

Hair by Xanthe



<http://www.xanthe.org/hair/>

Story Notes:

VERY harmless!

Posted: 2nd April, 1999.

Danni, my Requited friends, and **Sean Spencer's** wonderful pic were all inspirations for this piece of schmoop.

Hair by Xanthe

"Walter...?"

"Hmm?"

"How old were you when you lost your hair?" Mulder balanced himself on one elbow, and gazed at his lover.

"About four. Why?" Skinner grunted.

"Four?" Mulder sat up halfway, his eyes bright with interest. "Four?" he repeated incredulously.

"Yes, Mulder. Four. I have the photos to prove it. In fact, it's a moot point whether I ever actually had much hair." Skinner opened his eyes, and looked down at the other man. "I had a crew cut when I was six and I have a photo of that which definitely shows a receding hairline. I was always follically challenged. Even when I had hair it was weak and thin, not luxuriant like this." Skinner reached out a large, weary hand, and lazily ruffled his lover's thick mop of hair. Mulder leaned into the caress, making a rumbling, sighing noise that sounded suspiciously like a purr.

They were lying on Skinner's bed. It was late on a hazy summer afternoon, and they'd been out in the field for three days, unable to talk properly, or to kiss, or even to touch. Mulder hadn't slept in all that time - somehow, without Skinner's large, reassuring presence beside him in the bed, sleep had eluded him. It had been a long time since he'd had to sleep alone. Skinner hadn't slept much either, but that was because he had been busy directing one of the largest FBI operations in recent memory, with hundreds of agents, and a voracious media circus attached. All Mulder had been able to do was devour his lover with his eyes, watching from the rank and file as Skinner gave orders, dealt with the relentless press inquiries, fielded phone calls from the Director, and ultimately resolved the case with as few casualties as possible. In short, he had performed a tough job with his usual efficiency and attention to detail.

Now it was over. They had stumbled home, grabbed a beer, then, by unspoken agreement, wearily climbed the stairs to the bedroom. Skinner had fallen where he stood, hitting the bed with a definitive sigh that said "I'm not getting up again." He had laid back, undone the top button on his shirt, pulled his tie off, and rolled it into a little ball, placing it neatly on the night stand. For his part, Mulder had quickly shuffled his shoes, jacket, and tie onto the floor, and clambered onto the opposite end of the bed, his head by the foot board - all the better to see his lover.

So now they just lay there, side by side: too hot to move, too tired to sleep, too exhausted to discuss the case, or anything else of significance.

"How come then..." Mulder began, chewing on his bottom lip in contemplation, "...how come, if you don't have any hair on your head, you have so much on your chest?" He leaned forward and snagged open a button on Skinner's shirt, which was half-way out of his pants, ran his fingers through his lover's copious, wiry chest hair with a contented little sigh.

"I don't know." Skinner murmured, idly wondering why it was so hard to switch off Mulder's questioning mind, and then thinking to himself that he wouldn't really want to. Well, only sometimes.

"I, on the other hand..." Mulder pulled his own shirt out of his pants, unbuttoned it a little way, and examined his sparse chest hair, sadly, "don't."

"No." Skinner agreed.

"Hardly any to speak of. Zilch." Mulder shook his head, mournfully. "Tiny tufts..."

"Yes. I know," Skinner interrupted, wondering just how many different ways Mulder was going to find to express this particular truth about himself.

"I could buy a body wig," Mulder suggested.

"You could - but then I'd have to kill you," Skinner muttered.

"True." Mulder nodded sagely. "You could buy a toupe."

"You don't like me bald?" Skinner raised his head a fraction, and opened one eye, glanced down at his lover.

Mulder considered the question for a moment. "Of course I do..." he began. Skinner sighed, and laid his head back down again, sensing a long monologue. "I just wondered what it would be like to stroke you, the way you stroke me. Like I'm a cat..."

"You purr like a cat." Skinner murmured, interrupting before Mulder could reach full flow. "Did you know that you can get bald cats? They're called sphinxes or something."

"Why?"

"Why what?"

"Why are they called sphinxes?" Mulder asked.

"I don't know," Skinner shrugged, feeling tired down to the very marrow of his bones. "I just thought it was relevant to the conversation. I'm not an expert or anything."

"Oh." Mulder seemed disappointed. "I'd like to have a hairless cat, to go with my hairless man."

"I'm not hairless. We've just established that I have chest hair. That should be enough to satisfy your stroking fixation."

"Anyway," Mulder continued, ignoring him, "like I said, I like you bald. When you're bald, you don't age. You see, if I lost my hair, I'd look old. Whereas you - you'll always look the same age, forever and ever."

"Amen." Skinner finished, definitively, he hoped.

"Even when you're very old." Mulder added, unnecessarily.

"Mulder, have you never heard of companionable silences?" Skinner asked.

"Only as an abstract concept." Mulder grinned.

He contemplated his lover for a moment. Skinner looked nice disheveled, he decided. He liked the large expanse of untidy white shirt, the way it rode up to reveal a tiny, tantalising portion of muscled midriff. Skinner's naked scalp was resting on the dark navy pillow, his thick neck and broad shoulders taking up an inordinate amount of bed space. Mulder felt small and supple beside him, although he knew that was silly as they were almost the same height. Still, Skinner was imposing, and he...wasn't. "Do you suppose, that if I worked out for like, months and months and months...I'd be as big as you?" he asked, idly caressing the leg of Skinner's pants, and tracing a line of hard muscle underneath.

"No." Skinner found one of Mulder's hands, covered it with his own, played with the fingers.

"Why not?"

"For the same reason as the hair." Skinner grunted.

"Which is?"

"Genetics." Skinner flexed his shoulders as best he could, trying to ease the kink that had been bothering him for the past 24 hours.

"Ah." Mulder took hold of one of Skinner's knees, and levered it into an arched position, then leaned his back against it so that he didn't have to keep craning his neck to look at his lover. "You smell of sweat and beer," he commented.

"And you smell of cheese." Skinner wrinkled up his nose in the direction of Mulder's feet, which were lying just a few inches away from his face.

"Why do feet smell of cheese?" Mulder speculated idly, "and why do you always sleep on the right hand side of the bed?"

"Feet - dunno. Right hand side of the bed - habit. Also, maybe, because it's nearer the door so I can hear you when you sneak out to indulge your couch-&-porn habit downstairs in the middle of the night."

"Hmph." Mulder pinched Skinner's thigh. "All right then. Why don't you wear that nice garnet silk shirt in your closet? You'd look nice in that color, and why does your office have two doors, and if you were an animal, what sort of animal would you be? Or car? Or bird?"

"Mulder." Skinner's fingers tightened warningly around Mulder's wrist. "What's with the questions?"

"Just pondering out loud," Mulder grinned, thinking that Skinner looked handsome with his lightly tanned face framed against the pillow. He loved to study the other man's broad, flat features, and the wide sweeping plains of his forehead and cheekbones. He especially loved Skinner's currently well-stubbled expanse of jaw. Mulder frowned. Skinner looked tired - the charcoal depths of his brown eyes were sunk in dark shadows.

"Such tiny, itsy bitsy, questions." Skinner commented wearily.

"Yes, but you see - there are too many big questions in the universe, and no answers to them either." Mulder sighed, looking suddenly very young, and lost, and utterly forlorn. "Sometimes it's easier just to think about the little ones," he whispered.

"Ah. Yes." Skinner's fingers resumed their soft, spidering play across Mulder's hand, and his expression became visibly tender as he gazed at his lover. "Well, continue with your plague of questions then." He gave a small, loving smile. "I'll do my best to answer."

"No. Your turn now," Mulder smiled back, rested his hand on Skinner's stomach, and undid one more button on Skinner's shirt, allowing his fingers to curl loosely against Skinner's tautly muscled torso.

Skinner was silent for a long, long time. Mulder closed his eyes, laid his head back on Skinner's knee, and waited. And waited. Finally, wondering if Skinner had fallen asleep, he opened his eyes to find his lover still gazing at him. "Well?" he asked. "Don't you have any questions?"

"Only one," Skinner said quietly. "I ask it all the time and I've never yet figured out an answer to it."

"Well? What is it?" Mulder asked, dreamily, his eyes closing again. Skinner's knee felt warm and solid against his back.

"Why you're here. With me. What did I do to deserve this? What do you see in this old, bald guy?" He ran a rueful hand over his head.

Mulder opened his eyes.

"Oh. That." He said. He toppled forward, snaked his way up the bed until his face was level with Skinner's, and then he touched his lips softly to his lover's warm, smooth, hairless scalp, his forehead, his nose, and finally ended up at his mouth.

"Some questions are easily answered," he said.

THE END.

Disclaimer: All publicly recognizable characters and settings are the property of their respective owners. The original characters and plot are the property of the author. No money is being made from this work. No copyright infringement is intended.