

Columbia State 34: Eating Away Regret

By: IndigoRho

In a cluttered bedroom of the Tau Tau Psi fraternity, silence was broken by an unwanted alarm. A phone rattled atop a side table, repeating the same, far too loud line of a song over and over again. The blue-and-white spotted salamander passed out in the bed nearby groaned and turned in a futile attempt to will himself back to sleep and forget his terrible headache. Unfortunately the phone persisted.

“Ugh, turn off your damn alarm Josh, my brain's pounding!” Jacob mumbled from beneath the sheets.

There wasn't an answer back.

The salamander reluctantly opened his eyes and turned to berate his twin brother, but was surprised to discover the offending phone was on *his* nightstand instead. He grabbed the phone and managed to quiet the alarm with a few, clumsy clicks. Then bits and pieces of the previous night drifted back to him. Hanging out in the rec room with a few of his frat brothers, chugging beers, playing pool...Josh making a reckless bet. Jacob closed his eyes to ease the pain in his head, but the worst part of the night replayed clearly in his head. He remembered Josh losing to Xavier, his twin's thick tail sliding past the otter's lips, the squirming belly bulge he'd teased, Josh's final movements before being overwhelmed by the stomach.

Jacob sat in bed, Josh's phone still firmly in his claw, and let everything set in; his twin brother was gone. Despite years of joking about eating him, and even some lazily thought through plans, he couldn't believe Josh had been digested. Or, more accurately, was currently *being* digested, just a couple floors down, by one of his closest friends. He'd laughed it off while it was happening and mocked his brother in his final moments. Jacob could've easily interfered and saved his twin, Xavier had practically begged him to if his memory was right. Doing away with Josh had seemed like such a relief the night before, but now, with the booze out of his system and a hangover punishing his excess, Jacob honestly didn't know how to feel.

“Fuck. Fuck, fuck fuck.” Jacob muttered to himself. He aggressively tried to keep his thoughts jumbled, desperate to avoid dwelling on the enormity of what had happened, until the perfect distraction came to mind.

The dim light of the room pained his eyes as much as the headache, but Jacob forced himself to look at the screen of his brother's phone as he swiped and clicked his way into the contacts list, settling on one name: Drew. Drew was a panther the twins had befriended in the dorms during their Freshman year. While Jacob had drifted from him rather quickly, Josh had stuck with him, and the pair were practically best friends now. Well, they had been until last night, when Josh had ended up as just another meal. Jacob shook away the thought as best he could.

A couple years back the three friends had enjoyed a taste testing party, in which they each took turns eating one another for fun, albeit temporary. Such parties were common amongst preds who trusted each other, and tended to help quell budding desires to consume those you were close to. Of course there was always the chance they would instead *fuel* such desires. Jacob had very nearly refused to throw Drew back up during the party, actively delaying and trying to sneak away while everyone else was distracted, hoping he could digest the delicious feline in peace and claim it was a simple, tragic drunken accident. He was certain few would've blamed him, and Drew wouldn't have even been the only unfortunate casualty of the night. His twin had clung to him, though, forcing Jacob to return the panther. Jacob had been waiting for a second chance ever since.

The tiniest bit of respect towards his brother had made Jacob weary of eating Drew in the past, and opportunities only became rarer as they stopped hanging out. Now Josh was out of the picture, though, and Drew was notorious for never being able to tell the twins apart. As long as the panther still assumed Josh was alive and well, Jacob could lure him into a trap and finally add the tasty prey to his

waistline.

Jacob typed up a quick text asking if Drew wanted to hang out later, before dragging himself out of bed. The salamander's massive gut jiggled as he tossed aside sheets and got onto his claws, nearly falling as the hangover messed with his senses. With lingering dread he waddled over to his brother's dresser and dug out clothes he thought would best help him pass for Josh. Fortunately the twins tended to weigh about the same, so finding something that fit his hefty frame wasn't an issue. Once his disguise was complete, Jacob checked Josh's phone, elated to see that Drew had not only responded, but invited him to come over whenever he wanted. Jacob would have more than enough privacy to safely eat the panther there.

His mood temporarily uplifted, Jacob gathered a few last essentials before heading out, only to have his own phone elude him. After scrounging through every drawer in the room, the salamander suddenly remembered where he'd left it: the rec room. A lump formed in his throat. Not only would his phone be down there, but so would Xavier, likely still passed out in the recliner while digesting Josh. He tried convincing himself to just leave the phone behind and grab it later, but an abandoned phone in the frat house was a recipe for disaster.

Sweat was beginning to drip down the salamander's forehead, and he swiftly wiped it away. With a deep breath he left the room, trying to distract himself any way he could. The third floor of the fraternity was quiet, most of the upperclassmen either away or keeping to themselves, and Jacob hoped he'd somehow be lucky enough to not run into anyone else before he left. Of course he managed to almost *literally* run into another frat member the second he reached the second floor. An obese otter just barely waddled out of the blubbery salamander's path, stumbling a couple feet and catching himself on the hallway wall. There was an obvious flash of annoyance on the otter's face, though it vanished quickly once he recognized who had nearly barreled into him.

"Afternoon Josh."

Jacob froze, a chill running through his body. "Y-yo." He was used to being called his brother's name—that was merely a fact of life as a twin—and while he'd often felt amusement or annoyance, he now felt guilt.

Without saying another word, Jacob waddled away from the otter and trudged down the stairs to the main floor, and the rec room. More frat brothers passed him along the way, each mistaking him for his digesting twin brother. The chill hit him every time the name was spoken. Out of necessity Jacob began remembering as many terrible things about Josh as he could. How cocky Josh had been once he'd gotten a taste for vore and started eating their peers left and right, how his twin had ballooned in size over those months and used the new weight to bully him constantly, how he'd only started eating others because he was convinced Josh would try to eat him.

The thoughts helped, to an extent, but good memories still crept in. Ambushing a trio at the skate park and saving the odd-prey-out as a prize to win over video games later, getting fired together from their first couple jobs for eating too many co-workers, Josh pulling him out of a classmate's stomach at a party. The rec room was both too close and not far enough away. Jacob remembered Josh getting caught drunk in the halls of their dorm by the R.A., how he'd been forced to eat the dalmatian to ensure Josh wasn't punished with digestion, how he'd missed a major test the next day and almost failed a class, while his twin laughed the whole incident off. At Thanksgiving Josh had eaten one of their slightly-annoying older cousins, making the whole night awkward as the gurgles from his gut breaking down his feast drowned out conversations.

Jacob finally entered the rec room, focusing his attention completely on the coffee table his phone was fortunately still resting on. Despite the effort, there was no way for him to avoid the bloated belly of the otter sleeping soundly on a chair nearby. His eyes drifted towards Xavier on instinct, and his heart sunk a little. The night before, Xavier had been somewhat chubby, a pred actively concerned about keeping his weight in check. At the moment, though, his middle was a horribly distended bulge that wobbled slightly with every breath. When Jacob had last seen Xavier his gut had been lumpy,

marred by the obvious bumps of a prey trapped within. Those lumps were already gone.

Against his better judgment, Jacob approached Xavier, eyes locked on his belly. Maybe Josh wasn't actually in there, maybe Xavier had just gotten drunk and been dared to drink from the tap till his middle swelled out, maybe his hazy memories of last night were the remnants of a recurring dream he'd had for months. Jacob reached out with a slick, shaking claw, and gave the otter's middle a nervous poke; almost immediately he felt something solid shift inside. He pulled his claw back, heart racing, as a long, sloppy gurgle echoing from within Xavier's gut. There was no longer any doubt in Jacob's mind that Josh was just a stewing soup waiting to be processed into layers of otter flab.

Jacob turned away and hurried to grab his phone, stubbing a toe on the coffee table in the process, and fled the frat house, repeating over and over again in his head: it was inevitable.

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Two hours later, outside an apartment on the other side of campus, Jacob stood with a dull smile on his face, moderately more composed. His stomach was growling and his mouth watering, thoughts of his future brunch doing wonders to distract him from heavier worries. Regardless of what had happened last night, he was now on the verge of glutting on a prey he'd fantasized about eating for years. So much daydreaming and planning, all about to lead to a satisfying ending. As the deadbolt clicked and the front door opened up, Jacob put on the most convincing fake grin he could, imitating his twin's mannerisms just well enough.

A lean panther greeted Jacob warmly. "Hey Josh, come in!" The deception was working perfectly.

"Josh" quickly accepted the offer, huffing after the panther who was oblivious both to his guest's true identity and walking speed. "Whoa Drew, wait up man, I'm drained from the trip here!"

Drew laughed. "What, did you have to waddle after the bus or something? The stop's right outside my place!"

Jacob gulped. He'd only been to Drew's current apartment once, and had gotten off at a stop a few blocks away. While he still felt he had the panther fooled, he didn't want to take any chances. "Y-yeah, almost missed the bus over, hehe."

"Well then have some water before you pass out. I don't think I can afford to get a crater in the floor repaired!"

The pair entered the small kitchen of the apartment, which while cozy for Drew was almost claustrophobic for Jacob. He was convinced he'd spend half his time knocking things over if he lived in such a place. Drew grabbed an empty glass from a cupboard and left it on the counter before stopping in front of the fridge, where Jacob decided to finally make his move. As Drew turned to continue chatting with the salamander he thought was his good friend, he found himself shoved hard back-first as Jacob used his massive gut to pin the panther to the fridge door. The force of the impact knocked the air from Drew's lungs and bruised his ribs and arms, causing him to choke and gasp out a cry of pain, a look of complete shock on his face.

"T...the fuck?" Drew managed, barely able to breath with over three hundred pounds of salamander pressing into his chest.

"You really should've taken the time to tell Josh and I apart man," Jacob said, leaning further into the panther to reduce his chances of recovery. "Not that it matters now, since bro ended up as dinner for someone else last night and you're about to be the best brunch I've ever had."

Drew's mind reeled as he tried to take in what was happening. Abruptly learning of his friend's death and being threatened with a similar fate himself was too much when combined with the throbbing pain and oxygen deprivation, and he couldn't even begin to think of a response. Jacob didn't give him the option.

Jacob opened his maw wide and engulfed half of Drew's face, causing the panther to frantically

squirm and yell in horror. The salamander's tongue ran all across Drew's chin and a little up his cheeks, savoring the taste he'd spent years longing for. A muffled, satisfied moan echoed from within Jacob, and he slipped his claws behind Drew's head to slowly push more of the panther in. The circumstances that had led to this meal were having such a conflicting effect on Jacob that he knew it needed to be memorable, needed to be worth it. He couldn't do a simple grab and gulp, he couldn't treat Drew like a half-assed snack he'd eaten on a whim. The taste, the squirms, the sagging in his gut...all had to be memorable. Unfortunately this would require Drew to suffer.

The darkness of Jacob's maw worsened Drew's panic, and the panther desperately gasped for second-hand air as he felt saliva matte his fur and moist breath blow into his face. While Jacob's belly was generally soft, the mass of rubbery flab proved as solid as a brick wall when concentrated onto the pained panther's body, enveloping both his chest and arms. His legs flailed about wildly, but sharp kicks of reprisal from Jacob prevented them from being a real threat. A horrifically sluggish gulp pulled his head into Jacob's slimy throat as the salamander's jaws stretched over his shoulders with ease. His footpaws lifted a few inches off the floor, claws scrapping at the tiles. He was being slowly eaten alive with no easily feasible way to escape, and the thought was nearly enough to crush his will outright.

Drew was fairly slim for someone who considered himself a pred. He'd only started indulging in vore after going to college, and was rather picky about his prey and post-meal exercise. The panther had always believed such choices would help ensure his survival, allowing him to flee fatter preds and subdue out-of-shape prey. While his approach had merit, that was only under ideal conditions. At the moment his small size merely made him easier to hold down, easier to swallow, and—eventually—easier to digest.

Every swallow was drawn out as long as possible, Jacob taking the time to eagerly taste every exposed inch of the panther. When Drew's shirt inevitably blocked the salamander's probing tongue Jacob didn't fret, instead taking joy in his meal's weak squirms and faint pleas for help and mercy. His gut bulged out ever-so-slightly as Drew's head pushed into his stomach. Drew's cries were more audible now, barely, though a couple more gulps muffled them once more as the panther's face was pressed deep into the stomach walls. The feeling of his prey pushing against his stomach was one of pure delight for Jacob, who moaned in pleasure and carefully stepped away from the fridge to continue his meal.

Even with his legs somewhat free, Drew could do nothing to truly fight back. Jacob's stomach was a terrifying, lightless pit of flesh and stomach acids, uncomfortably cramped no matter how much space his consumption seemed to add to it. His ears were assaulted by a barrage of disjointed noises, from the thumping of Jacob's heart to ominous gurgles, further preventing the panther from collecting his thoughts. Jacob, meanwhile, was in bliss. He could feel his belly expanding from Drew, though his durable expandex clothing stretched to match it. The fact that Drew had been wearing shorts meant there was even more exposed flesh and fur for Jacob to salivate over, which led to the most delightful struggles as the panther tried to stay above the rising pool of digestive juices, barely able to maneuver. He snuck as much fresh air into his swallows as he could, guaranteeing Drew would remain conscious throughout the entire ordeal, too.

Drew's footpaws finally slipped into Jacob's mouth over fifteen grueling minutes after he'd originally been shoved against the fridge. The panther had exhausted himself into a gibbering mess by then, the occasional twitch and whimper serving as the only sign he was still alive. Jacob gripped his bulging gut as he made the final swallows, sighing in pleasure as he felt the modest weight of his meal cause his belly to sag and sway; Drew was everything he'd ever hoped for in a meal.

“Oh fuck, oh fuck that was so worth it,” Jacob muttered, sweating.

The stuffed salamander took a moment to catch his breath, teasing his belly the entire time. Despite how well he'd been able to overwhelm Drew, eating another person whole was still draining in general, and the desire to simply pass out then and there was strong. He forced himself to stay awake, though, in order to prolong the fun.

“I gotta be honest Drew, you were one of the most delicious meals I've ever had, just fucking amazing in every way.” Jacob stretched and shifted between his claws, adjusting to the added weight in his middle. “Like, some people are just *meant* to be food, and you are one of them dude.”

Jacob's stomach groaned and wobbled, but there wasn't a cohesive response.

“I really hope your bed's comfy, cause I think I might need to stay here a couple nights to deal with things,” Jacob said. “And, ya know, properly turn you into fresh new pudge.”

The salamander tried his best to leave the kitchen carefully, but he couldn't seem to move a foot without having his gut bump into a cupboard or knocking something off the counter, and managed to accidentally trash the place by the time he'd waddled into the living room. He considered plopping down on the couch to watch TV while he enjoyed Drew's squirms, but the panther's fidgeting was beginning to pick up again, and the whimpers turning into pained whines. Undoubtedly his overeager stomach was starting to work over brunch early than he'd have liked. Too lazy to search Drew's apartment for digestion inhibitors and not having thought to bring any of his own, Jacob decided to just nap in the panther's bed as his prey officially transformed from former friend to meal.

Whines and gurgles grew louder as Jacob entered Drew's tidy little bedroom, the salamander unintentionally roughing it up a bit with his bulk. The bed looked just big enough to handle the hefty predator and his prey-filled gut, and thankfully only creaked a little once he'd settled in. A few stray belches tightened Jacob's belly and hastened Drew's demise. In the end, the panther made his last conscious twitch while technically atop his own bed, passing out in agony. Jacob fell asleep soon after, the fate of his twin brother temporarily out of his thoughts, replaced with the lingering taste of a delicious meal. On a dresser nearby, amidst a lamp and textbooks, a framed picture of Josh and Drew smiling after a successful hunt looked on.