

Envious Gains

By Dragonien

"So, you want to bulk up?"

The dragon's deep voice rumbled through the gym's lobby, his massive barrel-chest magnifying the sound of his words like an amplifier. Listix would have been utterly terrified of the monstrous beast of a dragon known as Kumo if he hadn't been so enamored with them. While his own frame was lanky and rail-thin, barely scratching the six-foot mark; the dragon was in a whole other league. His thighs alone were thicker around than the fox's waist and his chest was as wide as any door the fox had ever walked through. Muscle shifted and rippled across the dragon's frame with even the slightest movement as if a constant reminder of just how much raw mass was packed beneath the dark purple scales of his hide. He was what Listix wanted to be; a beast.

"Y-yes. I want too, no, I NEED to get bigger. I'm sick of being scrawny." Listix muttered, gaining just a bit of steel in his voice as he spoke. "I want to be huge."

The dragon stared down at the fox for several long minutes before finally letting a wide grin split his muzzle. He could appreciate the fox's feelings. If he'd ever been that puny he would have been begging at any gym he could find for someone to help bulk him up. He wasn't sure how far the kid could go, though. His approval turned to a speculative gaze as he looked the fox up and down more analytically. He clearly didn't have any predisposition towards mass or size, not even fat, if the near-invisible amount of muscle and lack of any visible body fat told him anything. But everyone had at least a little room to grow so he figured there was nothing to lose.

"Alright then. I'll take you on. But you're gonna have to do everything I say. No complaints, no whining, no arguing. First time I have to fight you as a client I'm done." The dragon finally offered, a hint of a smirk still tugging the edges of his lips. "Don't expect miracles. Everyone has a natural predisposition to what their body will allow and everyone's got a ceiling they hit sooner or later. Not everyone's lucky enough to get as huge as me."

Pausing for a moment, the dragon's lips spread into a grin again. Unable to help a little bit of showing off he raised up one of his arms and flexed a massive bicep. the thick bulge of muscle surged out and strained the hide along his upper arm to its limit, ballooning out until the mound of meat easily rivaled the dragon's own head in size. That single bicep probably had more muscle than the entire fox's body, and both of them knew it. Rather than cow the fox or even spur a sign of jealousy, all the dragon saw in Listix's eyes was a look of awe and admiration.

"Of course, of course! Whatever you say! I'm ready!." he called out eagerly.

Despite his tiny frame his determination seemed legitimate. Maybe the dragon could make something out of the fox.

The first couple of weeks were the most grueling for the poor fox. He hadn't done much exercising save for the occasional jog and swim so getting his body acclimated to constant exercise was a painful barrier to overcome. The first few days they barely got through half of the routine that Kumo had planned for Listix before the fox was on his back on the floor, fur soaked in sweat and chest heaving with the effort of pulling in enough air. He just didn't have the stamina yet to go through everything. That didn't stop the fox, though. If anything, his failures to complete the whole routine only encouraged him to work harder the next day, then the next, until by the end of the week he was able to get through every set without collapsing. Kumo was honestly a bit surprised at how quickly he had acclimated to the work. Admittedly he had been going a bit harder than he probably should have on the fox, as he did with all his clients, to weed out the ones that weren't actually willing to put in the time and effort. He couldn't remember the last time he'd had a client that finished the entire day's workouts and then came to him of their own volition and asked for more. Usually by then they were all but begging to go home.

Even more surprising was the fox's progress. By the end of the second week, Kumo could see visible improvement in the fox's body. Whereas before his arms were little more than twigs covered in fur, now they had hardened up and had some real firmness to them. When he poked and prodded along Listix's forearm and bicep he didn't feel like he was going to snap it like a twig anymore. His legs had thickened even more visibly than his arms had, having gained at least half an inch of girth in just that first full week and that was after shedding the tiny bit of body-fat the fox had. Even his shoulders had widened a fraction of a bit to make his shirts noticeably better. The dragon was proud of the fox that was rapidly becoming his star pupil. Not that he would ever have admitted such to the fox.

He was a harsh taskmaster, constantly demanding more and more of the fox even while lording himself over Listix. He used his own body as the bait and lure for the fox to improve. Constantly flexing and posing in front of him while he was in the middle of his workouts and demanding more of him. Yells of "Don't you want arms like these?!" accompanied by the casual flexing of a bicep to rip open the sleeves of the purposefully too-tight shirt he wore that day or growls of "Skip leg day and you'll never have monsters like these!" as he did much the same with an overly-tight pair of old workout shorts that tore right down the seams when he squatted down over the fox during his sit-ups. Yet everything he did only seemed to push the fox harder. He never looked at Kumo with resentment or jealousy, only with looks of admiration and awe. He wanted Kumo's body, but he didn't resent Kumo for having it and Kumo enjoyed those looks. Just because he was a good trainer doesn't mean the dragon can't also let himself be shamelessly vain.

It was at the end of the first month that the dragon started to get a little concerned, though. He'd gone out of town for a family emergency for the last week of the month and had one of the other trainers fill in for him while he was gone. When he returned, he hadn't even recognized his charge.

Listix looked like he hadn't left the gym since Kumo had been gone. Where before the lean body had just begun to harden up with wiry sinew now it bulged with thick swells of mass. His pectorals jutted out visibly in front of him, pushing his shirt forward and stretching out the collar just a bit while his stomach had hardened into the beginnings of a four-pack of abdominal muscles visible even through the thin layer of fur along his belly. His biceps had ballooned in size until they filled the sleeves of Listix's T-shirt to the brim even when relaxed. They weren't going to be bursting the sleeves any time soon but there was definite stretching going on there. His thighs were arguably where the biggest change had been; each leg having swollen in size to nearly half again their previous girth! They pulled the legs of his gym-shorts taut much the same how his biceps did for his shirt sleeves and suddenly the idea of the fox squatting and shredding his shorts the same way the dragon did to encourage him didn't seem like such a wild fantasy.

Despite the unnatural gains the fox was making, his attitude hadn't changed at all. He still held the dragon in a state of reverence above him and listened religiously to anything the trainer told him to do. Hell, he hardly even seemed to notice his own progress beyond knowing he was improving thanks, specifically, to Kumo. Thankfully the dragon quickly got over his trepidation over the fox's drastic improvements. If anything, they acted as a signal for the dragon that he should push the fox that much harder. And push him he did.

Redoubling their efforts, Kumo increased the difficulty of the workouts he gave Listix. No matter how hard he pushed the fox, though, he never seemed to break him. Listix greedily pushed himself as far as his body would allow him, forcing beyond his limits almost every day. It paid off immediately. Kumo swore he could actually see the fox growing nearly every day, listening to Listix complain at least once a week how his clothes kept shrinking in the wash and he had to keep buying new ones. The dragon was getting increasingly nervous as he watched the fox bulk up from a scrawny weakling into a powerhouse of muscle and size. Listix even seemed to gain a bit of height, just an inch or two here or there as if his body were trying to enlarge itself to better fit all of the muscle it was building onto itself.

By the end of the second month, Kumo was becoming genuinely concerned. Listix's improvements weren't slowing down at all. If anything, they were getting more extreme. The fox already looked like an amateur bodybuilder that had spent years living in a gym and working out religiously. Hell, he was getting dangerously close to outdoing Kumo by now, if the dragon didn't still have a good seven or eight inches of height on the fox even with his growth spurt. That didn't stop the dragon from pushing him harder, though. If anything, it encouraged Kumo to redouble his efforts to taunt and lord himself over the fox; both to encourage Listix and to reassert his own dominance over his growing charge. Thankfully the

fox hadn't seemed to have lost any of the awe and respect he had for the dragon, even if he now was big enough to be a legitimate threat. He continued to yell to the fox that he had to work harder if he wanted to be as big as the dragon was, if he wanted to ever hope of being as big as he was one day; as manly as he was one day. He continued to show off and flex for the fox as he worked, emphasizing what it was the fox should be striving for as if he would never reach it... even when the fox's own body was nearly there.

By the end of the fourth month it was official; Listix had outdone Kumo. The dragon still had a height advantage, that was for sure, but proportionally there was no way even his ego would let him convince himself that Listix wasn't the bigger of them. Whereas Kumo's biceps were the size of his own head, Listix's were easily larger. If Kumo's legs were telephone poles then Listix's had swollen into tree trunks. For as deep and heavy Kumo's barrel chest of pectorals were, Listix's jutted out so far that if he tried to look too far down his chin would get caught in the cleft of his own pecs! The dragon tended to wear tighter clothes now, better showing off what he did have, as if to compensate for where the fox was starting to leave him behind. He growled and challenged Listix more, knowing the fox would take it as encouragement rather than a real challenge to sooth his crumbling ego. He wasn't hateful or mean towards the fox; the kid was just too reverent and innocent towards him for Kumo to build any real resentment. He was jealous as could be, but not resentful. The kid may have hit some kind of genetics super-lottery but he was still putting in all the work to earn what he was getting.

When his six-month anniversary came around the entire gym staff had thrown a little celebration for the fox. He had become a bit of a local celebrity thanks to his ridiculous gains and enormous size. Kumo got plenty of praise for being a good trainer as well, but the focus was almost exclusively on the fox. There had been a chorus of laughter when Listix unwrapped the large colorfully wrapped present the gym staff had gotten for him, only to find it contained the half-bent door of the locker Listix had accidentally ripped clean off of its hinges a month or so ago when he accidentally pulled it too hard. It had become a running joke around the gym that Listix was growing faster than his brain could keep up; which is why he kept accidentally destroying things with his skyrocketing strength. When Listix pressed the knife down to cut the cake they had gotten him he had pressed too hard and shattered the plate underneath it only further reinforced the joke and led to that much more riotous, if good natured, laughter among the rest of the staff. Even Kumo couldn't help but let a bit of a smirk show on his otherwise stern face. It wasn't the first thing that Listix had destroyed as he fumbled around, too big for his own good, and it certainly wouldn't be the last. It was well into the evening before they stopped making jokes about how the chair he was sitting in would collapse underneath his bulk at any point, which only made it that much funnier when it finally did.

Unfortunately, the whole situation left Kumo in a strange mix of reactions. He felt unending pride that he had raised such a behemoth from a scrawny little twig in only six months. Yet at the same time he also felt envious that he had been so thoroughly usurped as the big guy on the block, so to speak.

That night, after everyone else had left the gym, Kumo went to the weight sets and started loading up weight after weight onto the bench press bar. He felt an irrational need to prove himself, even if only to his own mind. He piled the weight on until it was the same weight that Listix used for his daily workouts. Laying himself down under the bar, the dragon carefully wrapped his fingers around the grips. His chest flared then retracted as he took in a long, deep breath to prepare himself. Then... he hefted the bar.

The moment it left its supports the bar came rocketing down towards his chest. Muscle and sinew strained and screamed; veins popping out so thickly they were visible through the covering of his fine scales! His eyes bulged and his jaw clenched tight enough he swore his teeth might crack. The weight was just too much. For all his massive bulk; for very flexing and flaring muscle that could have twisted any normal man into a pretzel, even his herculean might just couldn't lift so much weight.

Just when Kumo began to get concerned, unable to even lift the bar high enough off his chest to re-rack it, he heard a set of heavy footsteps approaching from behind. The strain of keeping the bar from slamming down on his chest was too much to even allow him to speak, much less turn his head to look so all he could do is sit there and strain against the over-taxing load. Then, a pair of black-furred fingers wrapped around the middle of the bar and abruptly the weight lessened significantly. With a gasping sigh of relief the bar found its way back to its rack and the dragon went limp atop the bar; chest heaving as he panted to get his breath back. Only when the burning in his chest had reduced to a dull ache did he finally open his eyes.

And find himself staring straight up at the smiling face of Listix, leaning forward to see past the enormous cliff-face of his pectorals.

Instantly Kumo felt his body tense. His head flooded with a mixture of embarrassment, indignation, outrage, and concern at being caught red handed in such a dire situation. Any second now he expected Listix to finally break, to finally let his ego out and berate the dragon for being weaker, smaller, inferior than him. Some taunting comment of the student surpassing the master or how Listix could lift that much with one arm. Instead, all he saw on Listix's face was a warm, friendly smile.

"Sorry, sir. I think I forgot to rack all my weights." the fox's now-rumbling voice thundered through the room.

He spoke with all the sincerity and innocence of a priest despite the obvious lie he was telling. For a moment, Kumo didn't know how to react. Listix was giving him an out, an 'excuse' for his blunder to save face that he almost certainly didn't deserve. It just made it that much harder to even be jealous of the fox. Finally, Kumo pushed himself up to his feet, suppressing a groan at the twinge of strained muscles in his arms, and stared down the fox who he now only had a couple of inches on. Unable to completely keep the smile off of his face, Kumo put on his usual aggressive trainer persona.

"Damn right you did! What's the first damn thing I taught you? Rack your damn weights when you're done! Just for that, tomorrow you're doing twice the roadwork. I'm gonna make you run till you puke!"

Listix, unable to hide his own smile, just nodded up to his trainer; the man that had turned him from a dried-out stick into a behemoth in less than a year.

"Yes, sir."