

Kate was feeling plenty grumpy already as the nurse wheeled her into the doctor's office, so his joke was far from well-received: "I'd ask you to take a seat, but I see you've already done that." His chuckle faded away at her deeply furrowed brow and intense scowl; the jackal knew his stuff, but he could use some serious work on his bedside manner. The normally cheerful rabbit often stayed silent when around anyone other than her friends, but this time it wasn't from shyness.

"A-Anyway, I've got your x-rays here..." he placed them on the stark, blue-white panel which illuminated the pictures of her injured leg for better examination, "...and I'm sorry to say that your leg is indeed broken. Quite badly, actually." He pointed to two dark areas bordered by jagged white that looked very out of place. "It will heal in time, but that time could be some way off. Basically, strap yourself in for anything up to a year on your butt. The best you can hope for is to be starting rehab with a physiotherapist in six months."

Her scowl persisted all the way home and she gave her TV a contemptuous glare when her friend had transferred her from the borrowed wheelchair to the couch.

"Come on, it's not *that* bad," Michelle said encouragingly, scooting a footrest over and lifting Kate's leg onto it, "You're insured, you've got at least six months of free time to look forward to!"

Kate wasn't impressed, fixing the muscular lioness with the same grumpy stare. "Six months of not being able to walk? Six months of relying on other people to do the most basic things for me? Six months of *no exercise*?"

Michelle and Kate had met at the gym, had become friends through the gym, and were, until the latter's accident, regular gym buddies; they even went on regular early morning jogs and bike rides most weekends. Michelle knew the rabbit to be almost endlessly energetic, able to bound ahead when even the lion's powerful frame in what many would consider to be peak condition was running on fumes. She therefore knew that having one leg encased in plaster from the hip down would become utterly infuriating for her friend within a day, let alone being stuck like that for up to a year.

Still, they were friends and Michelle was going to help her out as much as she could, and that included trying to get her to see the bright side of her new situation. "Think about it this way: it'll be nothing but games, comics, music, and food until you're better. *Nothing* is going to get in the way of that, I'll make sure of it. I'll set everything up so that you can just enjoy your time off."

Kate sighed, her bad mood seeming to ebb away into a light melancholy. "Yeah, I guess you're right. What about cooking and cleaning and stuff, though?"

"Don't you worry about that," Michelle said, smiling as she patted her friend on the shoulder, "At least one of us will be around every day to check up on you and everything."

Despite the circumstances, Kate smiled. "Thanks, 'Chelle. You're the best," she said with sincere gratitude, holding out her arms for a hug.

"Okay, here's the plan," the lioness said when they'd parted, "I'll get everything you need set up around you, then we order pizza and watch bad movies all night. Sound good?"

"Definitely!" Kate replied, now beaming.

That evening passed in hoots of laughter at the selection of terrible films, both deliberately awful and otherwise, and a veritable feast courtesy of Pizza Shack; Kate even finished off Michelle's last slice when the portion proved that one piece too much for the lioness.

The next few weeks came and went just as Michelle had said they would: Kate remained stranded at home, filling her time with TV, games, comics, and music – the lioness had made sure to leave the remotes for both the TV and the stereo, a controller and charger, and a stack of comics within arm's reach of the rabbit's now relatively permanent location on the couch. That cycle was broken once each day by the arrival of one of her friends to cook, clean, and generally give her a little bit of company.

Another of her friends, a red panda by the name of Paul whom she'd also met at the gym, swung by towards the end of her first week of isolation with a pair of gifts that would prove to be godsend almost immediately: a mini-fridge and a microwave. Now able to enjoy something other than the previous day's stale leftovers for breakfast and lunch, Kate was considerably more cheerful, though the highlights of her days were always when someone arrived to talk to her and restock her with sustenance.

It took a couple of weeks to become apparent, but her lack of mobility and a steady stream of food deliveries from her friends had begun to take a toll on Kate's body. It was the Wednesday of the third week when, having set the Tarantula-Guy comic down in her lap so she could help herself to a swig of soda, she noticed a change to her midsection from how it had been before her accident: where once had been a slender, high-toned tummy, was now a distinct softness, a layer of pudge a centimetre or two thick. She poked it with her index finger, immediately feeling a rush of various emotions as though there was a button secreted beneath her extra couple of pounds. She had always known that being inactive for so long would see a loss of fitness and a gain of weight, but she hadn't expected to notice it quite so soon, nor had she expected how seeing and feeling that new softness would make her feel: the part of her mind which was so deeply attached to her frequent visits to the gym and the effects that had wrought on her physique was repulsed by even the smallest hint of flab on her frame, yet there was another voice which had always been there in the back of her mind but which now spoke that much louder, matching that which called for immediate exercise for volume, saying that this extra weight was a good thing, a most desirable side effect of her inactivity and one which should be encouraged.

She shook her head, as though she could fling the second voice out of her head; at the first chance she would find a means of working out even while permanently sitting. For now, though, she was going to finish her comic, followed by a nice big bowl of ramen for lunch.

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After the first month or so things started to go a little awry: sure, Michelle and Paul were still visiting Kate regularly but the rest of the 'friends' she had enlisted to help her out in her time of need had either become too busy with their own lives to visit or had lost interest in the ailing rabbit. Where once she'd had a supply of homecooked meals being produced faster than she could consume, now she needed to ration what Michelle and Paul were able to whip up when they came round which they couldn't manage for anything greater than a short chat more than twice a week.

Despite her best efforts and hours of scouring the web for sedentary workout ideas, Kate had gained several more pounds since she'd noticed her tummy getting a little flabby. She had visited the doctor to get her cast changed and, since she was there, he'd decided to check-up on her general well-being. He had been entirely unsurprised that she had been putting on weight (which totalled twelve pounds it turned out) and had commended her for at least trying to exercise, and she had returned home with the news that she was doing well considering her situation, though the chances of her being back on her feet in six months were looking slim.

After that first pizza night, Kate had resisted the temptation to order more take-outs largely thanks to her friends cooking for her. Now that she had consumed her last portion of spaghetti Bolognese made by Paul and with no hope of anyone coming to cook any more for at least two days she was in something of a bind: she could either subsist off the snacks she had remaining, or she could cave and get something delivered.

It was a decision over which she agonised for the whole of that afternoon, her choice becoming imperative as night fell. As she had spent the day keeping hunger at bay through nibbling her way through a bag of chips and a candy bar, her stomach was firmly telling her that she needed something more substantial, preferably not potato-based; in the end, it seemed she didn't have much of a choice at all.

The delivery Komodo brought her two boxes: one containing half a dozen spring rolls, the other a stir-fry with rice.

Though she thoroughly enjoyed sitting there, watching whatever she could find while munching her way through her order, she told herself one thing over and over again, seeking to ingrain it deeply into her mind: 'Only in emergencies'.

But the longer she went without visits from her carers the more often 'emergencies' seemed to crop up. One take out a week soon became three or four, and with the increase in frequency came an increase in quantity: each time she saw the Komodo (among other delivery people) he was bringing her another box, for eating had become a form of entertainment for Kate.

As to be expected, all this extra food – often unhealthy, empty calories – combined with her disillusionment with the efficacy of her couch-bound exercises was taking the vague softness around her middle to whole new levels. Within one short month of her last visit to the doctor she had positively ballooned, adding close to another fifty pounds to her previously lithe frame.

The odd thing was that, though she should have hated herself for how she had 'ruined' her hard work at the gym, she found herself secretly enjoying the changes to her body. Her tummy now spilled over her waistband to sit in her lap, plump, cute, and gorgeously soft. Her chest had swelled a little, straining her bras and oozing out of the cups. Though she could still not walk, she was quite certain that her thighs would have brushed gently past each other were she able to.

Occasionally she would set aside her comic or her controller in favour of poking and squeezing her paunch, finding great enjoyment in watching the ripples run across its surface as she shook it. There were times, of course, when she'd be in the midst of enjoying her new pass-time when someone would arrive at the door – be it to deliver her latest order or to keep her company and take care of things about the house – and she would hurriedly tuck her belly as out-of-sight as she could beneath her now ill-fitting clothes; she wasn't prepared to reveal her enjoyment of being overweight to anyone.

Michelle and Paul were still the only two people she count on to visit her regularly and they naturally expressed their concern about her weight gain, though were still reasonable enough to acknowledge that the rabbit had little choice but to pack on the pounds while she was indisposed. In an effort to mitigate Kate's reliance on take-outs the two of them committed themselves to spending more of their time cooking things for her, as that would surely at least slow her inevitable expansion.

Little did they know that Kate's appetite had grown along with the rest of her, and that their best attempts to provide her with all the food she needed was no longer sufficient; the rabbit continued

to order food in from various restaurants and fast food chains, to the point where it was home cooking that was the supplementary part of her diet.

They were also unaware that she'd enlisted a third assistant. Ricky, the Komodo, had been summoned to Kate's home with packages of food so often that the two had struck up a friendship, one very much their mutual enjoyment of the bunny's growing waistline.

Initially he had lingered only long enough to share a short conversation with the couch-bound rabbit, but as time went on and their relationship progressed beyond that of mere acquaintances the two began to plan his deliveries so that he could stay longer if he so wished. Kate had begun submitting her orders to the Thai restaurant at which he worked mere moments before closing. Ricky would then volunteer to make the late deliveries on his way home, always arriving at Kate's home last of all.

Their routine was a relatively simple one. He would let himself in (after knocking first, of course) with two bags in his hands: one Kate's order, the other his own but most of which would be given over to the rabbit's ravenous appetite. They would then settle on the couch together – of which there was less space for Ricky on every visit – and dig into their respective meals. Occasionally Kate would allow him to physically feed her and rub her growing gut, but most times she preferred to operate under her own power and eschew any intimacy and he respected that. After they'd eaten and chatted, Ricky would gather up the debris of their meals and any other signs of Kate's junk food habit to be disposed of well away from her home; she was loathed to let either Michelle or Paul know what she was up to when they weren't around.

Well within two months of the start of this arrangement, Kate had added another hundred pounds to her frame. Her cute little tummy had become a fully-fledged belly: it tumbled a good foot or so into her lap (which itself had grown thanks to her thick, flabby thighs) and had developed distinct rolls around her hips. She had been forced to go braless for a while now, having snapped one and been unable to do up any of the others, even with Michelle's assistance. None of her tops were capable of covering her torso anymore, putting her paunch on permanent show for her visitors (something which Ricky certainly appreciated).

Oh glorious day! Thirteen months since her leg had been entombed for the first time, Kate was free from her cast. She was up and walking once more, though perhaps 'walking' wasn't the best word to describe it: the doctor had been unable to weigh her properly owing to the size she had now attained, but he estimated that she was somewhere between six hundred and fifty and seven hundred pounds, a tale already told by her waddling gait.

Ricky had done a little bit of shopping for Kate so that she had something to keep her decent on her final visit to the doctor: he'd taken her measurements to a plus-size establishment downtown and returned with a white top that looked like a small marquee when she first clapped eyes on it, a sarong to keep her lower half decent, and a single matching set of underwear; none of it fit perfectly, but it would suffice.

It was a party at Kate's that night to celebrate her freedom, though only Ricky, Michelle, and Paul had earned themselves an invite. Food was abundant and, as one might have expected, most of it was consumed by Kate with Ricky's whispered encouragement.

As she was able to move about of her own volition for the first time in over a year, the bunny was keen to rock out to her favourite band's new album, cranked up to full on her stereo. Things had

started well with their punk stylings blasting out of the speakers at near-maximum volume, Kate prancing around the living room as best someone her size could. Before the first song was even halfway through, however, she was panting heavily and being assisted to the couch by Paul; there she would stay for most of the rest of the evening, but she insisted on heaving herself to her feet to fetch her own drinks.

With Paul and Michelle's encouragement, Kate returned to the gym the following week to start on the 'road to recovery'; the rabbit, though inclined to shed a little of the weight she'd gained, had no intention now of ceasing her new life as a happily fat bunny.

Back in the days when she was slim she would have simply worn an old t-shirt and a pair of shorts as her gym clothes, but as even most of her newer t-shirts wouldn't have stretched over her chest she donned a new pink lycra top, similar black shorts, and a sports bra.

She naturally received many a glance from the other gym-goers as she shuffled towards the exercycles with her giant water bottle and sweat towel, though none of them were of recognition even from those others with whom she'd once been passing acquaintances, and she wanted to keep it that way.

Ignoring everything around her she climbed aboard her chosen machine and began to pedal. In mere moments she was once again panting heavily with her mouth wide open, sweat pouring from her brow and gathering in every one of the numerous fat rolls her body now sported. To add to her discomfort, it turned out that she was ill-adapted for riding a bike these days: her rump was so vast now that it drooped over every side of the seat, swallowing it up; her thighs swished past each other with every stroke of the pedals, already slowly wearing away the fabric that separated them; and her knees were forced to overcome not only the obstacle of turning the pedals, but also pushing up against the tide of belly fat that now slumped all the way down to them even when she was standing. It was the last of these which was giving her the most grief and it was solving that problem on which her mind was most focused as she forced her legs onwards, metre by hypothetical metre.

And then a lightbulb moment. Ceasing her pedalling, she reached down and gathered up the sagging ocean of adipose into her arms. Heaving it skywards, she dumped it onto the handlebars and the lights displaying how long she'd been working out, how far she'd 'travelled' and the like. She retrieved her water bottle from beneath the jiggling canopy, gulping down some of its contents before resuming her exercise; free of their burden, her legs were far happier to do as she asked them.

An ominous popping sound from one of the seams on her shorts told her that it was time to go; she was already exhausted after all.

She collapsed into the vehicle waiting for her outside the gym, causing the suspension to squeak and the car to lean heavily to the passenger side.

"Here, you look exhausted."

It was Ricky, come to collect her, holding out a waffle cone stacked high with several of her favourite ice cream flavours.

Her small moan of delight was thanks enough. She'd only asked him to pick her up after her first workout, but this extra treat had earned him a few rubs of her belly, that was for sure.