

In the darkness of the night, Don Karnage silently made his way into Higher for Hire, his hands eager for the prize awaiting him. His men had learned by accident that that idiot Baloo was due to transport a certain valuable cargo; the ring of Mab.

Legend has it that Mab was the queen of the fairies, said to be really powerful even though she was also said to be really small, and that the ring was hers. It had been found in a tomb, and was to be sent overseas to a museum. Somehow, that insufferable lady boss of Baloo's, Rebecca Cunningham, had managed to sell her air cargo services to the archaeologists that found the ring, and Baloo was meant to fly it sometime tomorrow morning. That meant that Karnage only had tonight to steal the ring and get it back to his ship! He hadn't seen the ring, but it was said to be worth a fortune.

He pried open the window and peeked inside. Luckily, there appeared to be no one at home, so he opened it all the way and crept inside.

*Now where would an obese moronic bar like Baloo possibly hide a millions worth ring?* He thought. His first idea was the safe, as that seemed the most logical, but then he pondered and thought maybe they had realised that that would seem like a too obvious place, and choose somewhere else. Perhaps they had kept it on themselves, or maybe they had hidden it on Baloo's pile of bolts, the Sea Duck, or possibly...

As he went on through the list of possible hiding places for the ring in his mind, he almost didn't notice a small box that one would normally use to hold rings, sitting on the desk. He stopped and stared.

*You can **not** be serious?* he said in his mind, his jaw close to dropping to the floor. He reached over and opened the ring-box to look inside. Sure enough, inside he found what looked like an antique ring set in ancient design, made of pure gold and encrusted with rubies and emeralds.

*What...a compete numbskull!*

He took the ring out and examined it thoroughly. No doubt about it, as the jewels were definitely real. They glittered in the moonlight that shone through the window. "A most precious prize indeed," Karnage couldn't help saying aloud. "A beauty well worth its weight in gold...for me!" He couldn't resist, and placed the ring on his finger, admiring the beauty of its wealth. As he did, he idly thought; *If Mab really was as small as the legends say, why then is this ring the size of an ordinary one. Humph, archaeologists. Ridiculous.*

Unfortunately for him; whenever Karnage got wind of a valuable treasure, he never bothered to seek out any knowledge about it, like its history or myth. He was only ever concerned with its value and location. If he had bothered to learn anything of the ring of Mab, he would have heard about the curse that the ring was said to carry!

As he vainly held out his hand to admire the ring more closely, its gems caught the gleam of the moonlight, and for a moment they sparkled brighter than the spark of a fuse. *Wha...?*

Karnage wondered before his whole body then started to glow, and a moment later; the entire world seemed to grow around him.

“Whaaaaa...?!” Karnage’s voice grew shrill, as every part of him then started to shrink. His body went from an average 6ft to a mere 6 inches, in less than a few seconds!

“What’s happened?!” he shrieked, his once proud voice now speaking with a high squeaky tone, making him sound like a chipmunk. “What’s happened to me?! Why am I...?!”

[THUD! THUD! THUD!]

Just then, he heard a massively loud thudding noise, followed by a shudder in the floor that started small, but with each thud it grew larger, and before long they grew to the point where they made him jump up an inch into the air.

“Wha...?” he stuttered.

“♪ DOO-BEE, DOO-BEE...! ♪” a loud voice boomed throughout the room, making his eardrums hurt. The voice was undoubtedly that of that buffoon of a pilot Baloo, sounding like it was speaking through a hundred loudspeakers.

[THUD! THUD! THUD!]

The thudding grew louder, and the vibrations grew larger, making him rise almost several inches into the air. Apparently, something was coming!

“Huh? What is...?” his words halted then, as a giant shadow came out of nowhere and enveloped him. He looked up, and blanched. Standing before and above him was Baloo, except now he looked to be the size of Shere Khan’s tower! If Karnage had thought him big before, he didn’t know what he had been thinking then. Not only was Baloo as tall as Khan’s tower, but his massive belly and lower section looked like a giant mountain of lard wobbling over towards him.

“♪ DOO-BEE, DOO-BEE, DOO-BEE-DEE-DOO! ♪”

Baloo’s voice once again boomed throughout the room, spouting off some ridiculous tune, one of many that he was known to be forever singing. But at that precise moment, Karnage had much larger problems to contend with; the major one being that Baloo was right now dancing across the room, and stamping his enormous feet in tune to the beat of his song, making the air pirate jump halfway up into the air.

“♪ WELL, IT'S A DOO-BAH-DEE-DOO! ♪” [THUD!] “♪ YES, IT'S A DOO-BAH-DEE-DOO! ♪” [THUD!] “♪ I MEAN A DOO-BEE, DOO-BEE, DOO-BEE, DOO-BEE, DOO-BEE-DEE-DOO! ♪” [THUD!]

Karnage yelped, as Baloo danced to his own tune; his paws tapping the floor with a thunderous beat. What was even worse was when he twirled around and shook his hips, shaking his obscene backside (and Karnage thought his belly was big?!).

But then, Karnage shrieked as Baloo's massive paws started to get closer. The oversized bear's giant soles stamped the floor as he walked across the floor, not noticing the shrunken pirate that was now running like a scared bug.

"BALOO, YOU DUMB BEAR! IT IS I; THAT GLORIOUS FEARED PIRATE OF THE SEVEN SKIES! WATCH WHERE YOU'RE GOING!" Karnage screamed as loud as his voice could carry, but at his present size, as well as Baloo's constant humming and singing, he may as well have been trying to get someone's attention by whispering to them in Louie's Place on a Saturday night.

[THUD! THUD! THUD!]

Baloo's paws lifted and fell, causing sharp and sudden shudders that bounced Karnage wherever he stood. Each time he ended up tripping and falling over, which inadvertently gave Baloo an extra few seconds for him to catch up to him, as his feet grew ever closer.

[THUD! THUD! THUD!]

The freelance pilot's last step brought his foot less than a few inches from Karnage, as the pirate once more fell to the floor in a daze, the bear's long claw just barely touching him. Karnage heaved deep breaths, as he sought to catch his from all the running he had been doing, but alas he chose the wrong time to do that, as a giant shadow once again came over him.

He looked up, and screamed. "NOOOOO!"

Baloo brought his foot up once again to walk forward, unknowingly raising it right above where Karnage was currently lying, and immediately started to bring it back down.

"NO! YOU CAN'T DO THIS, BALOO! YOU DUMB FREELANCER! I AM DON KARNAGE; MASTER OF THE SKIES, DREAD PIRATE OF...!" His words ceased, as the leathery sole of Baloo's foot came crashing down upon him, squishing him into the floor.

"Huh?" Baloo then said, as he felt his foot land on something soft. "Hmmm, Becky must have carpeted the place while I was out." He grinded his foot onto whatever it was he had stood on. "Mmm, that's good!" He lifted his foot again, but then quickly brought it crashing back down again, stamping on whatever.

Karnage yelped as the giant ursine's foot fell on him, its weight pressing him down into the floor. He blanched and gagged, as the heavy paw crushed him, forcing his mouth open and inadvertently making him lick the salty sweat of the bear's sole. He squealed and frantically tried to wiggle himself out from beneath it.

“He-he-he!” Baloo suddenly giggled, as he felt something wiggle beneath his sole. He guessed that it was one of those frilly mats that he thought maybe Becky had bought for the office, and that one of the frills was tickling him. After he stamped and grinded on it for a few moments, until the tickling of whatever had stopped, he then carried on walking out of the room.

A flattened form of Karnage lay on the floor, with stars flying around his head in a daze, and his words coming out in dazed slurs, as he tried to re-gather his thoughts. “Whaaaa....how do...I am the panic-protruding...No, that’s...the panic-preventing...” After several minutes, he managed to find the strength to stand up and stagger away, his legs feeling like Jell-O.

“Ugh, why do I...?” He took a sniff of himself, and immediately gagged. His whole outfit stank like Baloo’s feet! “Oh, that insufferable...bad-smelling...bag of...” At that moment, no mere words he could think of could compare to what he thought of the so-called greatest pilot. But if he had learned anything just now, it was that there was no way he could do anything to help himself at his current height. He needed help!

The thought of asking Baloo for aid was unthinkable, so he decided to try one of the others. Perhaps his former protégé, Kit Cloudkicker? But first, he would need to find a way of getting his attention. But how?

He stood where he was for a moment, idly tapping his foot in concentration, and then finally noticed a massive armchair sitting off to the side of the room. It was one of the largest things in the room, and if he could climb it to its peak, he would be on level with everyone’s heads, and thus close to their ears, so they should be able to hear his shouts then. He clapped his hands in elation at the brilliance of his plan, and hurried over to the chair.

It took him a while to reach it, even by running, but eventually he did. Once he reached it, he grasped onto the cloth of the chair and heaved himself up, and begun climbing its exterior until, after several minutes, he finally reached the middle of the armchair. He pulled himself up onto the seat-cushion, as he puffed and panted in exhaustion.

*Who would think...that a mere walk across a small room such as this...would drain a man of his energy so?* he thought, as he wiped the sweat from his brow. He needed to rest, so he sat down on the seat of the armchair, which to him was as big as a football field. The cushion was indeed soft and comfortable, and made him want to lie down and sleep, but he shook off his fatigue, and was about to stand up and continue his climb, when...

“WILDCAT, I ONLY WANTED YOU TO CHECK THE AIR CONDITIONING UNIT ON MY PLANE! I DIDN’T WANT YOU TO GO REPLACING THE ENTIRE INTERIOR OF THE SEA DUCK JUST TO UPGRADE IT!”

Karnage swore, as Baloo’s voice boomed once more against his ear-drums. Apparently, to tiny persons such as himself now, Baloo’s already loud voice was amplified to thunderous levels.

[THUD! THUD! THUD!]

He soon heard and felt the familiar giant footsteps of Baloo's paws, and guessed correctly that he was returning. Fortunately, he knew he had nothing to fear about being stepped on again, since he was now off the floor. Unfortunately for him, if Karnage were to ever once think things ahead, he would have realised that standing where he was right now was a lot more dangerous than on the floor.

Baloo strode into the room, stretching out his arms to their impressive length, and grabbed the newspaper off the table to check the latest headlines. "Ain't got no deliveries till the morning, when I take that fancy old ring to that museum, so Papa Bear needs his rest for the night!" he said to himself, as he walked over to his most comfortable and favourite chair.

He came up to the chair that Karnage was now standing on, and turned around. "Hey baby, miss me? Cos papa's been missin' you!" he said to the chair in a low and almost seductive tone, as he bent over and swayed his hips from side to side, getting his glutes ready for the coming seat. "Ain't nothin' that'll separate you and me for the night!"

Karnage's eyes went as wide as saucers, as his pupils adjusted to the gigantic behemoth before him. Baloo stood right above him, bent over and showing off his humongous backside, which swayed and bobbed about like a giant grey beach-ball bouncing across the sky and blocking out the sun.

"Come to papa!" Baloo said finally, as he wiggled his hips one more time before slowly lowering his rear down onto the seat.

Karnage shrieked, but his sounds went unnoticed as Baloo's fuzzy rear continued its descent. Karnage fell onto his back and lifted his hands up in front of him for protection, though in his current predicament it had about as much usefulness as a Chihuahua would be in stopping a herd of rampaging elephants. He gave one final scream, as Baloo's giant butt came down and squished him.

[SPLAT!]

"Mmm yeah," Baloo moaned in delight, as he shifted his hips and wriggled his rear into his chair. "Ooh, feels like you've gotten a little lumpy since last we met. Well, don't worry, cos papa bear will grind the lumps out of ya!" He lifted and slammed his butt into the seat, and began grinding the lumps and bumps in the cushion, including one particular lump that he felt right in his butt-crack. "Oh yeah, right on it, baby!"

From down below, Karnage squeaked and yelped, as Baloo's backside grinded him into submission. He gave a feeble roar, and frantically tried pushing Baloo off him, but naturally it was no use, as his current size gave him the strength of a mere mouse. However, his attempts did not go unnoticed.

Baloo paused, as he felt the small lump he was sitting on wriggle beneath him, tickling his butt. Curious, he stood up and looked behind him, as he stared down at the seat. But when he looked, there was nothing there. He shrugged, and guessed that it had been a simple lump and nothing more, and went to sit back down.

As he turned around, Baloo didn't think to look at his own backside, as a shrunken Karnage lay spread out and flattened on Baloo's behind. Karnage forcibly pulled his face out of the deep folds between Baloo's buttocks, heaving deep breaths, only to immediately start screaming as he saw Baloo was getting ready to sit again.

Baloo paused, as he made out what sounded like the squeaks of a mouse coming from behind him. His first thought was that they had mice again, and Becky would need to call the exterminator (poor him for having to tell her), but as he listened closer, he could just make out the squeaks to sound like actual words. His curiosity peaked; he stood back up again, and looked behind him. As before, there was nothing on the chair, but the squeaks still persisted behind him. He looked over his shoulder, and then realised where the sounds must be coming from.

*Really gotta watch where I sit from now on*, he thought, as he reached his hand back and felt around the impressive width of his behind until he at long last found something. Yes, something was stuck to him, so he pulled it out and brought it up to his face to look at it better.

"Now what do we hav... HUH???" His eyes nearly popped out of his head, as he looked and could clearly make out none other than Don Karnage sitting in the palm of his hand, no bigger than a bug.

Karnage lay in a daze on Baloo's hand, his head swirling with the image of Baloo's fat butt bouncing around it. After a few moments, he shook it and once more gathered his thoughts, and then looked up...

"YEEEAARRRGHHHHHH!" he screamed, as he saw what looked like a giant brown moon pressed nearly right up to him, heaving deep sighs of warm air on him, beyond which he saw two gargantuan eyes staring down on him. It was, of course, Baloo; he had been so amazed by Karnage's shrunken size, he had brought him up closer to his face so that he could get a better look at him, pressing his nose on him and taking a big whiff, and staring at him in disbelief.

"Get your fat snozz out of my glorious face!" Karnage bellowed, as he slapped the ursine's enormous snout, and backed away from him.

If Baloo minded him slapping his nose then he didn't say, as he straightened up and looked down on the air pirate, once more inadvertently intimidating Karnage with his giant stature. "WHAT THE HECK HAPPENED TO YOU, KARNY?!" he bellowed, making him cover his ears.

"Keep it down, will you?!" he demanded. "Your voice is louder than a thousand foghorns! And it is Kar-NAGE!"

"OH?" Baloo looked at him curiously, as he was talking in his usual tone, as always. "UMM...okay!" He was now speaking just barely above a whisper, though his voice still carried a massive boom to it. "But...what happened?!"

"I don't know! I came here looking for that ri... I mean.... Err, I just came by to say hello!" He tried to look innocent (which never worked on Karnage's face by the way), and even in his shrunken state, Baloo could tell he was lying. He had been expecting the air pirates to try and steal the Ring of Mab, though he hadn't thought they would try coming to his house to take it.

"Uhhh huh!" Baloo said unconvincingly, and then noticed a bright sparkle on Karnage's finger, even on his diminished stature. "What's that?!"

"What's what?!" Karnage exclaimed, immediately shoving his hands behind his back. But Baloo merely frowned and reached down with his giant hand, each of his fingers looking bigger than Karnage's whole body.

"I don't mind finding out for myself by force, Karny!" he explained smugly. "But you should know, with these massive babies, I can't be expected to be gentle with you!"

As his fingers got close to him, Karnage squealed. "WAIT! Okay-okay! I came here to get the ring you were to be transporting tomorrow! I have it here!" He held up his hand, showing the jewelled ring still on his finger. "I put it on, merely for inspective purposes you understand, but when I did, I suddenly started to shrink!"

Baloo frowned. There had been a time when hearing a story like that would sound ludicrous to him, but in his time he had seen his fair share of magical idols, magic beasts that change size, ghosts, curses, and even more. It seemed as though they had inadvertently come across another cursed item in their delivery service.

"Have you tried taking it off?!" he asked.

"Oh, what a wonderful idea! Gee, I wish I had thought of that!" Karnage said snidely, and then stamped his foot. "Of course I have, you idiot! The stupid thing won't come off!"

Baloo frowned again, as he scratched his head with his free hand. Honestly, he would like nothing more than to turn Karnage in to the cops and be done with it, but in his current state he wasn't sure if the cops would even believe it was him, and he couldn't leave Karnage as he was.

He guessed the only thing to do now was to take him with him to the museum overseas, and ask for their help. They would know more about the ring than he, so perhaps they would know of a way to help Karnage. In the meantime, though...

Baloo smirked, as he stared down on the little pirate.

“W-why are you looking at me like that?!” Karnage asked, a little nervous from the look Baloo was giving him.

“Well, I don’t know anything about that ring, so the smart thing would be to take it and you to the museum, and ask their advice! Thing is, I don’t carry passengers anymore, so if you wanna come, you’re gonna have to pay the toll!”

“Toll?!”

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### **NEXT MORNING:**

Baloo adjusted his heading, as he flew the Sea Duck to its destination. So far, the weather was fine, there was no sign of pirates, and he had some good entertainment for the long journey ahead. Kit wasn’t with him on this flight, as he had schoolwork to see to, which was fine with Baloo for once.

He hummed an idle tune, as he tapped his foot on the floor, only to quickly stop. “Whoops! Sorry, Karny!” he called down.

From down below, Karnage stood up from the side of Baloo’s foot, breathing frantically. He had just got out of the way, when Baloo’s foot began beating down on the floor, narrowly missing him and squashing him flat. “This is absolutely, positively degradingly humiliating!” he shouted. “You can’t possibly expect me to do this!”

Baloo simply shrugged and waved his finger at him. “Ah-ah-ahh! Remember; you tried to steal the ring and cost me my reputation! I could have easily just handed you over to the cops, but I didn’t!”

Karnage glared daggers at him, wishing he had his sword to run him through.

“Way I see it; this arrangement works out good for both of us! I give you a free ride to those eggheads who know all about that ring, to help you deal with this curse of yours! And in return; you help me relax during this loooong journey by giving my feet some overdue pampering!” He leaned back, and lifted his feet upright, exposing his soles to the shivering red wolf before them. “Now how’s about you work that magic touch of yours, and give my pads some lovin’?! Unless you’d like me to turn back and take you to the cops?”

Karnage cringed in rage, but reluctantly did as he was told. He hesitantly walked up to Baloo’s feet, and immediately gagged at the smell of them. This was disgusting! He moaned as he walked up and held his hands out, grimacing at the expected task, as he reached out and touched the leathery pad of Baloo’s one foot.

“Ewww!” he groaned, as he rubbed his hands in circles over the giant bear’s giant foot, pressing them into his flesh and massaging it.



Baloo closed his eyes and moaned in bliss. "Mmm yeah. That's delicious!" He moved his foot slightly, pushing it closer to Karnage, and made the wolf jump back, only for the pilot's paw to instantly move up to him. "Just a little more to the right! There... Right on it! Mmm!"

The minutes seemed to stretch into hours, as Karnage held his nose with one hand, to protect it from the sweaty stench that was overwhelming his nostrils, nearly making him pass out. Dear God, didn't this guy ever wash his feet???

"Mmm, this is beautiful!" Baloo said, as he looked down at the fallen captain. "You're pretty good at this, Karny!"

Karnage stamped his foot in rage. "No more! I refuse to do anything so downright degrading! I will fight you if I have to!"

Baloo acted shocked, though Karnage was anything but scary. It was taking all his willpower not to burst out laughing at him right now. "You wish to go back on our deal, Captain?! And right now, just as we're so far out to sea, where it's too late to turn back?!"

"I don't care!" Karnage squeaked in anger. "Have me do anything else besides this! I would rather die!"

Baloo tapped his chin for a moment, as though considering something. "Hmmm, let's see. What else could... Oh, I know!" He suddenly got up, and tied some rope to the steering wheel of the plane (his version of an autopilot). "I got just the job for you!"

"What?" Karnage said, looking up at him in suspicion.

"Well, as memory serves to remind me, there was another part of me, besides my feet, that you did very well in servicing!" He stood up and turned around, and then patted his huge gigantic bottom, causing it to jiggle down at the now stricken captain. "Of course, I prefer my feet, but since you're so tired with them, I guess I don't min....!"

"NOOOOO!" Karnage screamed, as he instantly raced back over to Baloo's feet, and practically threw himself on them, blabbering endless words. "I'll stick with the feet! I'll massage your feet! I'll worship your feet! You want them cleaned, I'll clean them!"

As he said the last part, he suddenly began licking them. Although the action was revolting, and made him want to spew, Karnage did it regardless. If there was one thing he knew, it was that being stuck tending to Baloo's feet was a heck of a lot better than getting sat on by him!

"Mmm yeah baby!" Baloo laughed, as he sat back down and continued flying, while enjoying the massage and footbath he was now getting. "Do it right there! And don't forget to do between the toes now!"

**THE END!**