



1. The Sundowner¹

He fully deserved one.

As amazing as being thanked by friends for saving their lives, being petted on his shaggy head — and, by now, a pleasant weight of red velvet sponge and heavy cream within — could feel, even *this* couldn't be quite compared to them feeling okay with his *monstrous* nature. With that maw and fangs hiding under a silly-looking mop of red strands.

And his ability to devour things *alive*.

¹ *Sundowner*, here: a snack to signify the end of the day.

Especially if his friends' lives depended on that.

Red was really sorry they had to see him bare his fangs and sink them into the Cake's sponge, but the unjust dessert left him no choice. Food always was too afraid of him to risk and try anything on Duck and Yellow. *Always*. Except that one time.

A body's like a house, *they* said. Of course. It's all fun and games if there's three of them against your two smaller pals, and without you around. He would rip the Steak Guy to shreds, he got already well-trained on raw chicken drumsticks. He so would shake the last remnants of the soul out of the Spinach Can.

But at least when it was him, Red, against a Red Velvet Cake who was apparently too new and naive to think teaching two younger fellows —

and a monster —

about parties sounded like a good idea...

...the Cake ended up in a nice house to stay in *forever*. Red, soft, with velvety walls, a shaggy roof, nowhere to, ahem, leave- and *zero* mercy to whatever foods inhabit it.

„You're you“, said Duck Guy, finally poking his head out of a heap of whipped cream. „Thanks for saving us!“

„It's you who owns them“, said Yellow Guy about Red's fangs, clinging to him and trembling, as if to shake off the horror of being nearly baked alive. „Why should we be afraid of them?“

The Cake barely could utter a squeak back then, but got completely quiet by now — save maybe for a few noisy glorbbs

in response as Red ran his paw down his fuzzy middle. For the very first time, it was *just* him and the rays of setting sun warming his lanky frame, now heavy with sponge cake and anchored to the grass, nothing more.

Red didn't even have to look back when grass rustled behind him: same familiar steps, friends not wanting to say a word, afraid to break the quietness but wanting to sit by their pal and get warm — in the sun and beside him.

October 2021



2. Greedy To Eat All That

Author's note: A. k. a. what would happen if Red Guy WERE around in Episode 5.

They lied: his fangs remained ivory white the morning after. A glance into a pocket mirror out of curiosity just proved him more right: not even a spot of grey. The only reminder of what had happened yesterday was this red furry globe, still anchoring him to the bed, making his checkered pyjama shirt and the blanket ride up. Softened only a little, still somewhat sensitive and aching, but nevertheless, the last ever home for any food, healthy or not, that would dare to mess with his friends.

They probably were still conscious enough to feel the ginger tea drizzle on them now, but at least didn't muck around anymore. Or maybe gave up and just fell asleep. He definitely would if he were them, knowing *what* a warm nest of pillows

and blanket they all are in. The only difference was about them eventually *becoming him* — the same way they wanted to force Duck Guy to become Yellow Guy — and not any other way around.

He cringed at the thought of how close he was to punching — *himself* — yesterday, because how else does one even calm down that mad Steak, who tries to beat back even after it's swallowed. Stretchy as any other mop monster's skin was, it still could barely withstand both the huge Steak and the pesky Spinach Can, and at some point, he got almost afraid for his own life. And yet there he was now, alive and well. Haha, *well*. A *bottomless one* for them. Another sip of ginger tea, Red? — Oh, Red, don't mind if I do. And let's pull that pyjama shirt over your middle, like that... well, *try* to, anyway. And the blanket. Not for them, for yourself, it's you who needs warmth to soothe that overfull globe. Good thing it somehow still has some room for tea.

Punching himself; what a stupid idea. As if apologizing to his own body for that thought, he ran a paw over his blanket-clad belly. Yesterday it might seem like he was stroking his prisoners — that's why he didn't want even Yellow or Duck to touch it, but now, with these prisoners settled (*settled*... ah, feels great to even savor that word), washed down with tea and barely even resembling their former selves, it was a quiet praise to himself for saving his friends. If it's going to take a while for the devious foods to break down, it's better to turn it into the best digestive siesta you ever had.

October 2021

3. pREDator

Author's note:

"...Harry looked into the mirror. He felt so disgusted with how he looked he felt so ugly. Ugly and fat. He only had a little tummy fat but he felt as if he was a tub of lard.

He whimpered as he looked at himself. He felt tears fill his eyes. He blinked them away and looked away." — [source](#)

Stumbling upon more-or-less-belly content starring Red but not quite the way *you* prefer it inspires on things. While I will not mess with the quote author's AU (or the user who requested the drabble), I decided to write a *confident* Red instead. Confident and proud of his first catch (even if it's a mere pesky butterfly) and his own body.

Red's parents, Crimson (father) and Fuchsia (mother), are my own characters.

A constable on the corner of the street rakes his eyes across Red's form — with a quick, understanding nod almost right away, a salute and an obligate "congrats on the first prey; how d'you feel?". Red only slightly waves a paw: that's nothing, merely some chicken drumsticks and wings. *Wings*. His face breaks into a grin under the yarn mane and almost immediately the pesky butterfly decides to break the moment, once again trying to blorp and gworgle its way out... as if there's any use, being that crammed in a monster's belly with a load of raw chicken. Now both Red's friends and the constable stare at him — only to get the same calming risen paw in response: nothing. He may be *"son of THAT Crimson, well, you know, the one who one day saved the whole block,"* but this one was no nightmare too large for him, nothing to worry about.

You won't have another body; try to take a good care about yours. Don't repeat my mistake, don't let your prey harm you like it did me.

Crimson and him had had this talk a million times, ending always with Red palming the scar on his father's side and promising that he won't hunt a fear larger than himself. "At least not until you reach my size," added Crimson with a much warmer note in his voice, and stopped before a large mirror to admire them both. And, in a short while, nodded to his own thoughts and put his strong paw around Red's shoulders. "...Yes, about as robust soon. Come on, let's help Mom now."

A slightly lighter pelt and no mighty sideburns, so much for the difference between him and Dad. The fluffy collar doesn't count, all it signifies is a mop monster being a parent. But the rest... Since Red moved out, a glance into the mirror felt almost like greetings from Dad, but even more – brought calm joy of *taking space* and being *exactly such*, something they both equally shared.

Pros of fears and nightmares: they taste like no ordinary meat does — to a mop monster, anyway. No other known creature had ever tried to taste them, let alone describe it — they are best eaten alive, sometimes even ripped to pieces at that. Taste and protecting instinct are reason why mop monsters at all feed on nightmares and fears. As little as there

was of that “pesky bee”, or whatever Duck Guy called that odd thing with a sugary voice, it was still enough for Red to enjoy *the live prey*. It *was* a threat all right, and the poor Yellow Guy felt genuinely scared once both his friends finally got to him — but, from the brighter side, not for long.

Pros of ordinary meat: it won't try to kill *you* once it's eaten. The butterfly does thrash inside, to heavens know what avail, probably hoping its “king” will send a miracle and somehow save it. Red didn't even bothers to stop the kicks — more tickling than actually hurting — and by the time all three reach home, his insides are completely calm.

And a bit later, he stops by the mirror like he used to — even absentmindedly straightens up like Dad. Because Dad himself used to look exactly that way — long in Red's cubhood — with last remains of that giant nightmare still slowly dissolving in him. For the little Red, it was just Dad having...

the same...

...bit of a tummy and nothing else.

Behind his back, the TV flickers to life (must be Duck) and floods the living room with a stream of today's news; something about a giant, gravel-eating statue head being burned down; then about an unusual amount of forest animals seeming to be recovering from some kind of weird hypnosis; then... Does not matter. The one behind that bunch of catastrophes now rests in eternal sleep, and soon the very memory about him will get mixed with delicious chicken picnic and absorbed by...

His, Red's, own inner magic.

He squints mischievously, and for a split second, his reflection turns into Crimson. Possibly proud of his son and ready to put a paw around his shoulders.

*...Look Pa, I'm a predator too. And I'm **loving** it.*

November 2021

4. All of These Voices

Author's note: Written on my first anniversary of getting to know DHMIS. The brief food and belly theme moment in the “Jobs” episode inspired me enough to come up with a ficlet. This time no fishy dish goes to waste; Red gets fed, and his new secretary Miss Fax gets to hear even *more* voices she had no idea he can communicate with. She's a machine and knows very little about living magical creature's anatomy, please forgive her that.

“...Don't get me wrong,” Miss Fax Machine finally confesses, having praised Red's unexpected scream at the end of a phone call. “It's just been... myself and the Trash Bin here, no one else, for days. There's only so much the Bin can do. Open the window, or the door, when it gets too quiet in here, but not take me off the table. I started to *really* miss hearing more voices.”

“You did her a big favor, sir!” Mr. Trash Bin's face breaks into a flattering grin.

“You're, erm... Welcome, I guess?” Red reaches to scratch the back of his neck, and all of a sudden, his paw meets — a shirt collar? A... blazer collar? Just a couple minutes ago he had but his own fleecy hide on. A glance below leaves no doubts — formerly bare legs are covered in a dignified way with tailored trousers, and yes, there's undoubtedly a white shirt over his-

Groooooaaaaaargl...

“...Ah,” nods Red, taking a quick glance at the clock (*oh come on, like there's time for listening to **you** rumble now!*). “I- I think I'll better go? It's lunch time and all that...”

“You can talk with your mouth closed?!” Looks like Miss Fax's eyes grew three times bigger. “Looks like... I got it, okay, I

got it: you said you need a refill. A refill, yes!" She corrects herself. "That is- food! You don't even *have* to go get your lunch. We'll bring it right to your desk!"

And so she does, pulling out of nowhere what she thinks would be a haute cousine dish to the mop monster's taste: salmon with asparagus, hollandaise sauce and...

"...Diamonds?" A flabbergasted Red lacks words: the fish looks delicious, *smells* beyond any praises, but how he's to say that diamonds may plain hurt his gums and break all his fangs without his lovely assistant taking offense? Yet somehow he utters, "How does one even *eat* diamonds?"

"Really?" Miss Fax doesn't even seem all that phased. "All right, we always can replace it with something else..." She reaches to throw the dish off the desk, but — "sssh- wait-" — a fleecy paw lays atop her gloved hand.

"...we always can just pick them out," explains the patient Red, pulls an empty ashtray with "BOSS" engraved on its side to the plate and, not even caring about his paw getting in the sauce, gets down to business, one by one. With an understanding "*Ah-*", Miss Fax joins him, her much thinner fingers delicately picking out the smaller gems, while Red's mitten paw barely getting out five bigger ones.

"...'Fraid I have no tissue," admits Red, once all the diamonds —some still covered with sauce, but who cares — are in the ashtray. "So if you don't mind..."

The Trash Bin utters an "*ack*" of surprise from his corner, but only because he haven't yet seen any bosses with tongues

that long in his life. Sure, surprises from a boss who's a monster are inevitable, but a tongue *as long as Bin's own arm* that just sticks out of Mr. Red's mane *all of a sudden* and cleans both his own paw *and* Miss Fax's hand in one lick?

"...The hollandaise's finger-licking good," concludes Red finally. "*And* paw-licking, I admit—"

A slightly more irritated *grrroooarl* interrupts him.

"...ah yeah, yeah," the mop monster nods. "*You* can't wait till we get to taste the rest, I got it."

Miss Fax takes notice of the hint of warmth in his voice. It almost seems like another, slightly more impatient being sat inside of her new boss – why else he addresses it so warmly and even runs a paw over it, as if calming down a living thing. Of course he has to eat — eat and not get distracted to some silly diamonds, however precious they look. To the very last bit of asparagus she can't quite figure out whether he eats or feeds this unknown creature, only sees that he truly *savors* her food.

"...Simply delicious." Red finally sits back — white crisp shirt in an inch from Miss Fax's reach — and lets out a contented sigh. "My compliments to the cook. Or should I say, assistant?"

"Anything will do," chuckles Miss Fax. "You've been feeding it with such care... I mean, may I—"

Red expects anything but her resting a hand on his shirt-clad belly and whispering to it, "Hello..." Did she really just mistake his hunger pang for some other voice? But a gentle "Didn't mean to have you wait; don't get angry, please..." leaves

no doubts. And even less he expects her to — rest her own headset onto it and ask, “Would you like to talk to me?”

Miss Fax expects anything but a sudden *wave* of many different voices to rush over her dynamic. Large pearls tumbling about — or, are they small bubbles popping? Growls, similar to the one she heard twice — some being higher-pitched, some lower; *what, is there several of them in there; was it enough food for them all?* One particularly sudden and creaky growl almost makes her drop the headset, but almost immediately shifts to just peaceful gurgles, like the ones she sometimes heard coming from a water cooler, and — even made the fuzzy surface under the crisp white slightly bulge out into her headset, as if rubbing against it? So, whatever is in there, it’s — *friendly?*

“But...” escapes Miss Fax’s lips at last. “...But just- *whose* are all these voices? You don’t look like a type to carry a whole crowd inside y-”

(*Ah, that.*) “Still mine,” admits a slightly amused Red. “Voices of whatever I’m made of. And you know what? They were saying thanks.” Not waiting till his assistant recovers from her surprise, he himself takes her headset into his paw, resting it on his chest. “And by the way? This one would like to do the same.”

Yes, indeed, realizes Miss Fax as a quiet, living warm beat hits her dynamic, *thnk thnk, thnk thnk, thnk thnk*. And prints out a picture of a beating heart, signed “*lovely*”.

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