

Columbia State—Long Overdue Vengeance

By: Indigo Rho

Bishop pulled a chair from under the study room's table and looked it over. It was practical, not pretty, like all the other chairs in the room. No arms, thick legs, and a gap in the back large enough to handle the tails of any species. Careless claws, talons, and fangs had left scratches scattered across the wood. Deeper ones had either come from roughhousing or desperate attempts to escape a ravenous stalker. And, of course, a few bored people had carved initials and shapes.

He grasped the back of the chair and shook it. A few groans, but nothing worrisome. One test remained.

The heavysset red fox shuffled in front of the chair and slowly settled into it. The seams of his jeans and red polo creaked louder than the chair did. He wiggled his wide rump and scooted himself forwards until his gut spilled over the table. The chair remained solid. Content, Bishop pushed back and stood up.

Being the house director of the Columbia State University chapter of the Tau Tau Psi fraternity involved a considerable number of duties. Maintenance was one of them. Besides making sure appliances ran smoothly and nothing leaked, Bishop kept an eye on all the furniture in the frat house. Chairs, couches, and tables needed to be replaced before they collapsed and injured anyone, not after, though accomplishing that in a house full of rowdy frat boys was challenging. A bulging gut could be as devastating as a wrecking ball when lugged around by a pred high off the rush of a successful hunt.

Bishop understood that the boys rarely considered collateral damage while hunting or boasting. He'd smashed his fair share of chairs as a college student in the 90s, along with a couch, a couple of beds, and plenty of stereos. When you had a person squirming in your stomach, you tended to ignore everything else, for better or worse.

Thankfully, all the furniture in the frat house had been chosen with preds in mind, and could handle the weight of an engorged occupant or two. But everything wore down inevitably, so Bishop made sure to regularly check on everything. The fraternity would be hosting a massive party to

celebrate the New Year soon, and he hoped to reduce some of the cleanup work by setting aside anything that seemed unlikely to survive the night.

He wiped a spot off his rectangular glasses and returned them to his chubby snout as he took a look around. Everything in the study room was in decent condition. That meant the upper floors were done and he could move on to the basement.

It wasn't the sort of job Bishop had expected to have at forty-six. When he was younger—a lot younger—he'd assumed he'd be a retired baseball star by now. A shoo-in for the Hall of Fame, naturally, since all young players with all-star dreams only saw themselves at the top. He'd be looking back at a long career free of debilitating injuries and thinking about his future as a sports commentator. There, he'd have the freedom to grow big and fat, his diet no longer restricted.

He'd been wrong about all that. Well, aside from growing fat. He'd piled on the pounds expertly.

Baseball hadn't worked out for him. He'd been a catcher for the CSU Trojans. He'd trained hard and played decently, but he'd never stood out like he'd hoped to. There were always better hitters, better runners, better players in general. He'd gotten his hopes up when a minor league team picked him up, but the Majors had never shown interest in him.

He'd considered gaining weight and trying out for the relatively-new XL League, but it'd seemed too risky at the time. The league was years away from being anything but a holding pen for Major League players who got too fat. He also couldn't guarantee he'd retain any of his skill after gaining a couple hundred pounds.

So instead, he gave up on baseball after two mediocre years and focused on his family. He was a better real estate agent than a catcher. He enjoyed being able to spend more time with his wife and had a few kids. For many years, life was good.

Then the twins—his two eldest kids—were eaten a month apart during their sophomore years in college.

Predation was an unavoidable part of life. Friends and relatives of his had been eaten. He'd consumed too many people to count, all without caring about anything other than showing off and enjoying their squirms. After his wife had given birth to the twins, every parent in their life had told

them to expect to lose some kids. You'd have a whole bundle of them and hope for as many as possible to outlive you. He and his wife had discussed the inevitability on a few occasions. None of it prepared them for reality.

If they'd only lost one of the twins, or lost them further apart, maybe they could've handled it. But it was too much. Both wanted someone to blame for the loss, and they unfortunately settled on each other. Their marriage gradually fell apart.

After the divorce, Bishop decided a change in scenery was in order. He left his job and moved across the state to become the house director at his old frat. Tau Tau Psi had been the high point of his college career, a memory he cherished even more than his time on the baseball team. Giving back to the fraternity felt rewarding.

Being back at CSU also gave him a steady supply of prey. In college, he'd had to keep his weight in check to stay on the baseball team, and had never been heavier than plump. Prey had been lean and low in calories. The habit had stuck with him into the Minor Leagues and the years that followed. Now he ate whoever he thought looked tasty, no matter how thin or fat they were. The last four years at CSU had ballooned him up. He liked the heft.

Bishop left the study room. The gym and rec room were his next destinations, both down in the basement. They went through a lot more punishment than the study rooms did, and would need extra attention. He needed to get through them that day, before the rest of the frat members returned from the Winter Solstice break.

The study rooms were on the second floor of the frat house, between the bathrooms and the grand two-story entry hall. Sharp conversation reached Bishop's ears, and he found himself waddling over to the balcony that overlooked the entry.

A young, golden brown mountain lion stood surrounded by luggage. He was a sophomore named Victor Davis. He ran a paw through the long tuft of fur atop his head that had a faint resemblance to a partial mane. He was panting, and his shirt clung to his chubby middle and love handles.

Mr. Bishop didn't quite like Victor. The fox had endured far worse frat boys in his time as house director, but Victor still managed to particularly annoy him. He never put much effort into chores and had a reputation for

wrecking things with his gut after eating people, rarely by accident.

An older man was with Victor, a red-brown lion plump around the middle. Probably an uncle helping Victor out in lieu of a busy dad. Or a digested one. Getting old might make a person wiser, but not harder to eat. Bishop had only known half his grandparents. He used to tell his kids they were lucky to have three.

Watching silently from above, Bishop swore the older lion looked familiar, though he couldn't quite place him. There was always a chance he'd dropped Victor off before. Remembering all the frat members was enough of a challenge; he'd never bothered trying to remember their families.

"Home sweet home, I guess," Victor grumbled. "Would've been nice to wait a couple more days, at least."

The lion sighed. "We went over this at home *and* in the car. It's a five-hour drive and I had to get you over here before I start work tomorrow. Would you have rather taken the bus?"

Victor rolled his eyes. "This is all Rod's fault for wrecking my fucking car. I can't believe that idiot tried to drive right after eating someone! I wish his fucking prey had eaten him instead." He pouted like a child denied a toy.

"Be lucky your mom's not here to listen to you talk about your brother like that," the lion said. "Rod made a dumb mistake and breaking his leg is punishment enough. Until it heals, he won't be able to go to work and he'll have to hobble to community college classes."

"Good, maybe he'll get snatched then. Not like he'll be able to get away from anyone."

"What did I just say?" the lion growled.

"I wasn't wishing for it, I was just saying it's possible. Which it is." Victor never knew when to hold his tongue. "At least I wasn't that stupid at his age."

"You're only a year older than him, Junior."

Victor winced. "Please don't call me that."

"What, your name?" the lion smirked. Bishop was starting to see where Victor had gotten his attitude from. It must run in the family.

"That's not even my real name. Which I *also* don't go by."

The comment didn't seem to have the bite Victor had intended. "Is my

name not good enough for ya?” the lion snorted.

“I’ve never been able to go by Dan anywhere because there are a million other Dans. And I can’t go by that at home because I get confused for you.”

“That’s what Junior’s for.”

“I’m not a kid anymore, Dad, I’m not going by Junior.”

Bishop’s eyes lit up. Dan Davis? The lion’s name was Dan Davis? He’d lost a fair bit of muscle mass, gained a slight paunch, and aged twenty-plus years, but there was no doubt in his mind that the lion below was Dan Davis. Dan *fucking* Davis.

Bishop snarled on instinct. He couldn’t think of anyone he’d hated more in college. Davis was a former Tau Tau Psi, like him. They’d belonged to the same group of pledges. He was an obnoxious ass who always gloated about his predation prowess despite being a mediocre pred at best. Ambushing drunk twink didn’t take skill. Of course if you believed his lies, every prey he’d scarfed down had either been built like a brick house or lugging around a keg of a gut. His minimal gains certainly never matched the stories, though.

Davis had been unpleasant in general to be around. What pissed Bishop off most was that Davis had managed to eat one of his best friends. Ted, another fox in the frat, had accepted a voracious bet while shit-faced drunk one night, and Davis had absolutely trounced him. Ted hadn’t been in any condition to make bets and Davis had practically harassed him into accepting one, but Bishop couldn’t interfere without causing a scene and likely being eaten in the process. Voracious bets were a proud tradition, both in the frat and at CSU in general. They only held up if the loser accepted their fate, and bystanders would always be willing and eager to enforce that.

So Bishop had watched Ted’s kicking legs gradually descend into Davis’ maw while the lion’s belly ballooned out. Davis didn’t even have the decency to start digesting Ted right away. He’d gulped down fresh air and kept Ted squirming for half the evening, taunting him constantly. Bishop had privately vowed revenge, but the chance never came.

He’d never considered that Victor might be related to his old rival. He only ever went by his middle name, and Davis wasn’t an uncommon

surname. He was also a much lighter shade of brown and didn't look like a lion. His mother must have been a mountain lion, then. The fluff on his head was from his dad.

The argument over Victor's name ended in a draw, with both felines on edge, their tails flicking about behind them. "I'm gonna check out the store and then hit up a bar for a bit. After that, we can go grab dinner before I have to drive across the damn state again. See you in two hours."

"Sure," Victor answered without enthusiasm.

Davis ignored his son's lack of tact and left.

A floor above and unnoticed, Bishop frowned. He already wasn't fond of Victor, and knowing he was Davis' son wouldn't help. He feared he'd start seeing Davis every time he looked at him. Maybe in the snout or the eyes, or whenever he had his hoodie up. It was going to be a long couple of years until the lion graduated.

Unless someone ate Victor before then. The odds of it happening were high, despite the fact he'd survived nearly two years of college already. Frat boys tended to be active preds, and being an active pred increased a person's likelihood of being eaten. There was a reason the memorial wall in the frat's heritage room was always filled with photos.

He'd never cared about Victor enough to wish he'd become prey, but Bishop suddenly found himself smiling as he imagined the possibility. And above all else, he wished he could see the look on Davis' face when he learned his son had become pudge.

But that would only happen if the lion started taking more risks or had bad luck. He seemed to favor scrawny prey who'd rather flee than fight back and hunted in a pack. If Victor was to end up stewing in someone's stomach, it'd more than likely be due to an ambush. But who said it had to be a student doing the ambushing?

Bishop smiled and eyed Victor up. The lion wasn't particularly big. Soft around the middle with no significant muscle. Hitting the gym had kept him from growing fat, but that was it. It wouldn't be hard to cram him down his throat.

House directors weren't banned from eating frat members, merely discouraged. The house was his responsibility, not his personal buffet. If he made a habit of gorging on the frat boys, he'd be reprimanded at the very

least, or eventually fired. But he'd taken the job seriously and rarely targeted Tau Tau Psi members. Parties offered him plenty of outsiders to snack on. Avenging Ted after over two decades would involve little risk to him.

Davis had taken away a close friend, someone he'd hoped to hang out with well into old age. In return, Bishop would take away his son. From personal experience, he knew the pain would match.

Bishop made his way down the central staircase of the entry hall. Victor was on his phone, not yet ready to deal with the bags around him. Either he'd taken half his room with him while on break, or he'd returned with a load of presents.

"Welcome back, Victor," Bishop said as he reached the bottom step.

"Yo," Victor replied back, only tearing his eyes off his phone for a second.

"I can help carry your things upstairs, if you'd like?" Bishop tried remembering if any of Victor's friends were in the house at the moment.

"Oh, yeah, that'd be awesome." The relief in Victor's voice was palpable.

Bishop grabbed the lightest bags so that Victor would tire himself out on the way up. "So, how was your Solstice? Or do you celebrate Christmas or something else?" he asked as they trudged up the stairs.

"We do Solstice and Christmas," Victor huffed. He carried his luggage awkwardly, shifting weight from one side to the other as he went. "Big family gathering on Solstice night to give gifts, then boring church stuff Christmas morning."

The combination had been a lot more common when Bishop was still a kid. But even he stuck to merely Solstice nowadays. "Ah. I had more of a Solstice lunch myself." It'd been with a sibling up north. Then he'd had a voice call with his ex-wife and the kids later that evening. They were still giving each other space after the divorce.

"I wish we did that. Being stuck all Solstice night with the family is lame. I want to go to a bar, not watch everyone get clothing they'll outgrow in a month," Victor complained. "Or a fucking week, like my dumb brother. All he does is eat people and wreck my shit, that fat ass."

Bishop nodded silently, letting Victor work himself up. He wanted the

lion tired and distracted when the time came to eat him. The thought widened his smile. Not only was he about to avenge Ted, he was going to get rid of Victor at the same time. One less hassle in the frat house and a few more pounds around his waistline. He hadn't anticipated a meal so much in months.

Victor's room was on the second floor, a few doors down from the study rooms. His roommate hadn't returned from break yet, so it was empty when Victor unlocked the door and stumbled inside. Luck didn't favor the mountain lion that day.

"Did you have a chance to grab a meal of your own while away?" Bishop asked. He didn't have to specify a live meal.

"I wish. I didn't have the time because of my stupid brother. I'm definitely having a meal at the New Year's Gorge, though. I've got a score or two to settle." Victor dropped his bags on the floor and tossed his phone on his desk.

Victor's attempt to act cool only forced Bishop to hold back a snicker. Bishop put down the bags he'd carried up and hovered behind Victor. "Vengeance makes every meal taste sweeter. And the best part is, waiting never dulls the taste, no matter how many years pass."

As soon as Victor turned around, Bishop kned him in the stomach. Victor fell back against his desk, hunched over and gasping for breath. Bishop didn't waste time boasting. He wrapped his arms around Victor's back and pulled the stunned mountain lion tight against his belly, causing him to sink into it. A solid squeeze made Victor spasm as the wind was knocked out of him again.

Bishop preferred to weaken his prey before he started swallowing them. In college, he'd open with a hit to the chest or head, something that'd get his prey reeling right away. That left them fighting to regain their senses when they should've been fighting to escape his throat. It saved him from the aches and bruises a lot of preds dealt with the morning after a successful hunt. A doomed prey could still kick up a storm.

He opened his maw and closed his jaws around Victor's muzzle. His first swallow pulled in the rest of the lion's head. Victor twitched in his grasp. Dazed or not, the warm confines of a predator's mouth would spur anyone to action. Bishop wiggled his meal upward as he swallowed his neck

and began working on his shoulders. They were the first real hurdle a predator had to get past when eating someone. Victor wasn't broad in any way, but it still took effort to stretch his jaws. Once he felt Victor's shoulders pressing against his cheeks, all he had to do was swallow.

For as meaningful as the meal was, Bishop treated it with the same caution and urgency as any other. Having the tables turned on him by his rival's son would be humiliating, even if it didn't lead to him churning away in the pit of the lion's bloated stomach. He frequently reapplied his grip to Bishop, quelling the terrified frat boy's struggles. Steadily he gulped him down, his lips passing over his chest and soft middle.

As his jaws were slowly stretched by the curve of Victor's paunch, his tail wagged in a frenzy. A few more swallows and he'd seal Victor's fate. Gravity would usher the lion along, and all the kicking in the world wouldn't be enough to stop his descent.

Below, Bishop's belly bulged a little as Victor slipped into it. Every swallow made him swell a bit more. He shifted his grip to pin Victor's legs together and prevent them from flailing about. His jaws slid over the lion's rump and the base of his tail, which flicked about erratically. Slurred shouts echoed from deep within. They—along with Victor's wiggling—vibrated his whole gut.

Bishop switched to autopilot. He needed the lion in his belly, and his paws and jaws were more than happy to comply. Gulp, push. Gulp, push. Gulp, push. His ballooning middle untucked his polo and wobbled out. The faint imprint of Victor's head and shoulders bulged out as he struggled in vain. Beneath layers of fat and fur, he was nothing more than a shifting lump.

Soon, Victor was in Bishop's maw up to his knees. Bishop tilted his head back and stretched his mouth wide, causing the lion to hasten down his throat in short bursts. The fluffy tip of his tail vanished. He couldn't kick anymore, only wiggle, and even that was suppressed by Bishop's firm grip. Victor's fate was inevitable at that point. He wasn't even a pair of legs, just a pair of sneakers. Bishop reluctantly left them on. The less evidence of where exactly Victor had been consumed the better. He'd rather there be some mystery to the mountain lion's end.

When his jaws closed over the last of Victor, a broad smile formed on

Bishop's face. He chuckled as he felt the lion empty into his stomach with a jiggle. His gut swayed from left to right as his prey squirmed. No different than any other meal he'd enjoyed in recent years, yet he felt the same high as he had when he'd indulged on a living being for the first time. "Vengeance really does taste better," he murmured.

Despite Victor barely putting up a fight, Bishop still had to take a seat to rest afterward. He couldn't stumble off after a meal anymore like he had in college. He sat on the edge of Victor's bed, his lap covered by his wobbling gut. Victor pushed against the walls of his stomach, stretching them in every direction as he searched for a way out. Paws, elbows, feet, and back—all felt around in the dark, all finding nothing but slick walls. The flurry of movement made Bishop groan, but he wasn't the least bit nauseous. His prey would only get out if he wanted him out, and he wasn't the sort to change his mind about a meal.

"Let me out!" Bishop's bulk muffled Victor's shouts some, but he could still understand every desperate word. "Help! Help!"

"There, there, Victor. No one likes a whiny meal." Bishop placed his paws on his belly and rubbed, smiling as he felt Victor's imprints shift beneath his touch. "And it's just you and me here. No one's coming to rescue you."

"I didn't do anything wrong, let me out!" There wasn't any anger in the trapped mountain lion's voice, only fear.

"You didn't do anything bad enough to deserve ending up in my gut, but you had the bad luck of having a dad with enemies, kid. I'm guessing your dad never told you about the fox he pissed off ages ago. Knowing him, he probably only boasted of all the people he ate." No doubt exaggerating both the numbers and situations.

"Dad's gonna eat you the second he gets back!" Victor blurted out.

"And how will that help you? I listened in on your chat with Davis, *Junior*." Bishop couldn't help but tease his prey. "He won't be back for two hours at least, and you'll be churning away by then. It's kind of hard to rescue soup."

"Fuck you!" the mountain lion's voice cracked.

While Victor was screwed, his failed attempt at a threat had gotten Bishop thinking. Davis *would* be back, and he'd be expecting to find his son

alive and healthy, not digesting. He wouldn't leave if his son vanished, he'd go looking for him, and his search would inevitably lead him to the house director.

Bishop idly jostled his belly with a paw as he thought. Perhaps he should've waited until Davis had left for home to target his son. He could've dealt with Victor whenever he wanted. It'd be as simple as requesting him for a chore in a quiet part of the house and gulping him down once no one was around. Or perhaps he should've tried following and ambushing Davis to get direct revenge.

Who said he still couldn't?

They hadn't seen each other in damn near twenty-five years, and Bishop had only recognized Davis for certain after figuring out his name. And while Davis hadn't changed much over the decades, he'd gone through quite the transformation. No longer was he the fit fox who used to shotgun beers before shotgunning freshmen. He'd rounded out considerably and the red in his fur had faded a little. He wore polos rather than tank tops, and had a pair of glasses rather than cheap shades he'd snatched from a meal. Whenever he'd shown frat members old pictures of his college days, they'd joked about him being unrecognizable. To Davis, he'd be an aging, fat, stuffed fox, not a former college rival currently churning his son.

No, he wouldn't be churning Victor by then. He wanted Davis to find his son still wiggling up a storm when he eventually slid into the stomach to join him. He wanted to feel both of them struggling in his gut at once. He wanted to hear them argue over who was more to blame for their impending doom.

Bishop patted his gut. "Don't worry, Victor. I'll reunite you with your dad soon enough."

He carefully slid off the bed, smirking as he felt his gut bounce around his knees. He grabbed Victor's phone off the desk and checked it for new messages. None. He set it to vibrate only and slid it into his pocket. Leaving Victor's bags exactly where they'd been dropped, Bishop left the room and closed the door behind him. Everyone would know the mountain lion had at least made it back to the frat before being eaten. A few keen eyes would suspect Bishop's swollen waistline was his final resting place, but they wouldn't make a fuss about it. The frat boys understood the need to feed.

Lumbering down the stairs with a rowdy gut didn't appeal to Bishop. He headed down the hall in the opposite direction, towards the elevator. Victor struggled in a frenzy while shouting his lungs out. He pleaded for help over and over again, but the only reply he received was a squeeze from Bishop's paw.

A short alligator and a pine marten were revealed when the elevator doors slid open. They stopped talking, eyes immediately on Bishop's bulging gut. Bishop gave them a smile and a nod, and they nodded in turn. Victor continued yelling. The two frat boys hurried out of the elevator without a word, and Bishop took their place. Even if they hadn't recognized Victor's voice, they'd correctly assume one of their frat brothers was filling his belly. And since Bishop had gone out of his way to cultivate a positive relationship with the frat members, they'd assume whoever he'd eaten had deserved it.

They wouldn't necessarily be wrong.

Back on the main floor of the frat house, Bishop took a couple of digestion inhibitors to ensure his meal wouldn't begin churning too soon. Regular gulps of fresh air kept Victor from passing out.

From there, Bishop returned to his duties as house director as if nothing had happened.

A belly full of prey made his testing of the gym equipment more accurate, as quite a few frat members attempted workouts before they'd fully digested prey. He noted which machines groaned under his bulk and which bars felt loose when his belly pushed against them. He bumped into the same things a stuffed frat boy would bump into, and considered what could be rearranged to improve safety.

The frat boys already in the gym ignored him for the most part, sneaking the occasional glance but mainly focusing on their exercises. Bishop asked if any of them had complaints about the equipment, and listened well to their suggestions. No one paid attention to Victor as he begged for aid. People were used to turning a blind eye to prey once they were trapped in a stomach. You had to, otherwise you'd spend your entire day distracted by the meals of others.

The rec room was more active, so Bishop couldn't check it as thoroughly as he'd liked to. He passed the occupied couches and looked over the handful of chairs. Most of them creaked, and he reminded himself

to check them again after the New Year's Gorge. Some would undoubtedly be on their last legs by then. Once he'd examined everything he could, Bishop waddled up to his private apartment on the main floor.

By the time Bishop closed the door to his apartment, Victor was barely moving. Struggling and shouting had exhausted the mountain lion, and the heat of the stomach hadn't done him any favors, either. Only his infrequent twitching told Bishop his prey remained conscious.

Bishop settled down at his desk. Arranging his gut so he could reach the keyboard took some effort, but eventually, he found a comfortable-enough position. With one paw on the mouse and the other on his middle, he read emails and checked the frat house budget.

A full belly made work more enjoyable for Bishop. No matter what frustration he ran into, he could always pat his gut and remember how good things could be. Though it proved to be somewhat distracting, as he kept thinking about the second course awaiting him.

Victor's phone rattled on the desk as a text came in. It was from Davis, saying he was only a couple of blocks away. "Time for the reunion." Bishop grinned as he hefted himself out of his chair.

He waddled into the entry hall right as the doorbell rang. This was it. After two decades, he was finally going to get revenge for Ted. He'd pushed any hope of doing so to the back of his mind for so long that it didn't feel real. But fate had led him back to CSU and delivered Davis right to his doorstep. Literally.

He'd need to deceive Davis just long enough to jump him. If he saw even the slightest hint of recognition in the lion's face, he'd have to attack him right away and hope for the best. He'd have a weight advantage for sure, but lugging around Victor would make him clumsy as well. The thrill of an uncertain hunt reminded him of college and got his adrenaline pumping.

After a few deep breaths to collect himself, Bishop opened the door. "Afternoon," he said with a friendly smile.

Davis looked confused. "Uh, hello. Sorry, I was expecting my son, Victor. I'm here to pick him up."

"Always good to meet a parent. I'm the house director. Come on in." Bishop stepped aside, causing his belly to jiggle. Davis only gave it a cursory glance. "I know I saw Victor carrying his bags up earlier, so I'm sure he won't

be long.”

Davis accepted the invitation and walked in. He didn't seem to have gotten drunk at the bar, unfortunately. “He better not be. I gave him plenty of heads up.”

Bishop's gut began to wobble more. Victor was aware his dad was nearby, but lacked the energy to cry out. Bishop closed the door and quietly turned the deadbolt. “Well you know, boys will be boys.” He waddled around to the front of Davis.

“Sure,” Davis scoffed. He squinted his eyes at Bishop. “Did you go to CSU? I've got the strangest feeling I might have seen you at parties or something.”

Too little, too late, Bishop thought to himself.

Without saying a word, Bishop charged Davis. The lion didn't expect the attack, and only had time to raise his paws before Bishop slammed into him. Bishop kept up his momentum, not stopping until he had his rival pinned between his stuffed gut and the doors. Davis howled in pain.

“Long time no see, Davis.” Bishop leaned in with all his weight, crushing the lion. “Didn't expect to see your good buddy Bishop again, did you?”

“Fucker.” Davis wasted what little breath he had left on the curse. He tried pulling himself free, but was smothered by fox gut. Victor's renewed struggles dug into his chest, unintentionally weakening him further.

“I'll just assume that means you remember me. Good. I'd be embarrassed if you didn't have a clue as to why you're on the bottom of the food chain today.”

Reaching Davis over the massive curve of his middle was a challenge, but Bishop eventually grabbed him by the collar and dragged him onto his gut. Davis almost had an arm free when he started to swallow his head. He put up far more of a fight than his son had.

The lion's arm slid loose, and he immediately began pounding on Bishop's gut. Bishop winced at every strike, but Victor absorbed the brunt of the attacks. While gulping down the rest of Davis' head and mane, Bishop managed to grab his prey by the wrist. He twisted it back, provoking a spasm and a yowl. The pain provided an opening for him to wrap his jaws around Davis' shoulders.

Bishop's control of the situation was volatile at best. He had to constantly apply pressure to Davis to keep him at bay. One lucky twist or pull and his advantage over his prey would've faltered, creating an opening for Davis to turn the tide. He couldn't get cocky. He didn't even allow himself to bask in having the upper hand. Boasting could wait until Davis was securely sealed within his stomach.

Davis flopped around as he was steadily dragged atop Bishop's belly and consumed. He kicked violently at the doors behind him, trying and failing to push Bishop over. His squirms only intensified when his plump middle was swallowed, and by then, Bishop was able to grab a hold of his legs and rein them in.

There was a surprised shout when Davis first plunged into Bishop's stomach and discovered where his son had vanished to. He yelled the younger lion's name and followed it with a string of curses. It was as ill-tempered a reunion as Bishop could've hoped for. Father and son snipped at each other when they should've been working together.

Bishop's belly shook up and down as it filled with its second, larger lion. He widened his gait to maintain his balance. It'd been a long time since he'd last eaten more than one prey in a sitting, and he'd forgotten how unwieldy his gut became when packed. Preds who regularly gorged on three or four prey at a time impressed him. Sometimes he wished he had such an insatiable appetite.

As Bishop slurped up Davis' legs, he had to choose between restraining his prey or supporting his boulder of a belly. Not eager to topple and be beached in the entry hall, he chose his belly. He slid one paw under his gut, and then the other. The muscles in his arms tensed as he braced his immense middle.

The second his legs were free, Davis started kicking. Bishop grunted as the first couple of kicks made contact. Strong gulps pulled more of the furious lion into his maw and reduced his kicks to a frantic wriggle. He wished he could savor the final moments, but Davis was too aggressive a meal to delay. He tilted his head back, opened his maw as wide as he could, and let gravity finish off his rival.

Bishop was panting once his jaws shut. "Oh, that hits the—*bworrrrrrrrrrp*—spot," he groaned. His gut was already sore from Victor and

Davis' struggles, and his jaws weren't feeling much better. Had either lion been fatter, he might have passed out then and there. Or failed. He preferred not to dwell on the misfortune he'd avoided.

"I'm gonna pound your head into the floor when I get out of here, you piece of shit!" Davis let out a roar that vibrated Bishop's entire body.

"Watch where you're kicking!" Victor's voice paled in comparison to his dad's. Stewing away in Bishop's stomach for two hours hadn't done him any favors.

"Shut up and fight!" Davis snapped.

"I have been!"

"Not hard enough! How'd you get caught by an old man?"

"He fucking got you too!"

"Only because he had you to swing around in his gut!"

Their struggles waned as they argued, much to Bishop's delight. "Alright you two, why don't we head over to my apartment and settle all this tension between us."

"Fuck you!"

Bishop lumbered across the entry hall one careful step at a time. His confidence improved the further he waddled, and he was almost used to lugging around his enormous belly by the time he squeezed through the door to his apartment.

He awkwardly rolled onto his couch. He sunk in, his gut rising above him like a furry, rocking peak. Getting back up would be a challenge. He wasn't even sure he could shift into a sitting position. Nonetheless, it'd be a comfortable place to digest his indulgent meal.

"Damn, Davis, you and your boy are lively ones," Bishop laughed. Father and son, both crammed in his belly, both on their way to becoming layers of fat. It was a voracious feat he hadn't realized he wanted to achieve until that very moment. It reminded him of the time he'd eaten two brothers back in college, though the meals had been a year apart. He found himself taking a tally of how many sets of relatives were currently in Tau Tau Psi. Not many, but enough to prompt fantasies of his stomach bouncing from the struggles of brothers or cousins.

They'd have to remain fantasies. He wouldn't wreck the trust he'd built up with the frat for a fleeting voracious high. He set his sights on the

present, and the wobbling mound that contained his filling prize.

“I’m not digested yet, you bastard!” The dark confines of a stomach didn’t diminish Davis’ misplaced confidence. Bishop wondered if the lion truly believed himself to be the invincible top predator he’d boasted about being back in college. If so, then he was in for a rude, tingling awakening.

Bishop let loose a thundering belch that tightened his stomach. The imprints from Davis’ squirms suddenly didn’t bulge as far as they had a moment before. “How much fresh air do you think you’ve got left in there? Not enough for you and Victor to share. Face it, you’re never seeing the light of day again.”

“I don’t give up that easily!” Davis shot back. His threats remained bold but his struggles were weakening.

Decades of eating people had given Bishop a solid idea as to how close a meal was to the end. Despite the lion’s bluster, he was fading, whether he realized it or not. Bishop wanted him to spend his last couple of minutes knowing exactly why he was about to digest.

“I doubt you remember Ted. Red fox, shorter than me but doughier. Well, doughier than I was back then. I guess you’d call him plump. I’d known him since high school. He used to swear up and down that he’d make sure I ended up so stuffed during my bachelor party I’d have to be rolled to the altar.” Bishop had managed three prey that night in Ted’s honor. He’d had to spend the off-season working his literal ass off, but it’d been worth it.

“But he never got to see it. Instead, you forced him into a bet he was too drunk to say no to and had no hope of winning, and then acted like hot shit afterward.” He still regretted not sucker-punching the prick back then. “I made the mistake of respecting fraternity rules and never found an opportunity to get revenge. Until now.” He laughed, shaking his belly back and forth. “And not only did I get you, but I got your obnoxious son, too. This meal’s killing two birds with one stone. But hey, at least you’ll have some company on my waistline.”

“Fuck...fuck you.” The words were so faint that Bishop nearly missed them.

“Bye, Davis. You couldn’t outrun your past forever.”

Bishop’s prey continued shifting around in his belly, but he didn’t hear another word from them before they inevitably passed out for good. He

lazed on the couch until he heard the first gurgle to confirm the lions were nothing but food anymore, and then he dozed off.

* * *

Bishop slept away the rest of the afternoon and evening. He woke in the dark of night to a smoother middle and a few belched-up bones scattered around the couch. His belly sloshed and gurgled as it worked to convert the lions into fat. The process warmed him so much that he didn't need a blanket, even on that cold night. He passed out again not long after.

By afternoon the following day, Bishop's stomach had finished off his prey. New layers of pillowy pudge had settled over the fox. His gut and butt were particularly larger. He could feel more of a jiggle in his waddle.

The clothes he'd worn the day before were now a size too small, along with a good portion of his wardrobe. He'd expected to grow larger, though, and already had an acceptable selection of clothing that now fit him perfectly. Shopping for the next size up could wait until after the New Year.

Bishop ran his paws over his round middle, smiling as he watched his fingers sink in. Davis and Victor were in those soft layers. Father and son, together forever. Scarfing down Victor had only enhanced his long-awaited vengeance. An extra bit of spite thrown in to drive home how much Davis had pissed him off. It was the greatest late Solstice gift he'd ever gotten.

He waddled over to his desk, cherishing every bounce of his newly enlarged belly. While photos of his children had a place of honor adorning the walls, the spot next to his computer monitor was reserved for a framed picture of Ted. In it, the fox was looking away from the camera, raising a beer in one paw and cradling his bulging belly in the other. It was taken towards the end of his freshman year. He'd felt invincible, in the same way all college students who survived their freshman year felt. Less than two years later, he'd be gone.

Bishop had chosen the photo for the frat's memorial wall. He'd visited it often while still in college. Once he'd gotten the job as house director, he'd taken it out of storage.

"Well Ted, better late than never," Bishop said, smacking his gut. His eyes watered briefly and he wiped the tears away. Despite glutting on two

people the day before, he was starting to feel hungry again. He was sure the leftovers in the fridge would be enough to fill him up. And if they somehow weren't, then there was a whole, fattening campus out there for him to browse.

The fox waddled away, tail swishing and stomach rumbling.