

Columbia State 31: A Dangerous Mourning

By: IndigoRho

Jordan struggled to keep his thoughts together. Only an hour ago the leopard had been lugging garbage to the curb, eager to finish his chores for the Tau Tau Psi fraternity so he could relax and enjoy the weekend. Then Xavier had snuck up on him. Xavier was an officer in the frat and the older brother of Jordan's friend Xander, but he also had a history of eating any feline he considered cute. Despite a desperate attempt to fatten himself up and escape the ravenous otter's radar, Jordan had been terrified to discover his rapid weight gains actually turned on Xavier even more. Worse yet, Xavier had realized the leopard's deep desire to be controlled, especially when the risks were high. In the weeks since, Jordan had been teased and influenced by Xavier frequently. Today felt different, though.

Xavier had leaned into him from behind, an opened bottle of vodka in one paw and Jordan's right lovehandle in the other. He'd only said one word, "drink", before shoving the bottle past his lips and forcing the leopard's head up. The cascade of liquor had burned Jordan's tongue, but he'd had no other option than to chug it all down so he wouldn't choke, squirming in the domineering otter's grasp the entire time. As horrible as it was, he'd still been aroused by it all. Jordan wasn't allowed to stop till the bottle had been drained completely, coughing and gasping for air while Xavier groped his belly and told him he was a "good kitty". After that Jordan had been roughly led away from the frat house and deep into the nearby campus park.

"Just a little further, kitten," Xavier said, an arm firmly wrapped around Jordan. There'd been a nearly perpetual grin on his face since ambushing Jordan earlier, and his words reeked of the same vodka clouding Jordan's judgment. "So nice of you to join me on my walk."

Jordan groaned, his head swirling with each guided step. "P-please Xavier, we need to go home, I...I don't feel good..." He doubted he'd ever drunk so much in one sitting before.

"Don't worry, we'll head back soon enough. I just need you to see something first," Xavier said, before guiding the pair down a side trail.

Jordan had made a habit of avoiding the campus park as often as possible, knowing its reputation as a hunting spot for preds and a favored patrolling ground of the more voracious members of campus security. He'd once heard it referred to as a "Freshman Buffet", and some of the upperclassmen in the frat insisted a third of the new students who entered the park left as struggling bulges in a pred's stomach. There were so many rumors and legends about the place that Jordan didn't know what to believe. Instead, he simply avoided it all costs, having managed to never step foot in the park until today. So far he'd only seen a couple harmless students, no menacing security guards, and a lot of pleasant scenery he'd probably have enjoyed if he weren't nearly blackout drunk.

The trail Xavier brought them down was far rougher than the previous ones, the pathway cracked by tree roots and surrounded by woods. Aside from a few distant car noises, Jordan could barely believe he was still in the city, let alone in the middle of campus. Drunk and hardly able to walk on his own, Jordan genuinely feared Xavier's intentions. Was the otter just luring him away to eat him? No, Xavier would have simply coerced Jordan into his room if he wanted to eat him, just like all the felines before him. Not to mention the fact that Jordan was a solid hundred pounds fatter than Xavier. Waddling out of the park with the overweight leopard digesting in his belly could very well be impossible. Then again, even while sober Jordan wasn't sure what Xavier wanted out of him.

After only a few minutes of walking the path came to an end, opening into a small clearing. A brick wall stood straight ahead, an artificial waterfall pouring down half its surface and flowing through a thin channel before emptying into a round fountain. Two benches flanked the fountain. Some of the wall's bricks had crumbled to dust, the fountain's edge was chipped and shattered in various places, and the purple paint of the benches was flaking away. The entire enclave was obviously underused and poorly maintained. Jordan wasn't too surprised considering the park was used more for hunting than relaxation—not to mention how out of the way it was. Few would be comfortable attempting to enjoy

nature when a pred could easily wander by and block their only exit.

Xavier brought them to the edge of the brick wall's dry side, letting go of Jordan so suddenly the leopard almost toppled over. His smile was gone, and he stared aimlessly into the underbrush. "I've...I've never brought someone here with me before. Well, it's only been a couple years so I guess I never really had the chance to."

Jordan braced himself on the wall, thankful to finally have a moment to rest.

"When I was a freshman I used to hunt here a lot with my boyfriend Marlo and our roommate Stephen. We stumbled upon this place while chasing a particular juicy meal, and considered it our good luck charm after that." Xavier was still looking towards the dirt more than Jordan. "We'd drag prey here for picnics, it was nice. Then one day we noticed a fat goat security guard head down the trail and followed after."

Jordan was barely paying attention, simply trying to remain standing.

"Three of us against one goat, it should have been the easiest meal of the year. I got tossed headfirst into the stone side of the fountain before I could even finish shit-talking the guy." Xavier ran a paw through the fur on the top of his head, stopping at a ragged scar behind his ear. "By the time I got back up, Stephen was just a bulge in the goat's gut, and Marlo was half-way down his throat, begging me to save him. Instead I ran. One of my best friends and a guy I'd dreamt of spending the rest of my life with, digested away because I was too scared to rescue them."

Even after collecting himself Jordan had remained silent, not sure of what to say. A simple "I'm sorry" would have felt shallow, but he didn't know Xavier on a personal level besides the fact he was Xander's brother and that the otter likely wanted to fuck and eat him. Of course Jordan was also too drunk to give any insightful advice at all. He was already vaguely trying to come up with a plan to escape, now deeply concerned he'd been dragged to the park as some sort of symbolic sacrifice to Xavier's dead friends. Fattened up all year under the premise of being saved, only to end up a plump offering to the quell Xavier's sorrow. In his inebriated state he even momentarily wondered if Xander had been in on the plan all along, befriend him under Xavier's orders and given one task: stuff the leopard. Maybe that's why his buddy was always so eager to feed him.

While Jordan found himself lost in an increasingly convoluted imaginary conspiracy, Xavier tossed a small bone into bushes, then stood back up and returned his attention to the leopard. He gently backed Jordan against the wall and stroked his chubby cheek before leaning into a deep kiss. Jordan blushed as Xavier's soft middle sunk into his much larger gut, and he found himself turned on in a whole new way. For the first time, his weight actually felt enjoyable. While initially he put up a half-assed resistance to Xavier's embrace, Jordan couldn't help but admit he was enjoying the intimacy, even wrapping an arm around the otter's back and pulling him in closer. Besides a brief fling with his friend Vann towards the beginning of the school year, Jordan hadn't been with anyone in well over a year. He'd forgotten how wonderful it was.

Xavier gave Jordan a moment to breathe again, grinning as he saw the satisfied look on the leopard's face. "You know, Marlo was a leopard, too. You both have the same color eyes, and I swear your spots are practically the same. He was even about your weight, in the end."

"I-Is that why you want to eat me?" Jordan asked, his paranoia breaking through the lust, if only briefly.

Xavier laughed. "I'd still want to eat you even if you were a lion or a tiger or a tabby. I've thought about it so often, how I'd take you up to my room while Xan's distracted, exhaust you in bed, and suck you right up my ass, a paw to your muzzle so no one could hear your screams for help." His tone was anything but sarcastic. "I doubt I'd be able to avoid Xan until you were fully digested. He'd track me down the moment he realized you were gone, and he'd know exactly who the misshapen lump in my middle used to be."

Jordan merely whimpered in response, terrified and uncomfortably aroused all at once.

"You'd be stupidly fattening, though," Xavier said, grabbing a pawful of the leopard's flab and

shaking it. “You'd be the fattiest thing I've ever eaten, I wouldn't be able to hunt again for months. Then again, I'd hate to be constantly reminded of the one who got away. Thankfully as an officer in the frat, I can simply order you down my throat.”

Again Xavier kissed Jordan, though once he was finished he inched his lips around the leopard's muzzle rather than step away. Jordan's eyes went wide as he felt his nose slip into the otter's maw. Every instinct told Jordan to fight back, to kick and struggle and flee, but he was far too drunk to disregard even a suicidal instruction. While he had just enough sense in him to not actively feed himself to Xavier, Jordan wasn't about to do anything to actually stop him. Another gentle gulp pressed Xavier's nose right into Jordan's forehead, giving him a painfully long moment to think about his fate before the rest of his head was completely engulfed. One paw slipped behind Jordan's shoulders while the other aggressively began feeling up his gut, teasing his belly button and making his pudge jiggle. Jordan wasn't sure if the teasing was for Xavier's benefit or merely to distract him.

The consumption progressed slowly. Xavier ran his tongue across every inch of Jordan's body, matting the leopard's fur and forcing him to giggle. Jordan had been swallowed only once in his life—during a friendly game—and he'd never endured such a thorough tasting before. He was just food to Xavier. A fresh swallow pushed his head through the esophagus and past the tight sphincter into Xavier's stomach, where the overwhelming smell of alcohol nearly caused Jordan to pass out. Only then did the reality of Jordan's predicament hit him, that once Xavier's lips sealed over his footpaws he'd be suffocated, digested, and turned into fat and bones. A full-blown panic attack ensued.

Xavier was gulping down the soft mass of Jordan's belly when the leopard abruptly shifted from timid to combative. He'd expected his meal to fight back eventually, but Xavier was still caught off-guard by the outburst, nearly falling over from a fury of wild kicks. From that point on he picked up the pace. Jordan's head was pressed into the slimy walls of his captor's stomach and soaked in stomach acids, while his legs were clamped together by the combination of Xavier's maw and paws. Every swallow trapped more of the leopard in the stomach, which gradually stretched to accommodate its immense meal. Xavier's small belly swelled and bulged, his shirt almost tearing apart, the normally smooth surface distorted by the struggles of his frantic prey.

Despite Jordan's best efforts, his fight for survival had begun too late. His squirms did little to delay his journey into Xavier's gut, and gravity was working against him. He could feel his own weight causing Xavier's belly to sag towards the ground, swaying from his struggles, filling with digestive juices. The puddle he'd initially dipped into was quickly becoming a bath, soaking through his clothes and seeping into his nostrils and ears. There wasn't a tingling sensation yet, but Jordan's mind associated the gunk with digestion so utterly that he cringed and spasmed whenever he touched it. Xavier groaned as his middle expanded to degrees he'd never experienced before. Eating someone almost a hundred pounds heavier than him was going to be a struggle, he'd known that, but after every gulp he feared he wouldn't be able to cram anymore of the leopard into his stomach.

Jordan's sneakers were torn off and dumped before his ankles ever reached Xavier's lips, and the otter breathed a garbled sigh of relief once he sent his prey's footpaws past his tongue and down the slick tube of his throat to join the rest of him. Had there not been a brick wall to brace himself on, Xavier would have toppled over from the weight of his meal. Even then his knees wobbled and he felt in danger of slipping to the ground at any moment. Regardless, step one of his plan was complete, and that was the most important thing; if anything went wrong afterward they'd be minor inconveniences at worst. While Jordan was rather convinced Xavier was intending to digest him, Xavier only wanted to enjoy the taste and feeling of having the leopard inside him for a bit. Telling the truth to Jordan would have been pointless—as he would never have believed him—and helped ensure the struggles were genuine. Bringing him to the park meant Xander wouldn't interfere, while also distracting Xavier from the anniversary of Marlo and Stephen being eaten. Now all he had to do was carefully waddle back to the frat house and let the delicious leopard free.

Xavier's belly was bouncing wildly as Jordan flailed and begged to be freed, the panic and

booze combining to make his pleas barely comprehensible. The swaying made standing on his own difficult for Xavier, but he managed to somewhat adjust to the weight and movement after a few minutes. Satisfied, Xavier took his paws off the wall and immediately redirected them to his bulging belly, which he aggressively rubbed and patted. Struggles of a terrified meal were always a delight. A tiny part of him felt remorse for tricking Jordan into believing he was about to be digested alive, though when all the fun was over Xavier would make certain to remind the leopard that the alternative was to *actually* digest him. In all honesty Jordan should be thanking him.

While relaxing on a bench and enjoying the squirms within him was incredibly tempting, Xavier understood he'd run the risk of being unable to stand back up or possibly passing out, and the digestion inhibitors he took earlier wouldn't last forever. After a few cautious steps Xavier felt comfortable walking with his added bulk, and slowly began to waddle down the pathway towards home. He felt embarrassed by how awkward his pace was; if anyone saw him they'd likely assume he was a first-time pred, instead of someone who'd been actively eating others since middle school. They'd be correct, though, in a way. All his previous meals had been much slimmer than Jordan, and he tended to take on the larger ones in bed and immediately sleep them off after, never having to deal with the majority of their weight or movement. Xavier was prone to rolling his eyes at the frat members who gorged on blubbery prey, but finally having to carry around one himself gave the otter a slight amount of respect, at least for their lifting ability.

As he clumsily strolled along the rough trail, an aggressive vibration in his pocket nearly caused Xavier to lose his balance. He pulled out his phone and groaned as he saw Xander's name and number, only answering because he knew the calls would never end otherwise. "Yo Xan, what's up?"

Xander's reply was loud and immediate. "What the fuck did you do to Jordan!"

"No clue what you're talking about, I haven't seen the tasty kitten all day," Xavier said unconvincingly. His gut lurched in response, and Xavier twitched as he heard Jordan's muffled screams for help.

"He's freaking out, spamming me with texts about how you ate him in the park! Throw him the fuck up now!"

Xavier had to hold his phone away from his ear. He'd been so tipsy and desperate to have Jordan in his belly he'd forgotten to strip the leopard of his phone. "No need to worry your tubby butt off, Xan. I'm just havi...having a little fun with him." He belched and shook his head as a brief dizzy spell hit him. "I'll let him out when I get back to the house."

"Xav he'll be dead by then, this isn't a fucking joke!"

"Geez mom, this isn't my first meal. I took preca...uh preco...stuff." The liquor was sneaking back up on Xavier without him realizing it. "God he tasted so good, you really need to try him some time! I don't even like pudge but it was like deep-throating the fattest cock."

"What? I don't...please don't tell me you're drunk," Xander said, only slightly less loud than before. "No no no no, are you fucking kidding me! Where are you in the park, I'm on my way right now! I swear if anything happens to Jordan I'll..."

The constant yelling was giving Xavier a headache, and he just barely managed to slip his phone back into his pocket without bothering to hang up. He wasn't sure why his brother was so worked up about nothing. Jordan was going to be fine, he just had to deal with being crammed in a stomach for a bit. A desperate kick from the leopard forced a belch from Xavier, who giggled as he felt his middle contract a little tighter around his prey and provoke even more squirms. Xavier lazily gulped down some fresh air, though it was less than what he'd released. He was slowly becoming less and less focused on the path before him, narrowly avoiding quite a few exposed tree roots and broken stones that could have sent him tumbling hard into the underbrush, injuring both him and his meal. Unfortunately his streak ended right as he returned to the main trail of the park.

A sharp nudge from Jordan and a poorly-timed step onto loose gravel caused Xavier to slip just slightly, but that was all it took to ruin his balance. He squeaked in surprise and unsuccessfully tried to

prevent the inevitable, the weight of the leopard in his gut dragging him down. By sheer luck Xavier landed on his side, narrowly avoiding severely injuring either himself or Jordan, though the force of the impact knocked the wind out of him and caused him to belch up a considerable amount of air. The fall still bruised him heavily, and Xavier's mind spun, his vision blurred. He let out a low groan before blacking out.

Jordan's experience was much worse. The lake of digestive juices had been tossed about violently during the incident, submerging Jordan's head as he reeled from the pain of hitting the ground himself. His paws scratched at the stomach walls as they pressed into him, the juices still rocking about so much he couldn't find where the air pocket had shifted. With his lungs burning and his body aching, he finally twisted himself so he could reach the precious stagnant air. He realized almost right away that Xavier wasn't moving. Tears streamed from Jordan's eyes and his whimpers echoed within the stomach, the leopard unable to cope with the reality that he was going to die. All he could do was wait for his dwindling air supply to run out.

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"Why do we always have to take the shortcut through the park? This place makes me uncomfortable," an obese ocelot asked his much lighter fox friend as they walked through the campus park. He compulsively looked over his shoulder to make certain they weren't being followed.

"Theo, I'm here almost daily on my way to work, I think I've felt targeted maybe once. Twice if you count Niall being a jerk." With a patch covering his left eye and half his left ear missing, the fox had to make occasional obvious glances of his own to scope the area. "The park's reputation's so overblown no one actually hunts here. Bus stops are more dangerous."

The ocelot didn't seem very convinced, and retained his vigilance. "Maybe the preds just haven't thought you're appetizing enough, Eli."

"I wish that were true, but I've been swallowed one too many times to believe it. Also, not all preds like to eat their weight in prey," Eli said, taking a moment to glare at the ocelot's gut, which peeked out from beneath his far too tight shirt.

"Man, don't start on that again. I know you hate it, but eating people is natural," Theo grumbled. "It'd been months since I'd eaten anyone, too."

"I wonder if you'd feel the same way if you were the one being digested into goop by a total stranger," Eli said.

Theo wasn't in the mood to escalate the argument with his friend. "Alright, alright. Geez."

Eli sighed. He knew his opinion on vore wasn't a popular one, and he didn't want to ruin friendships over it. "I'm...I'm sorry. I don't have the luxury of being that judgmental anymore." He could feel the subtle jiggle of his small belly with every step, the pudge a constant reminder of the puma he'd eaten in a daze only a month ago. "I just know from experience that actively hunting increases your likelihood of being eaten, and I don't...I don't want a bag to fall into the Peace of Mind box at the clinic and find out it's yours."

Before the conversation could continue, both Eli and Theo stopped in their tracks. Further up the path there was someone laying on the ground, their bloated gut easily visible. They started walking again, though they were already making an effort to ensure they passed the pred at a distance.

"And you said no one hunts here," Theo said, secretly admiring the otter's belly.

"I didn't mean literally. He probably ate someone last night and decided to sleep away his damn feast then and there." Eli did little to hide his contempt. "I'm surprised campus security hasn't dragged him away yet."

As Theo obsessed over the pred's middle he saw one of the lumps rise slightly. "Uh, I think this meal was a bit more recent. And not digested yet."

Eli was suddenly interested. He hurried over to the fallen pred, seeing the weak movements of

the trapped prey himself. “Hold in there, we're gonna get you out! Theo I'm going in!”

Theo didn't have time to argue as Eli tossed aside his shirt and carefully slid his paws into the unconscious otter's maw. He cringed as his arms made their way down the wet throat, gripped by its fleshy walls. Pushing past the sphincter took more effort than expected, and he was rewarded with a retched stench of alcohol and what may have been the prey's shampoo. By then Theo was beside him, and Eli quickly directed the ocelot to help push him further inside so he could grab the prey. The whole process was painfully slow for Eli, as the pred was still out of it and barely swallowing even instinctively, but eventually his paws bumped into the obviously frantic prey. Unfortunately Eli needed to be swallowed almost up to his waist just so he could get a proper grip and explain the situation to the prey.

When Eli's head slipped into the otter's stomach, all he heard were pitiful whimpers and the sloshing of apparently stagnant digestive juices. “Don't worry, you're gonna be ok. Just grab onto me and we'll get you out of here!”

The stomach was too dark to see anything clearly in, but after a moment Eli felt a weak grasp on his arms. He immediately grabbed a hold of the prey and kicked twice to alert Theo of his success. Eli was beginning to feel lightheaded himself towards the end, holding himself together just long enough to be pulled back into fresh air, along with his ward. Now free of the stomach, Eli could finally see the otter's victim was a rather hefty leopard, who was in the middle of a coughing fit but thankfully breathing. The longer Eli looked at the leopard, though, the more familiar he seemed. Suddenly the answer hit him.

“Jordan? Jordan is that you?” Eli asked, not completely sure of himself. He hadn't seen the younger brother of his long-passed friend Eddy in nearly two years, and while the leopard in front of him was much, much fatter than Jordan was then, their patterns and eyes were the same.

Jordan groaned and coughed, looking up at the vaguely familiar fox with similar confusion. “E-Eli?”

Eli knelt over the soaked leopard and embraced him, grateful he'd somehow been in the right place at the right time to save Jordan's life. “Holy crap I'm so glad you're alive!” Jordan's older brother Eddy had been one of his closest friends, and after he was eaten Eli often babysat and comforted the much younger leopard. “What happened?”

“X-Xavier gave me booze and told me about a goat and made out with me and he ate me—just like I told Xander he would!” Jordan rambled, his mind still a mess. “Why are you here?”

Very little of what Jordan said made any sense to Eli. “Just walking to work and got lucky. Is there anyone I can call for you, you're not in any condition to leave on your own.”

Jordan's paw went to his pocket to retrieve his phone, only to find nothing. “Fuuuuck. I lost my phone in Xavier. Pass me his, my friend Xander's probably already searching for me.”

Theo had been admiring the still unconscious otter while the other two caught up, so much so that he almost didn't hear the request. He jumped a little when Xavier shifted and moaned as his phone was pilfered, but managed to hand it to the leopard.

Jordan's claw stumbled across the screen, finding Xander's number after a series of miss-clicks. There was a single ring on the other end before Jordan's ear was assaulted. “Where the fuck are you Xav!”

“Ow ow ow, that hurts man!” Jordan said, his ears ringing.

“J-Jordan? Oh thank God you're ok! Did Xav actually throw you up?” Xander asked.

“Um, no. He sort of passed out. A friend wandered by and pulled me out before I ran out of air.” Jordan said.

“He'd better be awake by the time I reach you guys, cause otherwise I'm shoving him down my throat and seeing how *he* likes almost dying for stupid reasons!” Xander seemed uncomfortably genuine with his threat, and Jordan was strangely relieved Xavier appeared to be coming to. “Also where are you, Kyler and I just got to the park but this place is fucking huge.”

Jordan looked around, hoping to spot some kind of landmark to lead his friends to him. While the area was rather sparse, there was fortunately a prominent stone statue of a bear in a suit, sporting a giant bulging gut. "I'm not really sure, but there's a big statue of a full bear nearby."

"I...I think I know the one. We'll be there soon dude."

Jordan put down the phone and let out a sigh of relief. He was thankful to be alive, and just wanted to return to his dorm room and clean the stench of digestion off his body. Digestive juices still clung to his fur and clothes and the smell of Xavier's stomach hadn't left his nostrils. If not for preposterous luck he'd be unconscious right now, maybe already drowned. He tried to shake off the thought, but his mind kept returning to the fleshy walls, the heat, the stale air. The sound of a nearby heartbeat and the feeling of the stomach sealing around him tight. His body started shaking and his eyes watering, and Jordan suddenly began to whimper uncontrollably. Eli watched in dismay. Having spent years pulling people from preds at the clinic, he'd seen this reaction, knew Jordan was likely stuck reliving the horror. He quickly embraced the leopard once more, steadying him and giving him as much comfort as he could as the sobbing started. Eli silently cursed the fact Jordan was enduring such trauma, cursed the society that enabled it and the friends who encouraged it. But most of all, he cursed himself for being unable to resist sneaking a taste of Jordan, and how much his mouth now watered.