

Consorting with witch doctors wasn't something Woz thought he'd ever have to do, but it was either that or give up on his dream of ever reaching a respectable size. It was bad enough that he already wanted to be bigger all on his lonesome; that he was mercilessly, ruthlessly mocked by his peers on account of being a practically weightless pipsqueak when compared to every other gator in the bayou didn't exactly help things. Every day Woz would wake up and look at himself in the mirror, hoping perhaps that his stuffing his face the night before had done *something* to his figure, and every day he would end up disappointed when absolutely nothing changed about it. Of all the people in the world to be blessed with such a unique metabolism, it *had* to be him; it couldn't be some fancy city-dweller with a legitimate concern for their waistline, no, it *had* to be the gator who so desperately *wanted* to become as huge as all the others around him, one that could eat his body's weight in fatty foods every day and only ever end up putting on a few ounces, rather than several pounds. He'd gone through every possible *legitimate* avenue several times over before he first considered trying something more esoteric, and even then the idea of making a deal with a witch doctor wasn't even on the top of the list; as much as the legitimately malicious ones were always a minority, even the most well-intentioned of practitioners could never truly guarantee that a change like the one Woz wanted could come without a hefty price tag attached. The loa weren't ones to give without taking *something*, even if it was a symbolic price, and given that the gator lived in a shack in the middle of the swamp, he wasn't sure if he even *had* anything that could be taken away in exchange for him growing bigger and fatter... at least, anything that didn't involve sacrificing a part of himself. The last thing on his mind was walking into a position where he was stuck with an ironic and cruel twist, where he got what he wanted but lost something he had that prevented him from fully enjoying his new body; at the same time, everything *else* had failed, leaving him with little recourse but to try the absolute last resort: Mama Josephine. Almost ludicrously old, enough for no one in the swamp to know just when she moved in, yet still possessed of an indomitably youthful spirit that often bordered on the downright excessive, one couldn't get within a mile of her hut without hearing the damned music she had on at every damned waking hour: always something new, always something she herself admitted was "trashy pop garbage", and yet somehow it always seemed to work just perfectly with her. That is, until someone decided to consult her for something serious, at which point they would find the approach to her abode to be deathly silent, even if they didn't schedule ahead of time; no one bothered to ask how she always seemed to know, for everyone knew that the answer would most likely leave them terrified, preferring instead to accept it and move on. For Woz, swimming that last stretch without the familiar tunes belting out of the rickety wooden shack out in front of him left him frozen to the very core, as if he was doing something terribly wrong and the world was trying to remind him of this; he was, ultimately, trying to get something for *himself*, a purely selfish desire he wished to see fulfilled, which was never a good thing when it came to spiritual exchanges. But, as he kept telling himself, he wasn't trying to find a shortcut; rather, he had genuinely tried everything else he could think of, and thus now turned to the one option he realistically had left. If Mama Josephine decided that he wasn't worth it, or instead chose to give him some sage advice rather than more

direct assistance, then he'd have no choice but to accept it and move on, no matter how hard it was; surely the loa couldn't fault him for that, could they? Josephine certainly didn't seem to think so, given that, rather than anything more involved, what she did upon seeing the gator approach her home was dive back into it and come back out with a glass bottle in her hand; once Woz came close enough, his cheeks went bright red when the witch doctor passed him what she said was a "little helper", along with so many winks that it was obvious she knew what her visitor intended. That the music started back up without her turning on the radio (or whatever she used) only served to drive the point home that her job there was done, and that Woz was free to go back home and agonize over whether or not he should drink the contents of the bottle. He did hurry back though; he knew for a fact that there were plenty of folk who took to watching Mama Josephine's home as some kind of sick entertainment whenever anyone came to ask her for something, and before long the whole bayou would know that he'd been there... and given the sort of problems he usually complained about, the gator was certain that he'd be on the receiving end of plenty of mockery even *if* the concoction did exactly what it was meant to do. Still, he had it, and that was all that mattered, so he rushed back to his place and promptly slammed the door shut behind him, staring at the clear glass container and immediately realizing just how *heavy* it felt. Perhaps it was the choice inherent to it, or maybe he was just a big baby who didn't have the courage needed to go through with it; whatever the case, what had once been an object light enough for him to carry without even noticing it was there had become so immeasurably heavy that he could barely hold onto it anymore, needing to place it on the nearest flat surface. Woz almost imagined that it would buckle and bend the table, before realizing that what he was feeling was his own mind trying to screw with him; it was a testament to how conflicted he felt that, by the time he got up from his bed and actually took the bottle into his hand, the sun had already begun to set... and his ass had left an impression on the sheets from how long the gator had been there staring ahead. Without thinking any further, Woz uncapped the container and tipped it into his mouth, opening wide and gulping down the liquid inside without thinking of whatever taste it might have. He was imagining instant results: his belly bloating outwards as the fluid somehow expanded itself while inside of him, his entire body bulging with additional size as a result of being infused with some esoteric magical power, the whole house around him creaking and groaning as it became progressively unable to deal with the sheer *heft* of him... only to receive absolutely nothing. He finished the drink and placed the bottle down, only to hear, feel and see... nothing. No changes to his body, no damage to his home, not even anything weird happening on the outside, like a visitation by spirits come to force themselves down his throat to fatten him properly; rather, just himself, staring down at a body that refused to change, thinking that even the powers of a bonafide witch doctor weren't enough to give him what he wanted. His genetics, somehow, were so hardy that even the power of the gods themselves was unable to change it, which could only mean one thing: he was condemned to live the rest of his life as a merely chubby little gator, overshadowed by every other of his kind. It was almost too much to bear; so many hopes placed in that potion, so much work done to convince himself to take it under the certainty that it would change everything, only to end up exactly where he

started... even worse, in fact, as his hope for a better future vacated the premises just as quickly as Woz's willpower to do anything at all to bring about this change, leaving nothing but a semi-empty husk in their wake, who thought to do nothing more than just sleep. Maybe a nap would fix things, maybe it would prime the substance to do *something*, or at least give him some much-needed perspective; whatever might happen, Woz did *not* want to be awake to deal with his frustrations at that point, and before long, he was staring at the ceiling with half-lidded eyes. He woke up some time later, or perhaps after just a single blinking of the eyes, it was hard to tell; at first, the gator had no clue what roused him from his slumber, especially seeing as it was still dark, but a few seconds later he came to find that his belly felt... weird. It was at once empty, in the sense that he felt *ravenously* hungry, yet at the same time so stuffed that he couldn't possibly think of even *imagining* taking a bite, which was itself odd given that he hadn't eaten anything in quite a while. If anything, the hunger was expected, but the other side of the coin? That much needed an explanation, and the universe being what it was, Woz got one but moments later in the form of his bed creaking menacingly without him actually moving; it hadn't been the first time it made that noise, seeing as it *was* old enough to warrant a replacement, but every other time it took the gator putting some pressure on it before it began to complain. For it to be wailing without him even so much as moving a muscle was certainly indicative of *something*, though Woz's barely-awake mind couldn't possibly imagine what that might be; it was only when he tried pulling the sheets off of himself, when his hands brushed against his belly, that he realized something was definitely off, because it wasn't supposed to be there. It was meant to be further down, next to the rest of his body, not so far up that he almost had to stretch his arm out just to feel his bellybutton; this was dreadfully wrong, and it just wouldn't do, hence why the gator's first response was to try and push it back using both hands, which only prompted the pressure inside of him to peak, and that colossal gut of his to start grumbling even louder than the bed was groaning. Woz's eyes shot wide open at this, as his mind woke up properly and began processing what visual information it was being given: there, in front of him, was a belly that wasn't his, but was still definitely attached to his body. There, in front of him, was what he'd been searching for, a goal he'd striven towards for *years*, inexplicably glued onto his form as if it had always been there; the more he touched it, however, the more the gator came to understand that it wasn't just an addition belonging to someone else, but his own body, his own scaly skin stretched out over a far wider curve than it had been before, along with a gut that steadfastly refused to let his fingers sink into it, so pressurized that it was. The hunger was still there, yet the notion of eating anything at that point left him nauseous, and it was precisely this contradiction that prompted his second growth spurt... or, at least, the first one the gator was aware of. Whatever the potion did to him, it clearly wasn't done yet, as only a few seconds after waking up properly, Woz's fingers dug into the mattress beneath him as the sense of overwhelming pressure within his belly began to intensify, seemingly expanding in every direction as it took the rest of his body with him. It was an escape valve of sorts, where his flesh was stretched and expanded to better fit some larger version of himself, emerging from within his form... or, perhaps, he simply had a *really* large spiritual meal inside of him that was being slowly turned into actual fat, or any number of other,

far more ridiculous explanations; it was hard to come up with reasonings that made sense when his frame was bloating in front of his very eyes. Even moving stopped being an option, as the gator was so unused to that extra weight on top of his body that he couldn't think to do anything other than lie there and watch as it grew further and further still, leaving him buried underneath a gut that seemed intent on bloating outwards at a dangerously quick pace... until, of course, it began melting downwards. Though, perhaps that wasn't the best word to describe it, especially not when it felt far more pleasurable than it did painful; rather, the gator's colossal, circular belly began pushing itself down, widening the *rest* of him as a result, almost as if his mass was being redistributed to leave him looking *fatter* rather than merely appearing as if he'd had a particularly large meal. His bed certainly felt this way as well, at least judging from how *loud* it was being; those noises couldn't possibly be healthy on the frame, and though Woz knew that he was fast approaching a state where the mattress would collapse from under him, he still couldn't bring himself to move... though, at that point, it was entirely by choice. He *could* have moved if he truly wanted to, but did he? Did he actually *want* to get off his bed, now that he had the opportunity to feel what it was like to be too heavy to stay on it? Did he truly want to deny himself the experience of outgrowing a part of his home, even if he knew he'd end up regretting it once the back pain started? Or did he instead want to lie there, unmoving, feeling as his body grew thicker and fatter, more and more unwieldy as the phantom mass spread across him, leaving him so much larger than before that he could already feel himself spilling from the edges of his mattress? The latter felt significantly more attractive, enough that that the gator had to bite back a moan or two once he began truly considering the consequences of what he was thinking of doing; assuming it wasn't just a very vivid dream that he was experiencing, then the fattening was going to leave him such a different person from before that everything would change... for the better, presumably. After all, this *was* what he was looking for, wasn't it? So why bother trying to hold back how much he wanted it to happen? Best to enjoy it while it lasted, seeing as he had no clue whether or not it would stop right when he wanted it to carry on the most; hell, for all the gator knew, it might actually end a few seconds from there, giving him even more of a reason to throw himself fully at the delightful banquet of sensations he was being offered. It was, truth be told, everything he expected it to be, which meant it was most likely nothing like the real thing; Woz had spent so many years fantasizing about how it would be like for him to fatten up and grow huge that he was more than certain his expectations were *seriously* warped compared to reality... but, then again, he was being offered those exact same sensations, so why look a gift horse in the mouth? It wasn't *just* his belly growing, after all, but the rest of him as well, in a sort of cyclical process: his gut would swell, as if pumped full of delicious food by an unseen force, before grumbling loudly enough to overpower the groaning of his bed, followed by that enormously bloated belly being pulled back down (or pushed back down?), its constituent mass spreading across the rest of him before the process repeated itself. This left him under fire from just about every direction, to the point where the gator couldn't focus on more than just one thing at a time, lest his mind be overwhelmed by the sensory overload he was under attack from. At times it'd be his hips and thighs, widening and fattening considerably as raw mass was pumped

into them, turned into soft pudge for him, and only him, to sink his hands and greedy fingers into. The cyclical nature of his growth made it extra delectable, as he was given a short period of rest where he could really flex the muscles in his hands to grab as deeply as he could, only to have his thighs then bloat so much that he practically lost sight of his extremities all the way to the wrist. The same could be said for his butt, which straddled the line between rotund and just plain *immense*, not so much threatening to spill over from the sides of his bed as *doing so* and thinking of the consequences never, leaving the gator split between wanting to keep both hands on a pair of legs that grew fatter and fatter every second or so, or an ass that did much of the same with the added bonus of being even *larger*... or, alternatively, just keeping on rubbing his gut, moaning all the while and pleading for it never to stop, even if he had no idea what was going on anymore. The rest of his form didn't escape the attention of the potion either (or at least, Woz assumed it was the potion), with his arms growing increasingly thicker as some of the mass was diverted towards them; his neck, too, quickly began bulging outwards, going from a skinny little support strut for the gator's head into a flabby roll upon which his skull lay comfortably, one that only became larger and more unwieldy with every passing moment. Things went so far that he even began developing "extra" chins along the way, with the many layers of fat overlapping to the point where the gator could genuinely see his face sinking into them... causing him to moan loudly, unable to contain himself as *that* particular mental image went through his head. He could just as easily get up and look at himself in a mirror, but where was the fun in that? Better to keep his hands rolling from side to side, from inch to inch, as he appreciated every minute part of his new, bloating form; it was a delight on the ears as well, given that whatever had caused him to bloat like that had also given him a stomach that seemed intent on rumbling loudly enough to make the windows shake in their frames. It probably had *something* to do with that almost mind-melting hunger he was feeling at the time, the incessant need to shove anything, *anything at all* down his throat just so he could make it go away... yet, at the same time, knowing he couldn't, for he was already stuffed so much that it was doubtful he had any physical space left for even so much as a crumb. Perhaps this was the payment the loa requested of him: he would receive his belly, his fat, his vastness, but in return he would always feel both hungry and incapable of eating anything, leaving him in a state of limbo that would torment him for as long as he could live with it. But... no, Mama Josephine wouldn't do such a thing; she was too kind, too saintly a soul to pull that sort of trick on him, and seeing as she already had the potion ready to go when he showed up at her doorstep, it could only mean that she had planned ahead. If that was the case, Woz *seriously* doubted that she'd play such a cruel trick on him, which left only one reasonable solution to the conundrum: it would all go away... eventually. The hunger would abate, as would the sensation of being packed with so much food that it bordered on the nauseating, leaving behind a fatter, wider, larger body that was the gator's to then fatten, widen and enlarge even more. For his dream goals weren't yet reached; his ass might be quickly approaching the size of a whole couch and his legs were each about as wide, sure, not to mention his belly seemed to be settling at an increasingly bigger size each time it was compressed into the rest of him. This was to say nothing of the vast amounts of fat rolls on his

back, or how his head seemed to be melting into a neck that had turned into a rounded pyramid of flab, or the simple reality that was his fingers having turned into fat sausages, unable to grasp anything that didn't fill up his entire palm. It was, in many respects, *almost* perfect; almost, because it was exactly the way the other gators looked, and while they were absolutely the sort of people that Woz looked to in terms of how he wanted to look, deep down he always knew that it would never be enough. Size goals were one thing, *realistic* ones were another, but this was his *dream*. He had worked his butt off for a solution and found none, resorting to the spirits only as a very last resort, and now? Now he'd been *rewarded* for his patience and dedication, now he was being bloated and filled from the inside out by the energies and power of the loa, leaving him as the colossal blob of fat that he so desperately had wanted to be before... and more. Why stop there? Why stop *at all*, in fact? He was a hair's breadth away from making his bed collapse from his sheer weight alone, and yet that didn't strike Woz as anywhere remotely near what he wanted for himself; he wouldn't stop, nay, *couldn't* stop until he was so massive that even his very house wouldn't be able to hold him anymore, until he took a step and the whole thing collapsed into the swamps down below, the thick wooden stilts holding it up buckling underneath the weight before finally snapping. Unbeknownst to the gator, he wasn't that far off from accomplishing such a goal; having remained lying down on an increasingly-strained mattress, Woz had failed to appreciate just *how* big they were, a reality that would set in *very* quickly just a few seconds later when the bed finally gave up the ghost. It didn't come as a surprise, as the poor thing had been groaning for so long that, quite frankly, the gator was surprised it hadn't collapsed *sooner*; what truly flabbergasted him was the sound that accompanied the metal bending into twisted shapes: wood cracking. He had a couple of seconds to appreciate it, panic rising once the reality of it set in; he really *was* heavy enough to damage the structure of his abode, he *had* become so fat that the equivalent of falling out of bed had left the floor panelling broken... and, considering the sounds it was making, *extremely* close to just giving in completely and sending him careening into the waters below. It was only then that Woz realized that he'd become *too big* to move, or at least to get back on his feet; enraptured by his transformation, he failed to notice that the mass transferral process had left his proportions *slightly* uneven, resulting in a form that, while it might be ambulatory while standing up, was completely helpless whenever he found himself on his back like he was then. Like a turtle, all he could do was try and roll onto his front, helpless to do anything as the creaking of metal gave way to the shattering of wood, the rumbling of his shack growing louder by the moment as his own fattening carried on in earnest. It was an interesting conflict, the one playing out in his head: on one side, the dread and terror at the realization that he was quite literally outgrowing his own house, and on the other, the elation and bliss at the realization that he was quite literally outgrowing his own house. One stimulus, two responses, each competing with one another for which would be the final output, all while the gator struggled to find any kind of position where he could force himself into a standing position, only succeeding in weakening the structural integrity of his floor even further. It wasn't as if his home was the most stable of buildings to begin with: it was little more than a shack, held up from the swamp waters by a set of stilts designed to keep it above the waterline even during heavy

rains and flooding. It was *meant* to keep the water away, yet now they looked very close to failing at holding *Woz* up, so great was his size; every second was another splinter, broken off and falling towards the water, every second the depression in the middle of the house's flooring grew wider and deeper, the colossus of fat causing it growing increasingly heavier as the potion continued to wreak havoc through his system. The side of him that wanted to enjoy it had begun gaining ground, especially once the gator's back touched the ceiling and the realization of just *how* big he was truly hit him; from there on, it was simple enough to throw away any last remnant of rationality or reason, leaving only the need to grow, the need to fatten, the need to widen. Every second was several more inches on his frame, yet more of himself that he could grope and knead and hold and squeeze and *lose himself* completely in, no longer caring about things like whether or not he could fit inside his house anymore... and, just a few minutes after first waking up to his belly bloating, there wouldn't *be* a house for him to fit inside of anymore. With a great roar and the grinding of wood, the flooring finally reached a breaking point, and in just a short, singular second, the gator was left to freefall into the water underneath his now-useless home; an instant after the bottom of it gave way, so too did the stilts snap in half, causing the whole thing to come crashing down on top of *Woz*, who by that point was too far gone to care. In fact, as far as he was concerned, him falling into water was actually a *good* thing, as at least then he could twist and turn around until he was right side up and ready to walk again... plus, his growth had been such that even after he found his footing at the bottom of the bayou, *Woz* still successfully pulled most of himself out of the water, cutting off at just underneath (what would be, if not for all the extra fat) waist. He was so much taller, in fact, that if his old self had stood on the surface of the water next to him, they *still* wouldn't reach as high as his new body did, giving him a brand new perspective on the swamps, one that he'd yearned for *years* to have. It was a powerful moment, so much so that *Woz* almost felt like crying out of sheer joy, but was slightly undercut by the fact that his belly was still feeling... weird. It wasn't as it had been up until then: the pressure was still there, but it had abated somewhat, as had the incessant, near-mindless need to fill it. In their place, a rather more familiar sensation, one similar to how the gator felt whenever he had a bit too much soda a tad too quickly, and his body decided that it had to vacate some of that gas in the most expedient way possible. The poor thing was left blushing as he realized what was about to happen, and he even went so far as to try and hold his long mouth shut as a means of defying the incoming release; alas, when the gas rose from his stomach and barrelled through his throat, there was nothing that he could do. No matter how much force he applied to keep his jaw snapped shut, the burp *Woz* unleashed was of such great power that it forced his mouth open in its bid to escape into the outside world. So loud it was that the gator felt his ears ringing even before it was done, so tremendous that not only did it create ripples in the water around him, but even bent a few of the smaller trees around him, pushing them away as the pressurized gas blast slowly, but surely, won the battle against their root systems. Amazingly, it refused to stop, even after a minute went by, then two... four?! He just kept going, the amount of gas held within him so ludicrously high as a result of the potion-induced transformation that the gator had no choice but to burp it all away, somehow

managing to carve out a path through the water, one deep enough that he might as well be parting the Red Sea! Shrubbery and trees were ripped off the ground, flying outwards as they were carried by the shockwave, the whole *swamp* being made to listen to that glorious discharge for the full *ten minutes* that it lasted.

Ten minutes, after which the gator finally managed to close his mouth, jaw aching from the beating it had just taken. Ten minutes, but at the very least he could splash back against the water, letting his colossal body float there, content and satisfied.

That is, until his stomach grumbled again, feeling empty for the first time in hours.

*The hunger was back.*