

Leto and the Waiter

By: Indigo Rho

The Melting Pot stood at the heart of the business district, surrounded by towering skyscrapers and high-end retailers. Dark wood paneling covered the walls while dim lights dotted the ceiling like stars. Geometric shapes drawn in gold spread across the tile floor. Tables and booths were set wide apart, many separated from one another by decorative wooden dividers as well as distance. Guests cherished the privacy the restaurant provided almost as much as the extravagant food.

A tall cougar stepped through the entrance and shook the chill from his body. His dark blue suit fit him perfectly, highlighting his athletic form. He took a moment to adjust his rectangular glasses, which had become slightly askew, then adopted a very slight grin. For Leto, nothing capped off a hard, but successful day of work quite like a visit to The Melting Pot. An executive at Gaines Global, he'd spent all morning and afternoon securing a major business deal. He'd also found the time to arrange future business meetings, call a few loyal clients, and chastise a subordinate whose work had begun to slip.

Leto had reached his position through persistence, charm, and a drive to always go beyond what was expected of him. He knew exactly what to say to get people to agree with him while believing they were doing it for their own sake. He'd thrived in the world of cutthroat business, where failure made you a target of ravenous rivals and hungry bosses. Despite his trim figure, he'd been the one packing away others, so many he'd lost count.

The maitre d'—a plump red fox—greeted him. “Mr. Harrington, it's a pleasure to have you, as always.”

The recognition widened Leto's smile. The Melting Pot treated its regulars well. “I am positively *famished* tonight and in the mood to celebrate,” he said, rubbing his paws together. “Do you have anything big and juicy in the back? I'm fine with putting some effort into it.”

The fox thought on the question for a moment, then nodded. “I do believe we have something to spare. Though you should know the surcharge has increased. We've been experiencing staff shortages.”

“I'm sure it'll be more than worth the price,” Leto replied. The maitre

d' knew his tastes well.

"Then please follow me." The maitre d' led Leto to the back of the restaurant.

Leto glanced discreetly at the patrons he passed. The majority were enjoying the luxurious offerings of the regular menu. One heavysset wolf sported a bulging belly even the low lighting couldn't hide, though. He'd opened his suit jacket, revealing suspenders and a dress shirt that clung to the squirming ball his gut had become. The blunted imprint of a paw pushed out from the side of his stomach. He placed his palm on it and pressed down, reverting his middle to a rough globe.

The wolf's belly stirred up Leto's hunger. Under more ideal circumstances, he would've liked to test his luck against the wolf and see who's appetite proved greater. But there was etiquette to consider, and one did not treat an establishment of The Melting Pot's caliber as a buffet. He left the wolf to his meal, and focused on his own.

Leto and the maitre d' arrived at a quiet, cozy corner booth near the kitchen. Leto had no reason to hide his eating habits, but he favored a degree of privacy. He wanted dinner to be intimate, not a show.

Leto slid onto the cushioned bench seat. He nudged the napkin and utensils aside and didn't touch the leather-bound menu on the table.

A few minutes later, a waiter darted out of the kitchen. He was a fat brown horse with a round belly and a large rump. He'd braided his brown mane, which ran over his shoulder and just past his pecs. His plum-colored cummerbund dug into his waist a little, highlighting his girth. The maitre d' had outdone himself.

The waiter took a few deep breaths, his belly jiggling with each one, and approached Leto's table with a friendly smile. "Welcome to The Melting Pot. May I get you started on a drink this evening?" His nametag read: Tycho.

"Indeed you may. I'd like a bottle of the spiced rum and two bottles of chardonnay. And make sure there are two glasses for the rum, please," Leto requested.

Tycho looked down at the table set for one. "Should a second place setting be brought out?"

Leto held his grin back. "No, thank you."

Tycho nodded, unwilling to press any further. He left, unaware of the way Leto ogled his wobbling rump. When the horse returned with the drinks a short time later, he carefully arranged them on the table for Leto.

Leto poured himself a glass of rum and took a sip. The tingling in his stomach woke him up.

“Are you ready to order, sir?” Tycho asked, standing at attention.

Leto let his gaze linger on the horse’s round middle. “I am. I’ve decided to have you tonight, Tycho. You’ve come highly recommended.”

Tycho jolted at the sound of his name. His heart rate noticeably increased as he began to understand what Leto meant. “Staff aren’t, um, aren’t on the menu, sir. But the risotto is a classic, and we’ve just added a fantastic beef wellington as well.”

“This isn’t my first time dining here,” Leto chuckled. “I’m well aware of what and *who* I can order, and I’m certain you are, too. You are more than worthy of being on the menu here. I dare say you’d outshine any risotto or wellington.”

Tycho caught himself blushing at the compliment. Worry with a dash of pride came over him as the handsome cougar stared into his eyes. “There are,” he gulped, “there are quite a few leaner options on the menu.”

“Ah, but I’m craving something hearty, something to reward myself with after a hard day of work. And to me, you fit the bill perfectly.”

Leto stood. He loomed a foot taller than the horse. He poured a second glass of rum and handed it to Tycho. “Why don’t you have a drink to loosen up?”

“I’m not allowed to drink on the job.” Tycho’s eyes followed Leto’s every move, expecting the cat to strike without warning. His body told him to flee, while his brain reminded him of the futility of such an act. *Someone* would catch him.

“You are when you’ve been ordered. Don’t worry, the customer is always right. I want this to be as relaxing as possible for you, honestly.” Leto spoke gently, the way he did with new clients. Piling on the charm worked equally well when chatting with a future meal.

Tycho accepted the glass and took a drink. He winced from the bite of the rum. Leto coaxed him into finishing the rest in short bursts. Warmth filled his belly, and his heart thumped a little less.

Leto looked Tycho over, nodding at the horse's ample curves. "You're a marvel, Tycho, an absolute marvel. You have to be the best meal I've seen here in months, maybe even years. Yes, yes, the best since that mouse. He was shorter and lighter than you, but he slid down my throat nicely."

Tycho had vague memories of the mouse on staff who'd vanished half a year back. He'd assumed they'd ended up in a belly, and now he knew exactly which one.

He shuddered as Leto tapped the side of his gut with a paw. "That is a very lovely wobble you have there." Leto tapped again, flustering Tycho. Then he squeezed the horse's love handles. "You've been keeping yourself well fed. Is the weight fresh?"

"Y-Yes." Tycho didn't know what else to say.

"I thought so. You can tell by the way a person carries themselves. You kept checking to make sure your middle wasn't bumping the table earlier." Leto smiled as Tycho blushed. "Let me guess. A little bit of overeating here, some long, sedentary nights there. Small changes can snowball into big ones if they aren't dealt with early. It's fascinating, really, how skipping out on a jog or choosing to order take out might have been the catalysts that led to this very moment."

The liquor and comments made Tycho's head spin. The cougar could scarf him down, and he'd be powerless to stop them. All because he'd lazily shifted to a diet consisting mainly of fast food. He wanted to curse his past self for dooming him. But, at the same time, he couldn't get over how pleasant Leto was. The cougar's voice had a way of soothing him, even as it spoke of him as a meal.

His survival instincts hadn't completely abandoned him, though. "Is such a fattening meal wise?" Tycho asked, nervously. "I'd hate to ruin your figure. Being big is a hassle." And dangerous, as he was rapidly finding out.

"Now, now, there's no need to feel ashamed of your weight," Leto said with a precise tone of sympathy. "My own goes up and down all the time, I assure you. Why, you should see how big I get whenever the company needs to downsize." He grinned and patted Tycho on the back. He reached for the rum and poured another glass. "Here, have some more."

Tycho didn't hesitate. He obediently drained it in a few gulps. The booze fended off the panic attack.

“I’m truly impressed with how round you are,” Leto continued with the praise. “And you carry the weight splendidly. It looks natural on you. Have you had a chance to sample the menu here yourself?”

The question was so abrupt, Tycho stumbled to think of an answer. “No. Well, kind of. We’re allowed to have anything that gets sent back.” He wondered how much of that had contributed to his recent gains. What had once seemed a perk of the job now felt like a sinister plot to plump him up.

“You deserve to experience it fresh. Let me treat you to a few dishes,” Leto insisted. He waved down a stout, orange and white rabbit, who diverted his way with haste. “Would you ask the kitchen to bring me Leto’s Special? They’ll understand.”

Tycho looked to his coworker, but the rabbit swiftly avoided eye contact with him. “Right away, sir.” He bounded off, disappearing through the kitchen door.

“The service here is just impeccable,” Leto said. “Alright, why don’t you have a seat?” He wrapped an arm around Tycho’s back and guided the overwhelmed horse into the chair across from the bench. Once he’d been seated, Leto loomed over him even more. “Remember to relax. You’re doing great. After the prep work is complete, you’ll be ready for the final course.”

Ready to *become* the final course, Tycho thought to himself.

Leto pierced the cork of one of the wine bottles with a claw and removed it with a *pop*. He leaned over Tycho’s shoulder and brought the bottle to the horse’s lips. “Drink up. The wine will make all your worries go away.”

Tycho opened his mouth and let the wine bottle slip in. Leto gripped the back of Tycho’s chair and tilted it backward. The horse’s eyes widened as the wine gushed down his throat. He chugged, lacking the will to resist. He gasped for breath as the last drop emptied into him.

The liquor he’d been encouraged to guzzle already clouded his thoughts. The remnants of his common sense told him he’d made a horrible mistake, but Leto’s amicable nature molded him into submission. Plenty of customers had threatened to eat him since he’d taken the job. They’d licked their lips and showed off their fangs, joking that they were hungry enough to eat a horse. But they’d never been special enough to make good on those threats. Leto, meanwhile, treated him like the daily special, like an event.

The appreciation felt good.

Tycho had finished draining the second bottle of wine when the sound of wheels on tile grabbed his attention. The rabbit had returned with a cart overflowing with food. It contained wellingtons, risottos, and every pasta on the menu, all in massive portions he'd never seen before at the restaurant. Their pleasant aromas flooded over him.

"You already look delectable, but I can see the potential in you to become a feast," Leto said. "All you need is the proper filling. Eat, Tycho, and don't leave a single crumb behind."

The other waiter lined the plates in front of Tycho, showing no sign of fear or glee. At times, all someone could do was be thankful they weren't on the menu.

The liquor and sweet talk had washed away Tycho's inhibitions. If there was no escaping being eaten, then he could at least enjoy a good meal before he became one.

Tycho started on the pasta, eating at a polite and steady pace. "Keep going, Tycho," Leto urged. "You have to finish it all before I give in to the urge to gobble you up."

He began to eat faster. Leto whispered encouragement into his ear, suggesting he take bigger and bigger bites. When he finished the first plate, Leto nudged a new one over to replace it. He couldn't always see the imposing cougar, but he could feel his presence looming over him, driving him to gorge.

The constant reassurance eased Tycho's nerves. He liked the attention and praise. A budding desire to please Leto grew within him. He couldn't stand the thought of Leto being unsatisfied with his taste. It'd be such a waste, consumed and then forgotten. He needed to be memorable, like the mouse. The desire to escape had vanished completely, along with any thought to the consequences of his gluttony. All he cared about was satisfying Leto.

Gradually, Tycho's belly swelled from the expensive stuffing. His cummerbund grew tighter and tighter, clenching his waist. Leto noticed, and deftly loosened the sash. The few creases of Tycho's shirt smoothed out. The material had a good deal of stretch to it, containing his middle even as he ballooned from devouring the crowded plates. Part of him recalled the

uniforms being one size fits all. He mulled over the possibility they were chosen with such stuffings in mind, or at least to accommodate the fattening of the staff. Leto's words of support dashed the unnecessary thoughts.

Tycho's hooves were shaking as he downed the last bite. He slumped backward in his seat, panting. His belly filled his lap and pressed against the edge of the table. He doubted he could stand, even if he'd been sober. He looked up at Leto, and felt a strange wave of relief upon seeing the cougar's wide grin. "Am I—*uworrrp*—to your liking, sir?" he asked, stumbling over formalities.

Leto ran both of his paws over the taut surface of Tycho's belly, causing the horse to moan. "Yes, Tycho. I do believe you're ready to become a dish worthy of an award-winning restaurant like this. Clear the table," he instructed the rabbit. The stacks of empty plates were removed, along with the glasses, bottles, and silverware. "Time to get him settled."

Strong arms lifted Tycho from his chair. His belly tried to drag him down, but Leto and the rabbit kept him up. Together, they hauled Tycho onto the table, laying him on his belly with his feet facing the booth. The pressure forced a series of belches out of Tycho, who profusely apologized for his lack of manners.

Being arranged on the table like any other dish dug up the old worries in Tycho. He wiggled, but lacked the energy to drag himself off the table.

Leto placed a firm paw on Tycho's shoulder, stilling him. "Now, now, this isn't the time to get cold feet, not after how well you've performed so far. There's no shame in becoming a meal. I can't think of any better restaurant to end up on the menu of. Be proud, Tycho. And delicious."

Leto returned to his seat. He casually unbuttoned his suit jacket. It could handle the meal he was about to feast upon, but he wanted an extra degree of comfort.

The famished cougar grabbed his dinner by the ankles and guided them into his waiting maw. His cheeks bulged, followed by his neck. As he took another swallow, he carefully loosened his tie to make room for Tycho. The collar and top-most buttons of his dress shirt stretched. Expandex outfits were essential for anyone in business with a hearty appetite. There was joy in waddling around the office with a squirming meal contained beneath a well-tailored suit. Such a display exuded intentional hunger,

rather than a meal of opportunity. And, if he were to be honest, he simply liked remaining stylish, even while stuffed.

Leto delicately pulled Tycho across the table, swallowing the engorged horse inch by inch. His jaws stretched over their meaty thighs and peaks of their doughy rear. Then they began the long trek across the prized, swollen middle.

The lower half of the horse steadily emptied into Leto's stomach down below, bulging it outward in short bursts. Leto's belly began to fill his lap as Tycho's filled his mouth, creating a two-pronged assault of bliss on his senses. Purrs rumbled through Leto's body and vibrated Tycho. Feeling the purest sensation of joy from Leto turned Tycho's face red.

Leto's gut continued swelling, pushing the table away to make room. Meanwhile, his jaws finished with Tycho's bloated middle and moved on to his pecs and shoulders.

A wet *glrk* reached Tycho's ears and he felt warm breath brush past his round cheeks. The roof of Leto's mouth pushed his ears flat and a tongue flicked under his chin. His head rested within Leto's open maw, one swallow away from oblivion. The rest of him pushed against the slick walls of the cougar's stomach, already soaked by the awaiting pool of digestive juices. He should've been terrified, but instead he felt fulfilled and giddy. He bet he was the best meal anyone had ever had at The Melting Pot.

Leto only needed to open his jaws a little more to send Tycho sliding out of sight. He felt a satisfying wobble as the stuffed horse was sealed within his stomach for good. A blissful, twisted smile spread across Leto's face. He bit his lip so he wouldn't moan too loud. "That was absolutely divine," he purred. He grasped the sides of his bulging belly and began to rub, feeling every lump Tycho made on its surface. "You tasted phenomenal, Tycho. This is *exactly* what I needed tonight. The manager will be hearing my praises, I promise you that."

The response from Leto's gut was muffled beyond understanding. Leto patted a bulge that might have been Tycho's head. "Now it's time for you to settle in and let my stomach get to work." By morning, the former waiter would be nothing but pudge. The paunch he'd gain would be a pleasant surprise to bring to work the next day. A reminder to the office that he was ready to indulge again if anyone failed to meet expectations.

Leto took some time to relax, allowing the wiggling in his stomach to cease and turn into gurgling. The rabbit returned with the bill, having taken over for Tycho once they'd become the main course. As the maitre d' had warned, the price for dinner was steep. Nothing he couldn't afford, though. He made sure to add a sizable tip for all the extra prep work involved in the stuffing of his dinner.

"The Melting Pot has never disappointed me," Leto told the rabbit, before stifling a belch. He hauled himself out of the booth. His massive gut bounced some, but he had no trouble maintaining his balance. "Give my respects to the kitchen. I can't wait to indulge here again." He gently patted his belly while eyeing up the plump middle of the rabbit.

The rabbit's ears tilted back as he was ogled. "Of course, sir. It was a pleasure to have you," he blurted, fearing Leto would find room for dessert. Fortunately for him, Leto was content with a single course that night.

The cougar cheerfully waddled out of The Melting Pot, his stewing belly swaying from left to right. Nothing made him happier than a well-fed meal.