

Bursting Bullies:

By: IndigoRho

Oscar wiped away the sweat from his brow as another happy customer walked away from the Cascadia Fries food truck. With the lunch rush finally over, the elk could finally take a short break and enjoy the relaxingly mild weather outside. Just as he was about to ask his coworker Cedric to cover for him, though, Oscar saw a pair of familiar furs walking towards the truck. Well, waddling was the better term. Both sported massive bellies that bounced with every step—sometimes even into each other if they got too close—with round faces to match. On the left was a light-brown bat wearing a black tank-top that barely fit and green shorts, the loose laces of his red-and-white Converse flapping about in tune with his middle. He was talking to his companion, and abruptly let out a loud laugh and slapped his gut with a gloved paw, obviously amused by something. The midnight-blue cheetah with him let out a belly-jiggling laugh of his own, causing his shirt to ride up and expose his flab. Like the bat, he was in shorts, along with a dark green button-up that clung desperately to him.

The pair were regulars at the food truck, but not the good kind. They were overly fond of using their bulk to bully both customers and the staff, harassing their way to the front of the line, demanding special orders or discounts, and constantly asking for refunds if they weren't "satisfied". Normally Oscar wouldn't put up with such behavior from customers, but every attempt to confront the gluttonous bat and cheetah ended horribly. Anyone who called them out on cutting in line ended up squirming in their stomachs if they were hungry, or overinflated and burst into a pile of scraps if they were bored. Just two weeks ago Oscar's friend and coworker Frankie had snapped and refused to serve the two after they'd scared away the lunch crowd. Oscar had arrived for work just in time to watch Frankie blow apart as the bat bounced atop his spherical body and the cheetah recorded it.

Before that day, Oscar had been content to simply silently hate the duo and hope karma dealt with them naturally. With Frankie gone, though, the elk had decided to take matters into his own hooves. Today the two blubbery terrors would finally get their just desserts, and Oscar would avenge not only his friend, but everyone else the bat and cheetah had eaten and popped over the years. He turned to Cedric and said two words: "They're here". The possum knew right away what he meant, and quickly pulled out their special surprise.

The pair were almost to the food truck, and close enough for Oscar to hear the bat's conversation. "Indi I wish you'd been there to see it, it was hilarious! This short corgi dude was just laying in the grass, totally oblivious, he was perfect balloon material," the bat said. "So I sit right on his chest and shove the hose into his mouth when he gasps for breath, and empty the whole helium tank into him! The look on his face when he realized the only thing keeping him from floating away was the tube in his mouth was priceless."

"Ugh, I can't believe you went on a helium hunt without me again, Jasu," the cheetah grumbled. "So how did you pop him?"

Jasu let out a joyful laugh. "I didn't! I taped his muzzle shut and just let him drift off with the breeze!"

"Well, that's still popping him. I mean, it just sort of happens naturally once you get high enough," Indi said.

"If he burst after I freed him that's on him, not me," Jasu replied with a grin.

Oscar looked down on the two as they finally arrived at the window, and for the first time ever he didn't have to put on a fake smile for them. "Welcome to Cascadia Fries, what can I get you?"

"What's the deal of the day?" Jasu asked.

Just as Oscar had hoped. "Something brand new, actually. If you order the Mountain of Fries in 'Rainier' size, we'll upgrade the usual large soda to a full two-liter of blueberry cola! Though we are limiting it to one order per customer."

The last part seemed to gain Jasu's attention, and a smug grin quickly grew on his face. "Hmm,

that's a shame. Indi and I have rather hearty appetites, and it'd take at least three orders apiece for us to be satisfied. Otherwise we might have to scrounge for something a bit more filling...and livelier."

Normally the unsubtle threat of being eaten would have made Oscar nervous, but the elk had planned on Jasu responding in such a manner. "O-oh, well, I'm sure we could make an exception for such valued customers! Cedric, start up six orders of the Blueberry Mountain special, pronto!"

"Excellent, I'm glad you understand the customer is always right," Jasu said, feeling triumphant. "The lion who used to work here didn't seem to think that way, and it's a real shame what happened to him."

Oscar swiftly bit his lip and forced himself to continue smiling at the reference to Frankie's fate. Only the intense desire for revenge prevented him from losing his cool and snapping at the terrible bat. "Yep, I always try to do what's right for the customer."

While the tremendous order was worked on, Jasu and Indi relaxed at a table near the food truck, discussing plans for the weekend, and whether or not they wanted to meet up and have a little helium fun at the expense of others. Their chat kept them well-distracted until Oscar finally rolled a cart laden with fries and blueberry soda. Jasu and Indi began digging into their first baskets the second they were laid on the table, practically shoveling the salty treats into their maws. Oscar quietly unloaded the rest of their orders and returned to the food truck, chuckling under his breath the entire way. Everything was going according to plan so far.

Unsurprisingly, the duo's gluttony caused both to grow immensely thirsty, and they were soon chugging the two-liters of soda without a second thought. Their stomachs slowly swelled from the influx of fries, condiments, and cola. Jasu's tank-top gradually untucked itself, revealing an expanding strip of blubbery brown fur. The gaps between the buttons of Indi's shirt grew wider and wider, while the buttons themselves quivered with every gulp. Neither paid much attention to their bloating bellies, too obsessed with gorging on their food and getting into impromptu belching contests that only seemed to encourage them to drink the soda faster.

In a short-sighted effort to outdo his bat friend, Indi began chugging his final two-liter, gulping the entire thing down in one go. Jasu saw through his plan half-way through, and quickly spun open his last bottle and followed suit. When Indi finished he tossed the empty bottle to the ground and thumped a paw on his round belly, letting loose a long, deep belch that rattled their fry baskets. For a moment he grinned confidently at Jasu, but his triumph turned to confusion as he realized his gut hadn't shrunk from the immense burp. In fact, he could swear it'd gotten larger. He looked down at his gut and middle and poked at it with his paw, surprised that it felt somewhat taut instead of purely soft, as if he'd swallowed a bunch of air. Then Indi watched his belly swell a bit before his very eyes.

Indi chirped in fear. "J-Jasu, something in that food made me gassy, I'm bloating!"

Jasu slammed his drained two-liter onto the table and belched in response. "Ha! Mine was louder. What are you whining about?"

"Dude, I'm inflating, something's making me inflate!" Indi said in a panic, his belly still growing.

"Oh stop worrying, it's probably just gas from drinking all that soda," Jasu said. "Just burp a bit and ride it out ya wimp."

A button on Indi's shirt snapped off, skipping along the ground at high speed. Two more quickly followed. "This isn't just gas, I can hear it sloshing in there!"

"You're just mad you lost the belching contest, aren't—*uuurrrp!*" An unintended burp interrupted Jasu. He looked down at his own gut, and let out a sharp scree upon realizing just how big it'd become. "What the hell, I'm inflating!"

"See!" Indi said in frustration. "Our food must have been spiked!"

Jasu turned to the food truck and glared. "If those idiots think they can prank me and get away with it they're in for a nasty surprise! Time to turn some fools into bat chow."

The pair of bloating furs struggled to leave the table, barely able to lift their legs out of the way

of their swollen bellies. By the time they'd managed to dislodge themselves they both sported comically round middles, and their limbs had just begun to puff up. Jasu's fur had also taken on a subtle blue hue. They waddled awkwardly over to the food truck window, the movement only seeming to hasten their inflation, their belts popping off and pants tearing. Oscar watched the entire ridiculous scene with sheer glee on his face. So far revenge was everything he'd ever hoped and dreamed it'd be.

"Gentlemen, back already?" Oscar said with mock politeness. "Did you want to order seconds?"

The blimping bullies were now too big to stand side-by-side at the window, and Jasu nudged Indi out of the way to yell at Oscar. "You screwed up big time, man! I hope you like blueberry soda, cause you're gonna be swimming in the stuff once I've shoved you down my throat!"

Indi leaned in to glare. "Yeah, and I'm, um, I'm gonna douse the other guy back there with condiments and eat him like a giant french fry once the bloating's stopped! No one pranks us, no one!"

"What gave you the impression that you'd *stop* inflating?" Oscar asked with a devilish grin on his face.

Until then, both Jasu and Indi had merely assumed the inflation was small-scale, that they'd get a little round before getting even.

"Y-you're bluffing!" Jasu yelled.

"You can believe that all you want, right up until burst apart in a shower of blue scraps." Oscar was absolutely delighted.

Indi watched Jasu's hide turn a deeper and deeper shade of blue. "Wait, you can't do this to us! Give us some deflation pills, you've gotta have them in there!"

"You don't keep them on you at all times? Good." Oscar laughed. "That means I can just sit back and watch the two of you balloon out of control until you're just giant, wobbling berries. Overripe and easy to pop!"

Jasu let out a loud *screee* as his shorts were ripped to shreds, exposing his stretchy mango-print boxers for all to see. A second series of tears heralded the end of Indi's own shorts, along with the shoulder seams of his shirt. The two were used to always getting their way, intimidating everyone around them through a mix of weight, gluttony, and callousness. Neither had ever been in such a compromising position before, and the role reversal was almost too much for them to handle. They didn't know how to respond to Oscar at all. The elk found this rather cathartic.

"Hmm, you know what, there is something you could do to save yourselves," Oscar said.

Both bullies looked up at the elk with hope. "Anything, we'll do anything!" Jasu replied.

"Well, there's a public juicing station right over there." Oscar pointed to the bright-blue hut across from the food truck on the plaza. "Of course, it can only juice one person at a time, so it'd only be able to save *one* of you."

As soon as Oscar finished talking Indi and Jasu both began waddling towards the juicing station as fast as they could manage. The desire to survive erased their friendship, the two furs thinking only of themselves. Every step shook the bubbling soda in their bellies further, swelling their bodies even faster. Their middles grew rounder and rounder, slowly engulfing their limbs and necks, slowing their waddles to a crawl. Loud sloshing and fizzing echoed from within the massive furs-turned-berries, a constant reminder of their impending doom. The plaza was mostly empty at that point, and the few bystanders kept clear of the inflating duo racing to salvation, though quite a few started recording the spectacle.

Eventually Indi and Jasu were almost completely spherical. They wobbled forwards at a snail's pace, leaving a steady stream of leaking blueberry soda and clothing scraps in their wake. In a fit of inspiration Jasu suddenly threw his weight against Indi, rolling the round cheetah onto his belly and stopping him in his tracks. Though almost losing balance himself, Jasu recovered well, and let out a victorious *screee* as he continued on to the juicing station. Indi rocked back and forth helplessly, unable to get back on his paws. The pressure within him was becoming unbearable and his overstretched hide felt every crack and edge in the stones below. His cheeks were swollen, his head partially sunk into his

bloated body, and he could barely flail his paws in distress. He could feel the end coming.

“Jasu you jerk, don't leave me!” Indi wailed, chirping as a small tear formed in his hide, spewing a small stream of blue soda and gas. “I don't wanna pop, I don't wanna pop, I don't wanmphmph!”

Indi's whole body creaked, sloshed, and bubbled ominously as a gush of cola poured from his maw onto the ground. Tears appeared all over the cheetah, and Indi violently blew apart. Bits and pieces of dark blue hide were hurled across the plaza along with plenty of soda, pelting Jasu's back in the process. The bat shuddered at the sound of the explosion, and attempted to pick up his pace so he wouldn't share Indi's fate. A wet blue scrap landed atop Jasu's bloated body directly in his sight, causing him to cringe as it slowly slid down his rounded form and landed on the pavement with a quiet *smack*. Fortunately, the juicing station was getting closer and closer. He just had to last a little longer, keep his body together a few more feet so he could stumble into the station and be drained of the volatile liquids and gasses that threatened to turn him from a bat berry into bat confetti.

The bat was just about to let out another victorious scree when he managed to step perfectly onto one of his own undone shoe laces, stumbling just enough to lose the little footing he had and roll right onto the ground. Blueberry soda spewed from his mouth and left a small puddle on the pavement. For a few seconds, Jasu couldn't believe what had happened. Salvation had been practically at his fingertips, he could actually smell the damn juicer from where he wobbled helplessly. He thrashed about in a rage, though all he could do was rock back and forth futilely. Then Jasu felt the light pat on his bloated side.

Oscar walked around the massive bat berry so they could look each other in the eye. “So close! For a moment I was worried you'd actually make it.” The elk breathed an exaggerated sigh of relief. “Would've had to pop you the hard way then.”

“Please, roll me to the juicer, don't let me burst!” Jasu begged, feeling his hide grow tighter. “Have mercy!”

“I wonder how often you heard that line yourself?” Oscar asked. “All those furs you ate, all the ones you popped yourself. I'm sure most of them begged for mercy, too. And each ended up either on your waistline or as scraps in a heap. Just like Frankie.”

“I-I'll change, I'll never eat or pop anyone ever again I swear!” Jasu lied in desperation.

Oscar laughed and shook his head. “Even if you were telling the truth, it's far too late for that now. I do have a parting gift, though.”

Oscar pulled a long roll of mentos out of his pocket and made sure Jasu saw what they were. The bat's eyes went wide and he immediately screed in terror. “N-no, don't!”

“I know it's a bit cliché, but I've always wanted to see how this looks in person,” Oscar said, snapping the roll in half so a couple were exposed. “Now open wide, big boy!”

The elk roughly shoved both halves of the roll into Jasu's mouth, making sure they ended up far enough to force the bat to swallow. He then hastily jogged away to put enough distance between them. Jasu felt the rolls slide down his throat and splash into his stomach, and the resulting chemical reaction was almost instantaneous. The pressure within his bloated body increased dramatically, a geyser of foam shooting from his mouth as the bat visibly swelled up even more. Jasu's expansion was so fast, dozens of tears erupted over his hide at once, before the bat exploded into a cloud of foam, mist, and blue hide.

Oscar shielded his face from the carnage—a few scraps of bat bouncing off his arms—before looking upon the wonderful results of his revenge. Two large blueberry soda pools stained the plaza stones, along with smaller streams of blue and dozens of scattered pieces of cheetah and bat confetti. He felt a little bad for whoever would eventually have to clean up the mess, but in the long run it would be worth it. Watching Frankie swept into a pile and dumped into a trash bag was one of the worst experiences of his life. Watching someone pressure wash the blue from the plaza would be one of the nicest. With a content sigh Oscar walked back to the food truck, kicking aside a wet, discarded

Converse as he went.