

Columbia State 12: The Importance of Observation

By: IndigoRho

The weather outside was wonderful. Clear skies, brisk temperature, though thankfully warmer than the previous few days, and practically no wind at all. Columbia State University's Fall Fair couldn't have asked for better conditions. And neither could Liam. The portly red panda was slowly making his way towards the Fair with no real sense of urgency, enjoying the relative peace of the rest of campus, and keeping a sharp eye out for anyone who looked even remotely appetizing. His flabby belly was growling impatiently, eager for a hardy meal. Liam had fed it a fox less than a month ago, but knew how demanding it could get during his periods of active predation. He would have no problem at all finding a decent-sized prey at the fair, though.

As he walked behind the library, listening to the chaotic noises of the nearing fair crowd, Liam eyed a gryphon further ahead, loitering in the walkway. The avian was definitely from an odd parentage, his bird half from a blue jay, maybe, and his feline half from a snow leopard. This resulted in his coloration being an unusual blend of white, black, and bright blue. The gryphon had also not been fortunate enough to inherit true wings, making due with a longer row of feathers on his underarms. Liam swore he had seen the guy before, somewhere, though maybe he was just unique-looking enough to stand out in a crowd. Regardless, Liam didn't give him much of a second glance; the gryphon was a bit too scrawny to satisfy his hunger.

The gryphon, on the other hand, was completely oblivious to Liam. He was meandering around a small patch of the path, splitting his attention between a lit cigarette and his smart phone. His baseball cap was marked with the symbols of his fraternity, Tau Tau Psi, and turned backwards at the moment. Thoroughly distracted, he failed to realize his next step would put him on a collision course with the red panda. Liam lurched to the side as the gryphon abruptly bumped into his shoulder. Expecting an apology, Liam was fairly displeased to instead hear the avian say "Watch where you're going, bro!" without ever looking up from his phone. Liam was suddenly far more willing to indulge in a light meal.

Sneaking up from behind, Liam flicked the gryphon's hat into the air, initiating a series of maneuvers with well-practiced ease. A hard kick to the shins caused the gryphon to cry out in pain, dropping his phone and losing his cigarette, and sent him to his knees. Still behind him, Liam grabbed his prey's neck with one paw, forcing him to look up, straight into a widening maw. Liam engulfed most of the gryphon's head in one go, and was already working on the shoulders a couple quick gulps later. The gryphon desperately tried to fight back, but soon found his arms pinned to his sides. A futile attempt to stand or even slide away was thwarted by a painful stomp to each thigh, too. Having originally dismissed the gryphon outright, Liam was pleasantly surprised to discover how delicious he actually tasted. The red panda's mouth watered as he savored the few bits of exposed flesh, feather, and fur of his meal, working his tongue to and fro. Now more than ever he lamented how scrawny the gryphon was.

More and more of the gryphon disappeared from sight, sliding down Liam's gullet and swelling his already round belly. While the pair had essentially been alone behind the library, Liam decided to pick up the pace, swallowing like he actually had somewhere to be. He released his grasp on the gryphon's legs early just to feel them thrash about in desperation. It was always amusing when prey thought that would do anything to help their situation. After a few last, deep swallows, Liam was closing his mouth, tossing an unwanted pair of shoes and socks to the ground.

Liam gave his distended belly a happy pat, ignoring the struggles within. Instead, he picked the gryphon's discarded phone and hat up off the ground. The phone case contained a couple of the gryphon's credit cards, always a welcome bonus. He also recognized the fraternity symbols on the hat, and suddenly remembered where he'd seen his meal before.

"I knew you looked familiar!" Liam told his stomach. "You post some half-decent vore videos on the same site I do, always rambling on about Tau Tau Psi pride or whatever. Huh, small world." The

gryphon didn't seem to care much for the praise, though Liam put on the hat, treating it like a trophy.

Thankful the mystery of the gryphon's identity wouldn't be lingering on the back of his mind the whole day, Liam decided to move on. The problem with indulging early, though, was that most of the furs at the fair would avoid him the second they noticed his squirming belly. Fortunately, an unsecured faucet jutted out of the library wall nearby, it even had a hose still attached! Probably forgotten by a booth volunteer or something, not that he really cared why. Liam held the hose's end in his mouth and turned the faucet as much as he could. The rush of cold tap water caught him off-guard at first, spilling out of the corners of his mouth onto the ground, but he recovered, greedily gulping down the stream. His meal didn't appreciate the shower, and struggled a bit more furiously. As more and more water poured into the red panda, his belly rounded out. In a matter of moments the gryphon was no longer distinguishable, and Liam turned off the faucet.

Liam gave his bloated belly a playful shake, satisfied that it maintained its false shape well enough. Just as he was about to leave, though, his newly acquired phone made a loud text alert noise. Out of simple curiosity he checked the message. *Leon I'm in front of library. Where ya at bro?* Liam grinned deviously, quickly putting the phone on silent and sliding it into a pocket. He began waddling at a brisk pace towards the front of the library, his meal—apparently named Leon—sloshing about. The library's entrance faced right into the loud and bustling Fall Fair, and Liam had to squeeze his way through the crowd, taking great pleasure every time a passerby accidentally bumped him hard enough to feel his prey. After a couple long minutes of searching, Liam finally spotted his next target. Sticking close to the front doors and all alone was another oddly patterned blue gryphon. From a distance he didn't appear any younger than the first, but he was definitely fatter, probably only ten or twenty pounds lighter than Liam on empty. The red panda licked his lips, and made his way closer.

Breaking through the crowd, Liam put on his best innocent smile and called out to the new gryphon. “Hey, looking for Leon?”

The gryphon heard him clearly, initially looking him over with well-deserved suspicion. Then he recognized Liam's stolen Tau Tau Psi hat, and grinned widely. “Yeah, hey! I'm Leon's brother, Marco!”

Liam couldn't believe his luck. A hat and a name were all it took to gain his next meal's trust, apparently. “Pleasure to meet you, Marco.” Such a pleasure. “My name's Liam. Leon sent me to find you.”

Marco looked a bit confused, but not nearly enough. “Where's my brother? We were just texting a while ago.”

“Oh man, it was hilarious. Right after he sent you the last message, this deer chick walks right by us. Leon takes one look at that tail and 'gulp', one less doe on campus!” Liam had remembered Leon's online videos predominantly featured women, and hoped the story would pass.

To Liam's joy, Marco started cracking up. “Figures. He complains so much about not having a steady girlfriend, then eats half the women he thinks are hot.”

“Yeah, you're telling me.” Quite literally, in this case. “Anyway, Leon headed back to the House to enjoy his meal, so you're stuck with me now!”

“Awesome, I really wanted to meet as many of the other guys in the frat as I could while I visited.” Marco appeared genuinely excited. “I can't wait to join the frat next month, I'm so happy the transfer to Columbia State went through all right.”

It was time for a little information gathering. “Well we'll be happy to have ya, Tau Tau Psi's always in need of new predators.” Especially now that one had transferred to Liam's stomach. “You any good at hunting?”

“I'm getting there!” Marco insisted. “I've been practicing while stuck at community college, pretty easy pickins'. Most of the students are timid furs who were too afraid of vore to apply to State.” He patted his soft belly. “I've managed to build a bit of a reputation there myself, actually. I'm thinking about overindulging like crazy my final week there, see how many I can eat.”

Liam was growing fond of the gryphon, at least in the way one might become fond of a freshly baked pie. "Ha! You can never eat too many, Marco!" Liam slapped his belly hard, creating a noise that reflected the water within. "I'm still digesting this meal from last night, but I'm eager to fill it again before the day's over!" Only half a lie. Leon's struggles had renewed, though. Besides the prodding, Liam assumed the gryphon had managed to hear his brother's name, and was attempting to get noticed, either in hopes of getting rescued or possibly sparing Marco the same fate. Unfortunately for him, Liam's gut remained smooth.

"Oh man, that's awesome! Liam, would you be able to take me hunting today? I really want to bulk up, I'm still so small." Marco squeezed his large belly in dismay.

"Today's not the best day for that, sadly." A wonderful, horrible idea suddenly entered his head. "Because you get to take part in a secret initiation ritual exclusive to the family members of Tau Tau Psi members."

Marco stood by in awe. "I...I do?"

Liam grinned. "You most certainly do. Now, we all know you can fill your belly with prey, that's just nature. But...a true Tau Tau Psi member can also fill their belly with a prey's weight in regular old food."

"Leon's never mentioned that before," Marco said.

"Good. It *is* supposed to be a secret, after all."

The simple answer seemed enough for Marco, who was growing excited for the challenge.

"This is going to be so awesome! I can handle food, easy!"

Liam was even more ecstatic. Marco was pretty much willing to accept anything he told him as truth. He stealthily swallowed some fresh air for his original meal. Might as well let Leon enjoy his last couple hours of life with his brother.

"I'm so glad you feel that way, Marco." This was like an early Christmas gift. "Now, we won't be doing anything too complicated. We're just going to hit as many food stalls and tables as we can, and you'll stuff yourself silly! The Frat's paying for your feast, so feel free to grab whatever you want in as large a quantity as you want!"

The pair slipped into the crowd, Marco dutifully following Liam's lead. Liam would choose a stall and stand aside, letting the young gryphon choose his fill, and paying for everything with a slide of Leon's credit card. He even held anything Marco couldn't hold on his own, passing him more when able. For Marco, the entire experience was amazing. Until the end of high school, he'd been incredibly scrawny, and always felt weak. Friends joked that he wasn't filling enough to be hunted or that he'd probably pop if he ate anything bigger than a sandwich. Then his older brother had joined Tau Tau Psi, and packed on the pounds hunting. That was when Marco realized what needed to be done. He managed to eat his first prey half-way through senior year, the second a month later, then a third. By the time he walked down the aisle at graduation, gown strained from a meal the night before, he had more than doubled his weight. No one made fun of him anymore, and his friends learned to grow wary anytime they heard his stomach rumbling.

There was so much food! Kebobs, scones, hot dogs, burgers, gyros, fried *everything*. With each new stall Marco's mouth watered, and his belly bulged a little more. Liam was with him every step of the way, encouraging him with enthusiastic pep talks and the occasional mocking dare. The voracious red panda watched his future meal's progress with glee. Marco was stuffing himself wonderfully, never complaining, always trying to exceed his limit. Eventually, though, even he began to slow down. After a particularly bountiful visit to a fudge stand, Marco was forced to catch his breath.

Marco sat on a bench, cradling his swollen belly. "Aw man, I don't know if I can eat another bite," he said in dismay.

Liam took a long, hard look at the gryphon. Marco was probably fattened enough to serve as the main course, but he was feeling greedy. "Well, Marco. If you're willing to try, I know a sure-fire way to increase your stomach capacity in times like this."

"You do?" Marco asked, eagerly.

"Yep, and it's fairly simple. Wait here." Liam stepped away for a moment, purchasing a trio of sodas in the largest size available. He set two besides the bench, holding onto the third. "Ok, I'm gonna need you to swallow all of this soda, preferably as quickly as possible."

Marco looked at him, confused. "How does that help?"

"It's all about carbonation, Marco," Liam said with a smile. "Once you've drunk the soda, I'll give ya a good shake, and the carbonation will expand your stomach with gas. It'll be rough at first, but, as long as you don't belch out too much of the gas, you should be able to squeeze a bit more in there without feeling much fuller."

Marco didn't need any more convincing, gulping down the three sodas in quick succession, despite the painful pressure in his stomach. Liam then grabbed a hold of the gryphon's belly and shook it back and forth, trying to disguise his own bliss. Again Marco groaned, holding in the urge to burp out all the gas building up inside him. He spent a couple minutes afterward letting his stomach settle, and carefully stood back up, ready for more. Liam grinned, ignoring a sudden surge of movement within his own, stuffed belly. Leon had been relatively calm for a while, but was now struggling nearly as aggressively as when he'd first been eaten. The pool of water in his stomach must finally be growing acidic. Soon his skin would begin to burn and redden, and his body would grow numb. But not before suffering an excruciating amount of pain. Liam swallowed some more air.

As the gorging continued, Marco became more interested in Liam himself. "Hey Liam, I know that with most preds, their weight changes a ton from so much hunting," he asked in between hot dogs. "Do you have a preferred size?"

"Oh most definitely," Liam replied, handing the gryphon a basket of fries. "I absolutely adore being fat, well above three hundred pounds when possible. I love looking down at my belly and knowing each roll was fueled by one of my prey."

"So you're not even at your average weight?"

"No, but I'll be there very, very soon," Liam answered, eying Marco's exposed belly. "When I'm regaining after a predation break, I tend to target fatter prey, so many calories."

Marco was practically shoveling fries into his beak. "I know what you mean, that's been my approach so far, too."

"I must admit, there have also been times I've personally fattened my prey, just to make them more appetizing," Liam teased.

"Ooh, that sounds fun," Marco said, obliviously, swallowing the last of his fries. "I'd love to fatten someone with you one day."

Liam had to make sure he wasn't smiling *too* widely. "Sounds like a plan. I feel you'd be a natural at it."

A while later, Marco had finally, truly reached his limit. The gryphon was spread out on a bus stop bench out of sight of the fair, barely conscious. His belly had ballooned to an almost comical degree, and while he didn't look like he'd eaten someone, he likely would have been mistaken for inflated. Liam stood nearby, ogling his handiwork with glee.

"Well Marco, I'd say your initiation was an astounding success!" Liam said.

Marco groaned a moment before responding. "Ohhh. I...I've never felt so full in my entire life."

"It'll be worth it, in the end. Now, another member of the frat is on his way to pick us up. You'll be able to enjoy a nice, smooth ride back to the house." Of course, he'd be spending most of that ride in a far more uncomfortable place.

"I can't wait to show my brother how much I ate. I hope I made him proud."

"I'm sure you did. And don't worry, you'll be seeing your brother again very, very soon."

A bulky, older model van rolled to a stop besides them, and a deer hopped out.

Liam smiled at his friend. "Good, our ride's here. Marco, this is Aaron, another member of Tau Tau Psi. He's our designated driver."

Aaron looked at Liam's belly, then Marco's, before giving his greetings. "Nice to meet you, Marco."

Marco managed a pained hello in return.

Liam and Aaron helped Marco up, walking him to the back of the van. Liam opened the doors, revealing the van to be mostly empty, besides a worn mattress and some scattered junk. Marco was carefully slid onto the mattress and joined by Liam, who closed the doors behind him. Aaron returned to the front seat and started the engine, driving away at a relaxed pace.

"How do you like the ride?" Liam asked.

Marco leaned up against the back of the seat, still sitting on the mattress. "It's...uh, different," he replied, breathing heavily.

"Yeah, inherited it from an ex-boyfriend. We used to go camping in it. However, I've found it serves as a great, private place to rest off a meal. Or eat one."

Marco didn't respond, looking on the verge of passing out.

"Alright Marco, I think it's time I reunited you with your brother," Liam grinned, and began gently removing Marco's shoes.

"Huh, what are you doing?" Marco asked.

Liam carefully slid Marco's exposed paws into his mouth, and began slowly crawling forwards.

Marco was having trouble thinking straight, and couldn't understand what Liam was doing.

"Liam, is this another secret initiation?"

Liam continued, quickly swallowing past Marco's ankles, then up to his knees. Marco suddenly considered the possibility Liam wasn't just messing around, and attempted to struggle, to no avail. He was so overstuffed full of food he could barely move, let alone fight. The horrible realization of what had happened finally hit him. There was no secret initiation, it was just a lie to fatten him up. And he'd believed it without question. But why was Liam doing this to him? Liam was a member of Tau Tau Psi, knew his brother by name, why would he decide to eat him? Did Liam and Leon have some sort of rivalry? Was Marco being eaten out of revenge?

As Marco tried to make sense of the day's events, his paws slid into Liam's stomach, brushing against something unknown and then almost immediately dipping into water. Water that quickly began to sting. Marco's eyes went wide, and a burst of adrenaline renewed his struggling. Liam wasn't slowing down, quickly approaching Marco's mouth-watering belly, submerging more and more of the gryphon in the boiling pool of his stomach. The burning sensation on Marco's paws and legs was growing worse. His eyes filled with tears and he began crying out in pain, begging for Liam to stop, begging him for mercy. Liam was too busy savoring the gryphon's belly to care.

The taste was incredible. No unsavory chemicals tarnishing the flesh and feathers, and he could feel the softness of the gryphon's fat around the engorged stomach. Liam ran his tongue along every exposed inch he could, soaking most of Marco's belly in saliva. By the time his gut was finally swallowed, Marco was delirious from pain. Liam hadn't bothered securing his arms, and the gryphon wildly tried grabbing on to anything he could think of, anything that might save him from his agonizing fate. He was sobbing uncontrollably as Liam swallowed up to his neck, hurting too much to even beg at that point. Liam greedily pulled the rest of his prey's head into his maw, quieting the van. Marco's arms were still sticking from the red panda's mouth, outstretched and twitching. Liam leisurely slurped them up.

Marco's head finally slipped into Liam's stomach, remaining just above the pool of water and digestive acids that burned the rest of his body. As his arms joined him with a stinging splash, he felt around his hellish prison, trying to distance himself from the motionless, seemingly-intact prey he had bumped into on the way down. Unfortunately, his eyes gradually adjusted to the darkness, and the outline beside him became recognizable.

As Liam carefully rolled over onto his back, the struggles within his stomach grew greatly, accompanied by a scream so loud it managed to startle him. He gazed upon the swollen, shaking form

of his belly in sheer bliss. He couldn't believe he'd actually been able to trick his prey into fattening itself. It was the kind of accomplishment he'd be able to gloat about for years to come. And on top of that, eating two brothers in the same day? Liam would have preferred the gap in between the meals to be shorter, in order to enjoy their combined struggles, but life wasn't always perfect. At the very least, Marco was doing a wonderful job massaging his belly from within. He swallowed a few more mouthfuls of fresh air to extend the pleasure.