to be a tasteful combination of classical and modern. There was a cozy and well stocked kitchen, a small laundry room with an obscenely sleek and modern looking washer/drier, and an antique dining room overlooking a small garden with a bench and birdbath. She was also surprised to find an entire upstairs complete with bathroom, attic, and a guest room-- which looked to be currently occupied by Lexa, judging from the medical journals scattered across a desk and the different medications sitting on her bedside table next to a pair of reading glasses.

Monique sits on Lexa's bed, the springs groaning slightly. "What the hell is happening?"

Mo flips on the light, illuminating a much larger bedroom. Her futon is long gone, replaced with a large bed flanked by enormous windows draped with heavy curtains. She goes over to her bedside table and searches through some items-- a small leather bound notepad filled with scribbles, sleeping medication, a dogeared romance novel, a pair of reading glasses. Not what she's looking for. She scans the room, eyes landing on a large leather briefcase in a chair. "Gotcha!" She rushes over and clicks it open. She pulls out a wallet and flips through it. "Credit card...credit card... credit card... holy shit, girl..." she mutters, not wanting to think about how much debt she might be in now. "Ah ha!" she pulls out her prize-- a driver's license-- and turns it over in her hands.

She squints, having trouble reading the tiny letters, her face to crinkling up with new lines and wrinkles. "Too damn dark in here." Mo sighs with frustration and leans over her bedside lamp, holding the card at different angles to her face, trying to clear up the fuzziness. Nothing works. She glances

down, spotting the reading glasses. She wore glasses briefly in high school and hated it, opting instead for contacts when she needed them. She hadn't worn a pair of specs in years. The aged woman frowns. Reaches out. Slips the reading glasses on.

Suddenly everything clears up into perfect 20/20, like magic.

"Monique Stone... Brown Eyes... Organ Donor..." she mutters, eyes scanning the card for the one detail she needs. Suddenly, she stops. Her eyes widen as she does a double take.

"Oh HELL no."

BIRTHDAY: 10/10/69.

"I'm... I'm 50 years old?!"

6:00 AM

Monique stares at her reflection in the mirror, refusing to believe what she's seeing. Looking back at her is a thoroughly middle-aged woman, well on her way up and over the hill. She pats her big, frizzy hair, a powdery mix of black and gray-- So much gray. She rubs her droopy cheeks and tries massaging away the stubborn crows feet that now permanently frame her tired eyes. She holds up a hand to her jowls-- she has JOWLS-- staring in morbid fascination as they slide back back down over and over again. It only gets worse the lower she goes, from the lines along her neck to her now drooping breasts and puffy stomach, pooching out over her panties. Her once svelte physique is now a mere memory as her hips flare out into a decidedly pear shape while her once proud booty now sags sadly with cellulite.

"I'm my own mom!" she whispers with a voice that sounds just as worn out as she feels. Her heart flutters in her chest and she sits down on the toilet as her head spins. "Okay, don't panic. You can figure this out," she says to herself, fanning her face and taking big gulping breaths. Why is it so hot? she wonders. Am I having a freaking heart attack?! After a few moments she calms herself down and does what any legal mind would do in the middle of a tailspin: she takes stock.

It's obvious that not only has she gotten older, but things have gotten warped around her too. Lisa thought this was completely normal, and no one's come in and kicked Mo out of this house that she's pretty sure she's somehow managed to buy, renovate, and afford? Whatever this is, it's fucking with her whole reality so if she was gonna figure it out, she'd have to play along. She nods and

takes another deep breath before standing and staring at the old woman in the mirror.

"Okay girl. You're old, but you're still kinda hot and you have a sexy younger girlfriend. You got this."

6:30 AM

Monique steps inside the yoga studio, pulling at her ill-fitting sweats and peering furtively from behind her sunglasses, hoping no one recognizes her. The young women that had been her friends just a few days ago now didn't even acknowledge that she existed. The stretches in sultry poses and giggled to each other. The two other groups of women – the 40-something divorcees, of which she would now be the oldest of the bunch gave her polite, inviting smiles; and the 60-something retirees or the 'grey hairs' as Monique used to call them now enthusiastically waved to her as they gave pained stretches and complained about their various aches and pains. It felt a bit like having to choose between the band geeks and the stoner's lunch tables in high school when she had only ever sat with the popular kids.

Mo glances back and forth, weighing the pros and cons of being either the oldest housewife or the youngest granny. She can't believe she has to deal with this. She should've had decades to ease into it, not a single day. Holy shit she thinks to herself. Is this a midlife crisis? I'm too young to have a midlife crisis! As she screams internally, Patrick rises out of a downward pose and waves a hand. "Miss Stone, right? It's been a while! Welcome back, you're right on time. Pick a spot and lay out your mat and we'll get right into it."

All eyes were on Mo as she gripped her mat tightly and bit her lip. Screw it. She shuffles over to the housewives, picking an open spot next to Melania who was already working up a sweat. Maybe it was her new age, but Mo found herself feeling a little jealous of how the cheerful 40 year old looked like she was positively glowing with her thick, brown hair in a sweatband and sweaty, freckled face flecked with only a few laugh lines.

"Hey good to see you! How are you?" Melania asked as they worked their way through the first few poses. She smiled glad to have the older woman next to her to make her seem bright and chipper by comparison. "I'm excited to hear if there's any new developments with that hot young paralegal you wanted to make a snack out of." She says with a wink.

Monique bends over to touch her toes and feels the strange sensation of her saggy breasts spreading across her larger belly. She definitely was going to

need to invest in a new sports bra at some point. "Oh, you know, just same old same old," she replies, wincing at the word old. The suddenly graying yoga enthusiast tries her best to nail her poses, but her thicker, stiffer body just doesn't work like it used to. Five minutes in and she's already wiping the sweat away from her wrinkly forehead, a little out of breath. "My snack? Oh. You mean Lisa?" She frowns a little at the term. Lisa was more than just some sidepiece. The two of them had a real connection. A history. Didn't they?

Melania grinned and winked. "Riiiiight 'Lisa'. Mine is called 'Jason'... he does the odd job around the house, if you know what I mean." She says with a wink. She then looked at Monique's horrified look. "Oh no need to be embarrassed honey. She may be young enough to be your daughter but at least you met your play toy as an adult! Cheryl used to babysit the boy she's been fooling around with! Changed his diapers and bathed him and shit." She said with a laugh.

Patrick was leading everyone through Warrior pose. Monique struggled with her balance and he didn't even bother to correct her. "That's great ladies. Great effort." He said with little emotion in his voice and then moved down to help one of the young women around Monique's former age make an adjustment.

Monique tries to put Melania's creepy prey tactics out of her mind and focuses entirely on the next pose. She reaches down, willing her flabby arms to touch her weathered toes with all her might. "C'mon...c'mon..." she mutters under her breath, thighs burning-- arms stinging-- back pulling-- Suddenly, Mo's stomach shifts. Her eyes widen as she clenches up, willing the inevitable not to happen. Nonononono—

Pffffttt! A hiss of high pitched air escapes with a tiny squeal from her flabby rear as she bends over. It's a horror the once young woman never thought she'd ever experience, an act of betrayal by her aging body which causes her face to flush with embarrassment as she slowly straightens, hoping no one heard.

A horror known as... a yoga fart.

The young women in the front row giggled. The oldest women in the room had the tact to act as if nothing happened. Maybe some quick flashes of sympathy. But the 40-something divorcees, the group which Monique was now desperately trying to fit in with, shot her incredulous looks of betrayal at her. As if to say 'how could you?' as if she had caused all of them to expel gas out of their ever-expanding, dimpled rears.

Patrick also seemingly had the tact to act like nothing happened but he clearly knew as he swiftly walked to the other side of the room to announce the next pose.

At the end of the class Monique's young former yoga friends completely ignored her, and to her disappointment now so did the 40-somethings, including Meliana who clustered together chatting with each other, completely shutting out the 50 year old.

A veiny hand patted her shoulder and she turned to see one of the older woman - a 65 year old named Cynthia who loved to talk about how she used to come to this studio when it was a dance club in the 70s - "Happens to the best of us dear." the gray haired woman says with a kind smile and then shuffles to the door rubbing her aching lower back.

7:00 AM

Monique stands in the shower, head hanging low, her entire body still racked with sore spots from the morning's workout. Two days ago, she'd have been back to her limber self in no time. Now, she had a feeling she'd be aching for days. She lathers soap up and down her thicker body, grimacing at how her once taught bits now jiggle at her touch. She doesn't bother turning on any music this time. She doesn't have the energy.

Besides, she'd hate to pull a muscle or slip in the shower. God she thought can I break my hip now?

7:15 AM

Mo had spent ten minutes trying to find something in her closet that looked remotely cute or attractive, but all she had were pantsuits, blouses, and sweaters. Seems her 50 year old self didn't feel like flaunting it any more, not that she could blame her. She rubs her larger rump self consciously as she shimmies into a snug pair of slacks. She slips on a muted button up, but as she leaves the collar open she rubs her wrinkly neck which was threatening to start looking like something you'd find on a turkey. After digging through some drawers she finds a surprisingly nice pearl necklace which she slips on as a distraction before slipping into a pair of orthopedically friendly loafers and turning to a full length mirror.

She sighs, shoulders sagging as she sees little of her former 27 year old self in the chunky, tired, graying old lawyer staring back.

"C'mon, old girl. Let's do this thing."

Yaz sits in the back of her uber on the way to the office watching the entire yoga class and subsequent crisis about what to wear unfold on her makeup compact. She snickers to herself at Monique's struggles with her older body. "Only twice your age Monique and you're already a has-been." She whispers.

"What?" The uber driver asks.

"Nothing! Speak to me again and I will only give you three stars!" She snaps as she abruptly shuts the mirror.

7:30PM

Monique enters the coffee shop and makes her way through the crowd of bustling commuters. It seems much more daunting than it had on Monday. She reaches the counter and the young blonde hipster smiles at her. "Miss Stone! You're looking radiant this morning!" She says with a polite smile.

"What can I get you? The usual?" She asks and to her surprise Monique orders an Americano with three shots. "Woah, you sure Miss Stone? I thought you had switched to caffeinated tea last year because your doctor said..." She began but on Monique's look she put her hands up in surrender.

"Okay cool no worries. One Americano triple shot coming up!" She says with a reluctant smile. "Hey did you get a chance to listen to that podcast I recommended? If you're still struggling with how to get it on your phone i'm happy to help you get it on there. I know smart phones can be kind of tricky to figure out with all the apps and stuff." She offered helpfully in a tone Monique recognized as the same tone she would use on the phone with her elderly aunt when trying to walk her through checking her e-mail. Mo frowns at the young hipster, about to pull up the podcast app to tell her off when she realizes it isn't there. She spends the next five minutes trying to download it but her future self isn't making it easy.

She squints at the tiny screen, holding it back and forth from her face, trying to get the words in focus as she navigates through several menus. Suddenly she feels a hand on her shoulder. She jumps nearly spilling the coffee Addie is holding.

"So sorry, Miss Monique! I was calling for you but I guess you didn't hear me? Don't trip though. Many of our, uh, veteran customers all have some trouble. It's just so darn loud these mornings. Totes get it."

"Girl, I know you're not trying to call me old right now," Mo responds sipping her coffee. Her eyes widen, as her mouth seems to tingle from the caffeine "Damn! What is this, jet fuel?"

"No, no, no! Ugh, I'm so insensitive! I super respect you and how you are carving your own path through life as a successful senior legal warrior lady! Just forget I said anything," Addie quickly apologizes, enveloping the surprises Mo in a quick hug before heading back to the counter.

Monique got on the bus with her heart pumping a mile a minute. She began to worry if she was going to have a heart attack. A woman who looked to be in her late 30s - a good ten years older than Mo's normal age stood up to offer her seat.

"No you really don't need to do that." Monique said waving the woman back. "Please ma'am. I insist." The woman said with a concerned look on her face. Monique would have fought tooth and nail to not take the woman's seat if she didn't honestly feel like she was about to collapse. She mumbled thanks and plopped down and took some deep breaths letting her heart slow a bit. Once she got to the office she plodded into the main lobby.

"Ah Miss Stone! A pleasure to see you today! You walked here? Did something happen with your car?" He asked the sweating, hyperventilating 50 year old in front of him.

'Of course! My car! I didn't even check to see if I own a damn car!' Monique thought and just smiled.

"Thought I could use the exercise Senior Cortez." She said between breaths. "How is your granddaughter?" She asks politely.

"She is good! She's heard back from several schools and she says she's so stressed about making a choice! Kids! I tell her - too much of a good thing is not a problem! You know of course where her mother wants her to go - she talks all the time about the great times you two had together back then! I still have the pictures!" He says with a smile.

Monique fans her face, her brow wrinkling in confusion, running that last sentence through a few times. "Your daughter and I went to college together...and now her daughter is ready to go there too?" Monique remembers

Marta coming in to visit the security guard once, and the aged up lawyer is hit with a sudden, crushing feeling of oldness realizing that she's roughly the same age as the plump, silver haired woman with the crinkly eyes. Not only that, but there are probably photos of the two running around-- younger, fitter, and likely dressed in 80's shoulder pads and jewelry-- hanging on Senor Cortez's wall. Monique leans on the security desk and rubs her temples.

"Are you okay, Miss Stone? If you don't mind me saying you don't look so well." "It's this heat. It's driving me crazy!" Monique explains, unbuttoning her collar as her skin continues to swelter. Senor Cortez nods sagely. "Ah, my wife had the same problem a few years ago. The flashes. You should splash some water on your face. Always helped her."

Monique turns, eyes widening as she realizes what he means. Hot flashes.

Menopause.

She quickly rushes across the lobby to the women's room, bursting through the door and heading for a sink. She takes off her coat, rolls up her sleeves, and fans her haggard face as another wave of heat leaves her gasping. "This day cannot get any worse!" she mutters.

Yaz, who had been gleefully watching this whole scene play out on her makeup mirror quickly ran into the office, thrust her ID at Mr. Cortez rudely and rushed through the gates and into the women's room behind Monique who was slashing water on her face.

"Miss Stone..." She says with a smile that looks like the cat that ate the canary. "You're looking tired... maybe it's time for retirement eh?" She says strutting over to get a good look of her young 20-something body next to her rivals now almost twice her age.

Monique groans, water dripping down her cheeks. "Do you just get summoned places or what?" She glances over at Yaz's reflection in the mirror and watches the younger woman as slowly pats her smooth cheeks and primps her smooth, bouncy hair. Yaz's eyes dart over and she smirks with her plump lips as she unbuttons her jacket and lightly taps her perky breasts.

"You know, I hear everything starts to go downhill at 50. Is that, like, literally true?" Monique's glare could melt glass but Yaz merely giggle to herself as she turns to lean on the countertop, curvy legs crossed. "I just wanted to tell you that you're an inspiration to us younger lawyers. It's just so important for us to

see a woman of your seniority still clawing her way up the ladder. Such stamina! It must be exhausting!”

Monique turns away, pulling a paper towel and drying her face. Luckily, it seemed the hot flashes were subsiding, but that did little to improve the tired, overworked face staring back at her.

TO BE CONTINUED...