

Loud knocking at the door roused Nat from a light sleep. As the haze of sleep faded, he recognized the sound and jumped to his feet. His glasses cluttered to the ground from the motion, forcing the boy to fumble for the eyewear and delay answering the sound. By the time he reached the door, his mysterious visitor was gone. Left by the doorstep was a large cardboard box, its top lacking any return address or sender's markings. Having ordered nothing, he looked around in confusion but saw none who would have left the curious parcel. Scratching his head in disorientation, he pulled the box inside. Straining under the weight, he carried the item to the kitchen, his thin arms shaking from the effort.

Grunting, he dropped the container on his kitchen table. The wooden furniture creaked, and liquid sloshed within the box. Taking a moment to catch his breath, he pulled a small blade from the cabinet and cut the clear tape. Inside, he found several bottles of a thick, grey liquid. The title and label of the stuff were in a foreign language, though the word '*Imisipha*' was written in large block letters across its front. Beside it was depictions of muscular, anthropomorphic elephants, flexing to the reader. Probably some kind of energy drink. No, its consistency was more akin to a supplement shake.

Strange, Nat had ordered no such products. Rechecking the box, he noticed the address to be one entirely different from his own. He briefly considered sending it off to its proper owner. However, repacking such a large container for an owner in a different city would be expensive. Besides, he had already opened it.

The plastic cap of the bottle snapped as he opened it. Drinking an unknown liquid was undoubtedly dangerous, but he suspected the package to be nothing but a foreign strength booster, something he could certainly use. He coughed upon taking a sip of the drink, the shake tasting hardly better than chalk, though this was far superior a flavor than most others accomplished.

Sitting to work on his laptop, he continued to drink the dense shake. Though he intended only to try it, he kept drinking more from habit than anything else. Soon, he found it difficult to focus on his work. He finished the bottle and felt flushed. Almost like a sugar rush, he bounced his leg felt a need to release his energy in any way.

Wandering upstairs, he completed a few menial tasks, before stopping in his room. Gathering dust by his closet, a set of barbells sat upon two stacks of addable weights. Months ago, he made

the purchase and vowed to get himself into shape. Of course, this inspiration soon left him, and they became little more than furniture.

Feeling that inspiration return, Nat picked his two one-handed bars and clipped small weights to them. While not overweight, he was by no means in shape. The little weights quickly made his arms ache and sweat beaded from his brow. Breath growing heavy with fatigue, he would have usually stopped there, but the liquid in his gut provided a vigor he could not quench in any other way.

Either his energy faded, or his fatigue grew stronger than it. Eventually, he dropped the weights and sat atop the bed. Panting, he wiped his forehead, it and his wrist dripping. His arms ached, muscles resenting the first real exercise he had done in weeks. Massaging his arms, he paused a moment, noticing his muscles already larger than they had been but hours ago.

A hint of worry crossed Nat's mind. Such sudden effects could not be natural, and he was left to wonder what sort of experimental concoction he drank. His entire body was slightly sore, though far less than his arms. Above all else, he felt starved, his previous meal all but gone from his stomach.

As he opened his refrigerator, he looked down in confusion. He made the motion on muscle memory but grabbed the handle in an unfamiliar place. Measuring his hand on the door, he noticed several issues. Most obviously, his skin looked both paler and darker, greying slightly. While that could have been blown off as a trick of the light, his hand met the handle at a higher point, as if he had grown a few inches in the last hour.

Nat shook off the worry, noticing no adverse effects aside from the otherwise harmless observations he saw. Feeling starved, he began stuffing himself with the food from his cabinet and fridge. Almost shoveling the food down his stomach, he washed it all down with another of the shakes. He hardly noticed he was drinking another until half of it was finished. The shakes were bland but addictive, aided by the energy and strength they provided.

Curiously, Nat found his tastes changed. He tried to eat a microwaved hotdog, but it tasted foul on his tongue, as did all other meats he tried. Instead, gorged on bread, oats, and vegetables. His stomach seemed a pit, never filling no matter how much he ate.

Leaning back on his chair, he patted his stomach. Not full, but no longer starved. His metabolism altered, the feast had spread quickly within him, his gut was pushed out, and some meat finally added to his skinny frame. Clothes formerly baggy and a size too large, they were usually comfortably loose, but now fit better against his larger form.

By now, he had come to accept the changes, thanking whoever had accidentally sent him the miracle supplements. His upper jaw ached, and when rubbed revealed the gums above his canines to be pushed out.

Reinvigorated, he walked back to his room. On his way, he stopped before a tall mirror on his wall. His skin had turned a dry grey, clinging to his form like leather. New muscles enhanced his previously slim body, now almost average in strength and mass.

Nat took back to his weights, this time equipping his two-handed barbell with far more weight than last time. He grunted as he raised the irons, gritting his teeth and his arms strained. Sighing, he dropped the weight and lifted it again. It felt like his very muscles were being torn apart, yet each time he relaxed, they were flooded with a comfortable burn as they strengthened.

Lying back on his bed, he performed bench presses on the unused equipment. Sweat poured from him, and he continued his reps, the fatigue in his arms fading as his mind focused to a blade's edge on the task before him. The lifts became easier and easier the longer he did them, his muscles noticeably growing the longer he worked. His baggy clothes soon clung tight against his skin.

The changes were hardly noticeable at first, his rippling muscles only growing slightly as they moved. However, as he continued, his arms enlarged with each moment. While his arms grew fastest, the rest of his body followed suit, building, and toning. Leathery, grey skin rubbed against his tight clothes, with every movement. His shoes far outgrown, the laces stretched and snapped, the sneakers falling away as he lifted his feet. Catching his breath, he stood, banging his head against a bump in the ceiling where several pipes passed overhead.

"Dammit!" Nat hissed, stroking a lump on his forehead. Nearly a foot taller, the ceiling would be something to be far more conscious of. He loosened his belt and wrist, the straps straining and his hand beginning to blue. In the mirror, he admired his powerful form. Aside from his grey skin, he had the body of a strong laborer. Black, curly hair grey from his arms, solid muscles bulging beneath a layer of fat. His ears had grown in greater proportion than the rest of his body, flapping

loosely like sheets against his head. Lifting his lip, he examined the swelling pain in his mouth. Poking from his gums, where what seemed a pair of forward-facing teeth, the two growing slightly with each second.

Opening another bottle, he took another deep sip and felt another rush of energy. His arms still weary, he began doing sit-ups and with newfound vigor. As brawn increased on his abs, his gut also fattened, forming a robust muscle-gut. Pinging loudly, the metal button popped from his jeans, bouncing off the wall farthest from him. With another dose of the shake in his system, his changes hastened, back stretching as he grew, and muscles feeling like concrete hardening from sludge. His face felt like clay, slowly being molded and pulled outward.

Panting with exhaustion, he sat against the foot of his bed, closing his eyes as his changes washed over him. With his still-growing trunk, he wiped off his forehead, amazed by how naturally he maneuvered the new appendage. His lips parted as two tusks slowly emerged from his gums and pushed into the open air.

Parched, Nat finished the last of his current shake, downing another when the first failed to quench him. His movements hampered by the clothes he wore, his growing form straining the threads of his once baggy jeans and t-shirt. With his new height and bulk, his shirt did nothing to cover his stomach and wrapped so tightly around his chest it restricted his breath. He attempted to pull off the shirt, but his movement caused the clothes to split loudly.

Laughing, he flexed and caused the shirt to tear further, living out a fantasy he had never been capable of before. He doubled over as he stood, his pants pulled painfully tight against him. Inhaling, he squatted down and let his pants rip beneath him, white strands fraying and whipping as he ruined his clothes. Straining himself, he clenched his gut. While he could just remove his belt, it was far more fun to watch the leather stretch and turn white, before ripping in two.

As the last shifting of his skull finished, he stood and admired himself in the mirror. Standing on thick legs, he now had the form of an anthro-elephant, his body muscular, bulky, and almost eight feet tall.

He examined the bottles which granted him the form, realizing its drawings to be far more literal than he initially suspected. Sitting on the bed, he heard the beams and legs of the item creak and snap, the furniture breaking under his weight. Laughing, he stood and walked for his computer

outside of his room, realizing he would need a new set of clothes. Unused to his height, he bumped his head against the upper casing of the door. With his new strength, the plaster and wood were insufficient to stop him, and he crashed through the piece of wall. His large fingers proved too unwieldy for fine manipulation.

Nat chuckled at the small path of destruction he had caused. This form would take some getting used to. However, he certainly preferred it to his old one.