

One would hope that after spending ten hours at a tedious office job, including two hours' worth of commuting on cramped buses, work would be done for the day and it could be a case of relaxing until the time for sleep rolled around; but no, dinner still had to be cooked which doubtless would take another hour in itself. Paradeox was returning after one such day to the small house he rented on the outskirts of town, for it was far easier on his pocket to endure the long commutes than find an extortionate apartment in the CBD.

As was his habit, the first thing he did when he reached the end of his driveway was check his mailbox: as always, the only thing in there that wasn't junk was a cobweb, long since abandoned by a spider moving on to bigger and better things. He idly flicked through the various advertisements and offers of special deals, regarding nearly everything as a complete waste of paper. One flier, however, did catch his eye: Pizza Shack were offering a two-for-one deal on pizzas and sides. This, it seemed to Paradeox, could not only solve the issue of dinner for tonight, but for tomorrow night too.

Flopping down in his recliner, he pulled his phone from his pocket and navigated to Pizza Shack's website, starting to browse their menu with the flier resting on his lap. With such an extensive selection to choose from it took the fox several mouth-watering minutes to come to a decision, but when he finally hit 'Confirm' he was eagerly awaiting a Meat Lover's pizza with garlic bread and two litres of soda for that night, plus a Hawaiian for the day after.

Half an hour or so later, he was jumping up to answer the summons of the doorbell. On his doorstep stood a young lion, his mane still fairly short and better developed on the top of his head than under his chin.

"One Meat Lover's, one Hawaiian, one garlic bread, and one Pipsee?" the feline asked, his voice cracking slightly halfway through the sentence.

Paradeox nodded and relieved the lion of his burden, wishing him a good night before disappearing back inside.

With a huff of satisfaction, Paradeox tossed the now-empty pizza box in the direction of the coffee table; it hit the edge and fell onto the floor, taking a coaster with it. The fox leaned back in his recliner, the footrest up, the big bottle of soda within easy reach for swigging. He was feeling very full and relaxed after his lazy dinner, and he still hadn't touched the garlic bread; after eyeing the package for a second, he shrugged and unwrapped it: it wouldn't keep that long, so he figured.

Yes, this had been an excellent idea, one to bear in mind for the future. He wouldn't do it every night, obviously, just every now and again when the day had taken too much out of him; that couldn't do him any harm, could it?

I wonder if any other pizza places do special offers...

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Paradeox began his new dinner scheme with the best of intentions, and actually kept to them too for the first couple of weeks: he would order a couple of pizzas each week and forced himself to maintain his energy to whip something up of his own creation the other nights. He even went jogging at the weekends, knowing that a sedentary job plus a less-than-optimal diet could have untoward effects on his body.

But then came the week from hell. The word had come down from on high that, due to the CEO's ineptitude, Paradeox's department would be pulling double duty for the foreseeable future. Instead of arriving at the office around nine o'clock, he found himself having to show up at seven, leaving no time for breakfast. Lunch had gone from a leisurely half hour or so to scarfing down whatever he could scrounge from the vending machine, then immediately returning to the grind. He wasn't strolling out of the building at a little after five anymore, he was hurrying to catch the last bus home at eight.

On the Monday he managed to convince himself not to take the easy way out: a sandwich with a little salad on the side was surely a better option than resorting to ordering food in, something which he had always told himself to save for later in the week as a treat.

The Tuesday, however, snailed by in a haze of hunger. He was so tired after that first day of non-stop work that he overslept, meaning he couldn't even grab something from the fridge on his way to the bus stop. Like the previous day, his only sustenance until he could get home was a single candy bar. He was running on fumes for most of the afternoon, the only thing keeping him from falling asleep at his desk being the knowledge that even a moment's unproductivity would make the whole situation much, much worse.

He collapsed into his recliner the moment he got home, closing his eyes, feeling ready to sleep forever. But then his stomach growled: it wanted, *needed* to take precedence.

The moment he drew out his phone an email notification popped up: In The Mood Pizza was offering free upgrades to stuffed crust. The fox tapped the screen largely at random from then on, paying just enough attention to make sure he ordered just the two pizzas, both with a cheesy crust.

The first bite was ecstasy. Normally a Vegorama wouldn't have been his first choice, but today it tasted like the food of the gods. Though his taste buds wanted to savour every bite, it was his starving belly that ruled him at that point: all eight slices were stuffed hungrily into his mouth one by one, the box empty save a little grease in under ten minutes.

He sat back, feeling oddly...unsatisfied. Normally one pizza was enough to fill him up for the night, though he could often find room for a side or dessert had he ordered either. Tonight, however, he still felt a gaping hole in his stomach: he had eaten so little over the past couple of days and spent so much energy trying to keep his brain on task that he couldn't help but need more fuel.

The second, still full pizza box lay on the coffee table; it was supposed to be Wednesday's dinner, but it looked oh so tempting from where the fox was sitting. He stared at it for a few minutes, his brain and belly battling with one another over what to do with that hearty meal whose smell was wafting tantalising over to his twitching nose.

The longer he sat there, the feebler his mind's reasons for saving it seemed to become. He was hungry, he had been working harder than he had ever done in his life, and, after all, there was no real harm in doubling down just this once.

With a small shrug, he leaned forward and scooped Pandora's pizza box onto his lap.

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Work didn't ease up for another month, leaving Paradeox in an infinite loop of having no time for anything but the fastest and easiest of foods. Breakfast remained an unattainable luxury, lunch was the first sugary thing that came to hand, and pizza had gone from being a twice-a-week treat to a nightly ritual. Fortunately, having registered either his email or his number with every pizzeria that

delivered in town, there was a non-stop stream of special offers, discount codes, and deals flowing into his phone. What was more, with dinner becoming his only real meal of the day, the 'just this once' event of eating two pizzas in a night had quickly become the norm; as that month went on, he was even able to pack away a side and a dessert too.

The weekends were his refuge from the endless slog of his job and he desired only to do as little as possible during those days of rest; consequently, the daily jogs he'd taken to previously were quickly abandoned in favour of slumping on the couch or in his recliner for hours at a time, doing nothing but watching TV or playing games.

On the first Saturday of this cycle, he'd made some kind of effort: he ate a proper breakfast of cereal and coffee, lunch was a sandwich, and he baked a couple of potatoes for dinner to go with a pile of veggies. He felt, however, when he got into bed around midnight that day, that he'd spent an awful lot of his relaxation time not actually relaxing at all.

Sunday started with cereal once again, since that was no real effort at all. The fox was fully intent on making another sandwich for lunch too, only for his phone to flash up a message saying that Old Man John's was offering a half-price second pizza to anyone who ordered their newest menu option; there was no way he was going to pass that up.

Despite having already consumed two pizzas that day, he was still intent on his plan to make use of his Tiny Tzars discount codes that night...

As a result of eating anywhere between two and five pizzas per day (he wasn't going to turn down a breakfast deal if it came along) for a month, Paradeox was having some significant difficulty fastening his pants on the morning of the first day back on his normal work schedule. Looking at his reflection in the mirror on his closet door he saw, where once had been a flat expanse of pale blue tummy fur, a definite change: a round belly, protruding several inches from his body, was obstructing him from doing up the button on his work pants. He gripped it in one hand, it was soft and pliable. He shook it, it wobbled about, jostling the zipper he'd managed to force all the way up to slide back down a couple of inches. He'd been so busy either with work or with recuperating from work that he hadn't notice what a diet of nothing but pizza was doing to his body.

Securing his pants with a belt (into which he had to bore a new hole), he departed for the bus stop, able to feel the breeze on the inch or so of overhang that his too-small shirt exposed. 'This week', he told himself, 'I'll buy some new clothes, ditch the pizza, and get back to working out.'

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Paradeox's diligence at work had paid off. As he was returning from his lunch break one afternoon, depositing an In The Mood box in the nearest trashcan, his boss emerged from his office to call him in. Instead of the reprimand he was fearing as he sat in the chair across the desk from the gryphon, she offered him a choice of promotions: a raise or the option of working from home. She gave him the chance to think it through overnight, and he returned the next day to accept the opportunity to combine his home and his office into one.

Though his boss had made it clear that his desk would be available for him whenever he needed it, his co-workers never saw him again; in fact the fox hardly ever ventured outside the walls of his house once he had settled into his new routine. The fact was that Paradeox had become quite accustomed to a lazy lifestyle. Everything he could ever need was available to be brought to his door at the click of a button: groceries, clothes, general oddments, and, most importantly, pizza.

Pizza had become the constant around which the fox's life revolved. Every single meal now consisted of a base, sauce, cheese, and an ever-changing selection of toppings, with sides for him to snack on while he worked in between times. His days all followed much the same formula: wake up, order two pizzas and two sides (using whichever pizza place was offering the best deals at the time), shower, eat pizzas, work while snacking on the sides, order two more pizzas and two more sides, eat pizzas, snack while working, order three pizzas and a dessert, eat pizzas and dessert, shower, sleep. He often included instructions in his orders for the delivery boys, girls, and others to check his mailbox, resulting in them often bringing him still more mail-exclusive special offers.

It was during one of Paradeox's work periods a couple of months into his new life as a stay-at-home employee when he received a curious email: from 'rewards@tinytzars.com' it was headed 'Congratulations!'. Intrigued, the fox set aside the piece of chicken on which he had been nibbling and opened up the message to take a closer look.

'Dear Paradeox,

Congratulations! You are the lucky winner April's prize draw: a fabulous Tiny Tzars branded maid outfit! To claim your prize, simply click [here](#) and fill out the form with your delivery details. Your prize should be with you within seven working days of claiming.

Please be reminded that all prizes must be claimed before 5/1/2020.

Yours sincerely,

The Tiny Tzars Rewards Team'

Though the prize itself seemed very odd, the email itself didn't appear suspicious. Shrugging both inwardly and outwardly, he followed the provided link and typed his information into the corresponding boxes. When it came to the question of what size he would be needing, he paused: that would require investigation of his wardrobe.

Rising from his desk chair with much squeaking and creaking, he lumbered around the corner from the guestroom-turned-office to his bedroom, throwing open his closet and rummaging for something comparable in design to the outfit.

The mirror that hung on the door reflected a very different picture that it had several months prior. The cute little paunch – or so he remembered it – was gone, replaced by a genuine gut that slopped over his waistband, dangling about halfway to his knees and shuddering slightly with every small motion he made in his search for the closet. His chest had developed into a bosom almost worthy of a cup size which sat neatly on the swell of his belly. A substantial roll of fat billowed over each hip, while his thighs below were in permanent contact with one another, though he had been spared the experience of chafing by the simple expedient of never leaving the house. His muzzle and neck had fused into one contiguous whole, joined together by his extra couple of chins. His cheeks were plump and round, dimpling cutely whenever he smiled.

He had found what he had been looking for: a polo shirt which had been a little overlong when he'd ordered it a few weeks ago. Pulling it over his head, he tugged it down as far as it would go, then examined himself in the mirror. The length he remembered it having seemed to have vanished, now not even enough to cover his belly completely. 'Still,' he figured, 'if I add an extra X it should be fine.'

He returned to his computer and completed the form, noticing as he did so that it was almost time to order dinner.

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For the seventh or eighth time that day, Paradeox was returning from the front door with a shipment from a pizzeria; to show his loyalty to the brand, he had greeted the delivery guy wearing his Tiny Tzars maid outfit, though he wasn't sure how to gauge the giraffe's reaction to it, nor the fact that he'd had to line up behind two other pizza delivery people. Still, it had been worth it as far as he was concerned; he'd gone to a lot of effort to get the outfit on after all.

Back in the living room, he glanced at the clock on his computer: nearly six, definitely time to clock out for the day. He wheeled his portable desk aside, then dropped onto the couch with loud snaps from its frame and the sound of his outfit ripping more than it already had: such noises were just part of daily life for him now. He settled back into his cushions and clicked on the TV: the couch had become his seat of choice a few months earlier when he'd discovered that he could no longer fit himself between the arms of his recliner; he'd since sold it, with a pang of regret, and used the funds to purchase his new desk.

No less than six pizzas, four sides, three desserts, and ten litres of soda were now arranged on the coffee table in front of the fox. He eyed it all, his mouth watering slightly, trying to decide where to begin. Unable to choose, he merely grabbed the two topmost pizza boxes and flung them both wide; a little noise of delight and longing escaped him as the smell of their contents mingled in his nostrils.

Nearly six months ago Paradeox had caved to his addiction to pizza. No longer did he ration his orders for meals, now he simply placed them as soon as he saw the offers arrive in his inbox. Sure, that meant he could be consuming a dozen or more pizzas per day, never mind the extras. Sure, that meant his belly drooped over and beyond his knees when he was sitting now. Sure, that meant even standing up was a challenge now. The truth was that he no longer cared about such things, he even embraced them.

Grabbing a slice from both boxes, he took a bite of each, squirming a little in ecstasy at the flavours dancing on his tongue, veritable tidal waves flowing through his enormous frame as he moved. He was all set now for a great night: one eye on the TV; one eye on his phone, ready to catch those sweet, sweet deals.