

The Professor's Adjustments

By: IndigoRho

Paul should've known something was wrong the moment he discovered he as the first one to arrive at the weekly meeting of the university's literary journal. He was *never* there first. At the very least Andy and Mike should've been at a computer, already discussing some new layout idea. The deer had been in such a rush to get there from the other side of campus he merely breathed a sigh of relief and plopped down in a chair.

As the minutes passed, though, he couldn't help but realize how alone he was. Andy and Mike still weren't there, not even wandering in after nabbing something from elsewhere in the English building. Rob didn't arrive, swearing he'd have been on time if his last lecture didn't run long again or the elevators hadn't been so slow or *something* else. And Ian never came in ten minutes late, making zero excuses and shrugging off Andy's toothless threats about eating him if it happened again.

For a moment Paul thought he'd missed a text about the meeting getting canceled, or he'd managed to come on the wrong day or time. But no, the others should've been there—*someone* should've been there.

The deer was on the verge texting Andy when the door finally opened. Paul looked over, eyes widening a little as he recognized—barely—the faculty adviser to the literary journal: Professor August.

Professor August was known for being portly, the gray lion carrying a sizable ball gut with pride. Today, however, he looked massive. His belly was so large the sweater vest he wore didn't come close to covering it, reaching to just about where his belly-button likely was. The dress shirt beneath it was tucked in but struggling, its buttons so strained Paul swore one might pop off at any second. There were large gaps in between the buttons, revealing fur-covered pudge.

Paul's gaze locked onto the Professor's middle, watching it bounce with every step as he waddled into the room.

"Evening Paul, glad to see you could make it," August said, cheerfully. He didn't seem to notice everyone else was missing. Instead of taking a seat like he usually did, the Professor simply leaned against a desk facing Paul, letting his gut take center stage.

"Y-Yeah. Never missed a meeting," Paul mumbled back. The Professor's sudden and significant gains still left him stunned. He'd seen him in class only two days prior. There weren't many ways to gain so much weight in such little time, and they all left Paul a little nervous.

Professor August rested one paw on the desk behind him and the other on top of his gut, idly tapping it with his fingers like a drum. "I like that dedication—it's what the literary journal needs to—*urrrp*—thrive. Excuse me. But yes, today's meeting is going to be all about the future of the journal."

Paul glanced at the other chairs, all empty with the mysterious absence of the rest of the team. Professor August still hadn't brought up the fact, even seemed ready to begin the meeting despite no one else being there. Usually the Professor just sat back and let Andy run everything, merely offering advice if asked. Everything was so strange, and Paul's thoughts kept returning to August's belly, as if it were the answer.

It wasn't a secret that Professor August ate people—most of the professors *and* students at the university did. In his head Paul tried to calculate how fattening the others on the literary journal would be, how many pounds they would hypothetically put on someone's waistline. Blind guesswork, but the answer could decide whether or not he bolted for the door in a few seconds.

Meanwhile, Professor August was grinning as he watched the wheels turn in his student's head. He assumed Paul was swiftly realizing the reason he was the only one who'd shown up at the meeting. Why his mostly punctual peers were nowhere to be found. Why he'd gained close to a hundred pounds over the weekend.

Teaching was one of the Professor's passions, but so was eating. He adored a full stomach and a

belly with heft. In his freshman year of college he'd spent more time eating classmates than studying and nearly ended up flunking out in a professor's gut. Of course August had learned to balance his priorities better—and added that professor to his waistline by junior year—but his gluttony had never faded.

If Professor August thought a student wasn't meeting their potential he'd gobble them up. Sometimes he ambushed them on campus, others he lured into his office for a meeting they'd never leave. He'd even eaten one at their weekend job once.

Unfortunately for the literary journal, the Professor had felt their last couple issues were uninspired, below par. Andy had clearly been a senior going through the motions, sticking to his head editor position to pad his resume. He hadn't been keeping the rest of the team in line or trying to innovate. His meeting with the university budget committee had been so low-effort August had been forced to pull a few valuable favors to convince them to provide even minimal support.

As such, Professor August had taken great pleasure in eating him after class. Andy had been plump and juicy, barely putting up a fight once he was caught off-guard. They'd incorrectly assumed they were too valuable for their Professor to ever eat. A cramped stomach shattered that delusion rather quickly.

August hadn't even waited to savor his meal before moving on to the next. Ian—who Andy should've dealt with months before—always took the same route back to his fraternity after classes ended. Speed waddling to an isolated portion of the path had nearly exhausted the Professor, his gut saying wildly as Andy squirmed in desperation. His efforts paid off, and he arrived with plenty of time to spare just as Andy faded.

Thanks to Professor August's bulging belly, pinning Ian to a wall was easy, their shouts for help muffled and their lean body slurped up like a noodle. August had plopped down on a bench after that, groaning and massaging his massive gut for close to an hour as it began to break down the two tasty students within. Just thinking about it made him unconsciously rub his middle now, which seemed to make Paul more nervous.

Mike and Rob had been saved for the day after. August had scheduled an adviser session with Mike beforehand, and they were sliding and kicking their way down his gullet within a minute of arriving at the office. Since he was roommates with Rob, all the Professor had to do then was grab Mike's keys and waddle over to their apartment.

The baffled look on Rob's face when his Professor showed up with a lumpy gut had been priceless. The ensuing struggle had wrecked the living room, though. If Rob had put as much effort into the literary journal as he had trying to fend off the Professor he never would've ended up as lion pudge.

Even for August the two days of gluttony were overindulgent, four students churned into layers of soft fat. He was *still* occasionally belching up random bits of clothing and bone, including Rob's stained watch only moments before he'd stepped into the room. Whether or not he'd be adding a fifth course to his feast would depend on the next few minutes.

“To be blunt, Paul, the literary journal is in desperate need of change, so I've begun a rebuilding phase.” Professor August pushed away from the desk, which groaned in relief once unburdened by the lion's weight. Paul cowered on instinct, but didn't flee. “Andy understood and graciously stepped down. The others also agreed to take on new roles...elsewhere.” August couldn't help but give his belly a gentle pat. “Now making the journal a completely clean slate might be a bit too extreme, but it might also be exactly what it needs. “Of course, I'd *love* to hear what you have to offer the new team.”

August let his gut drop on the desk Paul was at so it took up nearly his entire field of view. The deer sunk back into his chair, listening to the growls coming from within. He knew exactly what the Professor meant by his question, and gulped.

Two hours later the door to the literary journal's office finally opened again, and Professor August waddled out. The lower buttons of his dress shirt had burst off, exposing a good deal of his much, much rounder middle. Aside from the occasional jiggle the mass was still. Ominous gurgles and sloshes echoed out of it, and August's cheeks puffed up as he muffled a small burp. There were a couple odd lumps at the bottom of his sagging gut but nothing overtly suspicious about it. Besides its size, of course.

“Looks like I'll be starting the journal again from scratch. What a shame~” the Professor chuckled, adjusting his sweater vest some. “Oh well, I'll just have to be a bit more picky about who I select, maybe be more proactive with motivating. If that fails I can always introduce them to their predecessors.”

In a cheerful mood despite all the work ahead of him, Professor August waddled off towards his next class, leaving behind a room empty aside from a pair of snapped off antlers and a discarded backpack.