

Indulging on Room Service

By: IndigoRho

A gentle ambient track drifted through a modest cabin aboard the space liner Scylla. At his desk Rho Taliesin sat thinking, the orange zebra enduring a rather prolonged period of writer's block, which he didn't know whether to attribute to his hunger or his relatively new surroundings. Rho had just published a novel he'd personally felt was below par, and had decided a change in environment would provide the inspiration he desired. A nice, month-long cruise on the Scylla had attracted his attention most. Only a couple days in the accommodations and amenities were proving wonderful, but his writing had been stagnant. Dozens of ideas were reviewed and rejected, initial paragraphs wiped away time and time again. His obsessive need for *something* to stick had caused Rho to forget dinner, an immediate regret for a zebra of his girth. Thankfully room service was already on its way.

Rho was torn from thought by the sounding of a chime: food had arrived. He eagerly opened his cabin door, met by a portly lion who's uniform clung tightly to his middle. Despite his best efforts, Rho's gaze drifted almost immediately from the serving cart to the belly of the lion, his mouth beginning to water. While not as voracious as many of his friends, Rho couldn't deny his enjoyment of the occasional live meal, especially those with a good deal of flab on their waistlines. Not to mention the fact lions were amongst his favorite prey. He swiftly got a look at the lion's name badge—he was Sam apparently—noting the green border around it. The cruise officially discouraged passengers from eating crew members, but still conveniently color-coded them by eating-fee, ensuring those who simply couldn't help themselves were well-aware of the bill beforehand. Poor Sam was in the cheapest tier, either due to inexperience or some kind of infraction.

With a warm smile Rho waved the unsuspecting Sam into his cabin, requesting he place the sizable meal that'd been ordered on a table further in. Luckily for Rho the lion dutifully did as he was told, giving him the opportunity to quietly close the door and retrieve something from a drawer. While Sam worked on moving the plates Rho stalked him from behind, ogling his round butt and curvy love handles, stomach growling. The zebra like to consider himself a fairly unassuming pred, someone who didn't seem a threat until his jaws were closing over your head. Others tending to let their guard down around him was one of the main reasons he was three hundred pounds more often than not. Sam was about to learn that the hard way.

As soon as Sam had finished his task he felt a firm, unexpected pat on his shoulder and turned to face Rho. A sudden puff of gas awaited him. The lion coughed as the strange mist flooded his nostrils, his first deep breath making him lightheaded. Rho grabbed Sam's shoulders to prevent him from falling and carefully guided him to a chair, the lion coughing and mumbling nonsense in a daze. He made no effort to stand up or fight back, seemingly oblivious to the square patch Rho slapped onto his gut. A holographic display screen flickered to life, emitted from the patch and perfectly following the contours of Sam's round belly.

"Alright, let's see your stats big boy," Rho teased, tossing aside the small sprayer he'd used to incapacitate his prey so he'd have both hooves free.

Sam's middle was now effectively a touch screen, and Rho wasted little time bringing up some very specific details. "Three hundred and seven pounds, four ounces, nice. Estimated digestion time of twenty-three to twenty-six hours unaided—trust me, I'll be chugging some accelerant so I don't waste a day lugging you around—and estimated gain of fifty-one pounds. You are gonna make amazing zebra pudge, honestly!"

There wasn't any coherent response from his soon-to-be meal, just distant confusion. "Hmm, I wonder where all your flab came from," Rho mused, bringing up more information and a couple small headshots of strangers. "Trace pounds from a weasel and raven, both meals that weren't re-formed. Looks like you mostly got huge the old fashioned way, tubbs!"

Sam's eyes appeared to be drifting less and he was almost managing half a sentence, so Rho

needed to cut his fun short. He shut down the belly display and removed the patch, then knelt on the floor before the lion.

“Well, sorry to see ya go Sam, but you know how things are. Some people are just meant to be food eventually.” Rho gave his dinner a vaguely sympathetic smile.

Rho grabbed Sam's footpaws and opened his maw wide, sliding the first bit of his meal right in. A light gulp was all it took to pull them into his throat, the muscles contracting steadily to transport the lion to his fate. With a thought Rho dulled his taste buds so Sam's bland uniform wouldn't detract from the experience. The zebra tended to enjoy the feeling of flab over its unaltered taste, anyway, not to mention the absolutely euphoric sensation of having a belly full of another living being. Sam was certain to be a memorable delight. Every swallow saw the lion becoming more lucid again, but by the time he was collected enough to resist his paws were already slipping past Rho's lips, along with his thighs and butt.

“W...wait, no, p-please...” Sam mumbled, his weak squirms less like struggles and more akin to someone stirring from a long nap.

Of course Rho only replied by gulping more of him down. The zebra's belly was swelling wonderfully, his expandex undersuit stretching alongside it with ease, designed to handle the particular appetites of preds in ways standard materials simply couldn't. Clothing that grew with him was always appreciated, and cost-efficient. Sam's sizeable belly gave Rho little trouble, his maw inching wider and wider to take in the selling-point of his meal. Soft feline pudge flooded into every corner of his mouth, the zebra lightly chewing here and there to feel the squish. His prey whimpered as his gut was teased, having already given up hope of leaving the cabin as anything *but* food.

Again Rho felt a sliver of sympathy towards his meal, though he swiftly brushed the thoughts away. If he didn't eat the lion someone else undoubtedly would, especially with how easy he was to overpower. Sam's two previous experiences as a pred were likely either freak accidents or the results of friends peer-pressuring him into eating an already-caught prey. Then again they might have been pricy cloned prey, maybe as a birthday present. If Sam were lucky someone might pay to have him re-formed. Rho himself had granted such a gift to meals before on rare occasions, usually if he felt they'd served as good inspiration for a successful novel.

At the moment, though, Rho needed to finish swallowing and digesting the lion before he even entertained the notion of bringing him back. Only Sam's head was still sticking out of Rho's mouth, and a few long gulps were more than enough to seal him away for the foreseeable future. Rho grinned and sighed in content as he felt Sam sliding down his gullet and into his stomach, the zebra's swollen gut resting firmly on the floor, wobbling. He carefully slipped his hooves beneath his stuffed belly and lifted, managing to stand back up with quite some effort. Though Sam wasn't shouting or begging like many prey were prone to, he was still shifting around defiantly, making standing a chore.

“Damn, you *really* hit the spot Sam!” Rho said with glee as he squeezed and jiggled his gut. “Honestly I'd tip you for a job well done but, well...”

Sam didn't seem very comforted about his quality as a meal, his panicked wiggles causing Rho's middle to sway.

“Anyway, I don't have time for long goodbyes and tomorrow's gonna be a busy day, so it's time for you to get digesting!” The zebra's tone was a tad bit cheerful for the morbidity of his words.

Of course the mention of digestion didn't sit well with Sam, whose struggles increased marginally. Rho simply responded with a drawn-out belch that drastically reduced his meal's oxygen supply and space. Now sporting a tighter, better restrained belly, Rho slowly waddled over to his table to retrieve a digestion accelerant. The convenient medication would enable him to fully process Same up to four times faster than he could naturally, negating one of the major drawbacks of eating another person whole. Gassiness was a common side-effect, but not a bothersome one considering he'd be snoozing while the lion gurgled. Delighted in the prospect of waking up the next morning fatter with barely a trace of his massive meal left, Rho swiftly popped a pill and continued onward to the bed,

wrangling his lively gut onto it and sprawling out.

A couple precision *braaaaaaaaps* and *uorrrrrrrrrps* purged the last of the air from his stomach, silencing the weakened Sam just before the digestive juices kicked into high gear. The echoing *gurrrrrrrrgles* of a fresh prey had always been soothing to Rho, and a few simple adjustments were all it took to amplify their sounds till he could hear every bubbling detail clearly. He toyed with his belly a little to provoke longer and messier noises, a welcome distraction as he yawned and neared the point of passing out. Eventually his eyelids closed, a tiny burp escaping his lips as he fell into a deep, relaxing sleep. Tomorrow he'd have to officially deal with the fact he'd stuffed himself with a crew member, not to mention the planned video chat with his agent and attempting to make progress on a new story. For now, though, he was free to simply overindulge and continue proving that zebras could be just as voracious as anyone else in the vast expanse of space.