

A Swell Risk

By: IndigoRho

"You're just being paranoid, there's no way that drink is a berry potion."

Two charr stood over a small crate of unlabeled bottles. One—hefty with a bright pink mohawk—was frowning at the bottles in disdain. His companion—a much slimmer charr with gray fur and a black flowing mane—appeared far less worried.

"The liquid's too glowy to be anything else. It'll probably turn you into a massive blueberry with a single sip!" the pink-haired charr insisted.

"Raf the stuff's yellow, it'd obviously turn you into a lemon instead," the other teased. "But honestly it's unhealthy to assume everything's gonna make you swell up."

"You know how often I end up getting berried, August," Raf grumbled in response. "If you're so convinced it's innocent then why don't you drink it yourself!"

August laughed and picked up a bottle at random. "Of course I'm gonna drink one, we came here searching for something to drink after all!"

The charr popped open the stopper and took a long sniff. "Smells fruity at least. Maybe we're lucky and it's a cider."

"It's a damn trap is what it is," Raf huffed. "The engineers never mark their potions."

August was thoroughly ignoring his grumpy friend and already taking a long swig of the mysterious brew. When he finally pulled the bottle from his lips he let out a satisfied sigh. "It *is* cider! Apple cider. I've been craving this stuff for weeks!"

While he chugged the rest of it Raf still regarded it with suspicion. "Whatever. Maybe that one was a dud. The next one definitely won't be, though."

"Suit yourself, I'm fine having all these wonderful bottles to my—*uorrrrrrp*—self." August patted his chest. "Oof, excuse me."

Raf's gaze shifted to August's snout, which now had a faint yellow tint to it. The color swiftly grew more vibrant, until it looked just like the bottled liquid. The yellow spread outwards from August's nose, wiping away his usual shades of gray, black, and white.

"There are yellow apples, right?" Raf asked.

"Huh? Oh, yeah. They're my favorite," August said as he contemplated a second bottle. "I really gotta find out where this stuff came from, I can actually still taste it on my tongue!"

"Well I think you're about to have more of it than you know what to do with."

August gave his friend a confused look, until he followed the other charr's gaze down to his arms. He nearly jumped when he saw that his fur had turned yellow, and a look behind him revealed that his tail was the same color. Berrification was always preceded by such change.

The now yellow charr was flustered, not sure how to react at first. "Uh, well, I guess you won that bet."

"Yay." Raf rolled his eyes. "That's what you get for drinking strange potions!"

"Oh whatever becoming a berry's not *that* bad," August replied. His flat middle was beginning to swell, his vest stretching to contain it. He'd gotten his clothing especially enchanted to handle such incidents.

"You only say that because you're a weirdo who likes being huge!" Raf gave August's new small belly an accusing poke.

August shrugged. "But it's *fun* Raf! You get to feel powerful and if you get big enough you can roll and bounce and stuff." His grins only seemed to frustrate his friend.

"Well it's definitely not fun getting immobilized for hours or having everyone use you like a ball." Past embarrassing moments flashed in Raf's mind, the charr blushing in anger at the thoughts.

"Raf you're an elemental, you could always just summon an elemental or two to roll you to safety. Not my fault you always end up in a daze when you get spherical." August smiled.

His friend blushed harder, not willing to continue the conversation.

By then August's belly was a fairly large, sloshing ball. He could feel his hide stretching, the pool of apple cider bubbling within. Tail swishing happily, the charr gripped his gut with both paws and began rubbing it. August genuinely hadn't thought the bottles were a berry potion, but he wasn't the least bit disappointed in being wrong. If anything he was even more interested in figuring out who had made them, if only to obtain a personal supply of his own for future fun.

August shook and slapped his swelling belly. "I'll be even wider than you soon, Raf!" he teased.

Raf responded with a frown, unable to understand how the other charr could enjoy such a silly thing. At least he wasn't the one inflating for once

August continued playing with his ballooning belly until his arms began swelling with cider as well. His whole body had a puffy look to it, with his immense cider-filled belly at the center of it all. The sheer weight of all the cider had made even waddling impossible, leaving August standing still with his arms outstretched, the charr simply waiting for the transformation to be complete. His face was as round as his middle, a wide grin in between puffy cheeks.

As his hide was stretched thin he felt the nagging distraction of his intense internal pressure. Those who didn't inflate often could be overwhelmed by it entirely, put into a daze and barely able to comprehend the world around them. Some looked sleepy, others drunk, but all who fell to the pressure daze were equally vulnerable. August had expanded enough to resist the sensation for the most part, though he still had to concentrate a fair amount to prevent himself from getting loopy.

August's paws and head finally sunk into his spherical body, the bubbling coming to a gentle end. He was almost completely round and bright yellow, his body mostly covered up by his clothing but not perfectly. The gaps between his buttons were wide and a thick strip of his middle was left exposed to show off his yellow sheen. His tail was still wagging wildly, a smile on his face.

"Sure you don't want to join in?" August asked with a laugh, wobbling gently in the process.

"No thanks. I'm not in the mood to be rolled into a damn press in order to get juiced," Raf said.

"You don't *have* to use the press. A spigot in the middle works just as well, and then everyone else can enjoy the juice on tap!" August said, delighting in the way Raf blushed in response. "Speaking of which, I'm gonna go find some barrels to empty myself into. Don't want to waste any cider!"

As a mesmer August was adapt at making illusory clones of himself. In a flash two appeared from thin air, purple-tinted copies of the charr. Unfortunately they were a bit too spot on. The twin spherical clones wobbled about, just as confused as their maker was. In between them was the unlucky Raf, pressed hard on both sides by the massive illusions.

"Oops," August chuckled.

He let Raf remain squished for a few moments more before finally dispersing the failed clones. The next batch were nice and slim, resembling August at his usual size. The pair each moved to opposite sides of August and carefully pushed him onto his back. August waved goodbye to Raf with one of his puffy paws as his clones dutifully rolled him away, letting out a few giggles along the way.

Raf let out a frustrated sigh as he watched his friend go. His thirst hadn't gone away in the slightest, and without realizing it he grabbed one of the remaining potions and took a swig, realizing too late what he'd just done. With a scowl he dropped the bottle, his nose already turning yellow.

"Damn it!"

August didn't hear his friend's curse, too delighted by his own immense size to care. Being a berry was fun...