

Boards and Bets

By: IndigoRho

“Bullshit. Bullshit!”

Groans and swears were exchanged under the growing heat of the warm Summer sun, as four friends argued at the local skate park.

A chubby, cream-colored horse glared at the badger cursing him out, angrily adjusting the tuft of blonde mane poking out from beneath his baseball cap. “Paulie, dude, why is it so hard to believe! I'm the best skater in the fucking city, grinding a rail with someone in my gut is easy.” His subtle belly jiggled as he fumed, the horse having ditched his shirt long ago to handle the heat.

“Clyde, showing off a few tricks in the yearbook video doesn't make you the best in the city, you ass,” the badger shot back. Though he still considered Clyde a friend, he'd felt the horse had become increasingly insufferable since that tiny moment in the spotlight. “If you keep gloating like that when we start at Columbia State next month you're gonna get laughed at and ate in the first week!”

A fairly slim jaguar hurried in between the pair before Clyde could do anything stupid. “Hey hey hey, stop pissing at each other already! This argument's dumb, let's just go back to skating.”

“Shut it Jordan, *he* started it!” Clyde tried shoving his friend away, but the jaguar wouldn't budge. “Dane'll totally back me up!”

The last of the four friends, a pudgy sparrow who was noticeably plumper than the others, had seemingly been content to avoid the confrontation altogether. At least until called on. “I...yeah, he's done it. Pretty sure...”

Paulie rolled his eyes. “You're just saying that cause Clyde helped you eat your annoying older brother!”

Dane starred at the pavement in embarrassment, fidgeting with his fairly tight shirt as he tried dodging the accusation.

“Dude I bet you a hundred bucks I can do it!” Clyde snorted.

“Deal!”

Clyde's eyes twitched momentarily, the horse obviously surprised his bluff had been called. “I...uh...I need to find someone in the skate park to eat first.”

“No way, you're not getting out of it that easily!” Paulie said. “Just eat me!”

Clyde looked even more nervous now, but wasn't ready to back down. Jordan simply looked at his friend in disbelief. “That's stupid, this whole thing is stupid, let's forget it!”

“Nuh-uh, Clyde made the bet, I accepted,” Paulie insisted. “Having to chill in his gross gut for a bit will be worth it for a hundred.”

“Hope you enjoy reeking of stomach acids while I'm spending your hundred buying some sweet expandex shirts for college!” Clyde had somewhat regained his composure. “I bet your fur will be matted for days!”

Jordan tried to get in a few more words to bring his friends to their senses, but Paulie was already tossing aside his shirt and sneakers, eager to win the bet. All the jaguar could do was watch and hope neither did anything stupider after. Paulie presented both his paws to Clyde, and the horse quickly gulped them down, not wanting to show any sign of hesitation. He cringed as his tongue was overwhelmed by the taste of sweat rather than the usual savoriness he remembered Paulie having, suddenly motivated to swallow the badger down as swiftly as possible. The paws soon brushed against the back of his throat before being sucked down into this gullet, Paulie grinning triumphantly even as his head was engulfed by Clyde's maw.

A few nearby skaters stopped to watch the spectacle, confused by the casualness of the situation and lack of struggles. They grew bored quickly, though, and most wanted to avoid a group of apparent preds. Clyde's hooves gripped Paulie's sides as he carefully lifted the badger off the ground in between swallows, his throat stretching from the bulge of his friend. Both Jordan and Dane watched in relative

silence, feeling too awkward to aide in the consumption and worried about choosing sides in the ridiculous feud.

Clyde's small belly began to swell as Paulie was emptied into it, his hide stretching with ease as its surface was distorted by the vaguely shifting lump of his temporary meal. He carefully angled Paulie's legs up once he'd reached the badger's waist, thankful that gravity would handle most of the work for him at that point. His middle sagged and bounced with every deep gulp as Paulie's legs swiftly vanished from sight. With a cocky wave of his footpaws the last of Paulie slid over Clyde's tongue, the horse closing his jaws and sealing his friend entirely within his cramped stomach.

Clyde rushed a hoof to his mouth to hold back a belch as Paulie moved into a more comfortable position. "You'd...you'd better have that hundred on you right now, cause you'll be...you'll be handing it over in a minute!" The horse was still panting from his gluttony.

"Hah! Less talking, more failing." Paulie's voice was slightly muffled, but loud enough for even Jordan and Dane to still hear.

"St-stay still in there, you'll throw off my balance!" Clyde grumbled.

He spent more time staring at his board than trying to mount it, though. There was little else he could do to stall for time, and eventually the horse was slowly rolling towards the nearest rail. His heart began to race and he picked up speed, noticeably swaying as his heavy gut bobbed to-and-fro. Despite the extra weight, Clyde staid atop his board, bending his knees as the rail closed in. Jordan and Dane watched from afar in awe as Clyde's board actually lifted off the ground, landing just well-enough on the rail for the stuffed horse to grind along for a few, brief feet.

Clyde had only a moment to bask in his triumph before he lost his footing completely, board shooting off ahead of him as he fell flat on his butt, gut bouncing hard. The impact sent a shock up his spine and forced out a long, thunderous belch that purged his stomach of air and tightly encased Paulie. Clyde groaned and flopped back on the pavement, too distracted by the pain to notice his belly lurching violently as his friend frantically struggled to breathe. He rolled over onto his hooves and gut with considerable effort, unintentionally concealing Paulie's movements just as Jordan and Dane rushed over to see if he was hurt.

"Dude, you did it!" Jordan said, both impressed and annoyed by his friend's surprising success. "I can't believe you got off the ground at all!"

Clyde coughed and shook his head, his body aching slightly less. "Told...told you it was easy. I do it...all the time."

Jordan and Dane grabbed Clyde's arms and carefully helped the horse get back onto his hooves, the pair doing their best to avoid his skinned elbows.

"Uh, sure, sure." Jordan knew Clyde would likely gloat about his trick endlessly from now on. "Yo Paulie, sorry dude but you lost." No reply came from the horse's stomach. "P-Paulie, you alright in there?"

All three stared at Clyde's middle, which was devoid of movement aside from the horse's own breathing. Jordan's eyes went wide and he poked at Clyde's bulging belly with his paw, hoping for a response. Nothing.

"Shit shit shit, throw him up Clyde, hurry!" Jordan yelled.

Clyde looked down at his full gut, then frowned. "Whatever, dude's gone. Serves him right for calling me a liar."

"This isn't funny Clyde, Paulie's gonna be digested if you don't throw him up right away!" Jordan said. "The bet was for money, not a meal!"

"It was an accident, it's not my fault the idiot couldn't handle a fall!" Clyde pushed Jordan away. "Besides, my back feels like shit, not gonna hurt myself trying to hack up someone who's not waking up."

Jordan desperately looked to Dane for support, but the sparrow seemed rather apathetic to the loss of their friend. "Jordan, it sucks but it wasn't on purpose. Paulie took the risk when he volunteered

to get eaten.”

“B-but there might...there might still be...” Jordan was flustered.

“Ugh, get over it Jordan. Stupid people get eaten all the time,” Clyde grumbled. “He probably would've gotten scarfed down in the dorms anyway.”

Without waiting for a coherent reply, Clyde began to slowly waddle off in the direction he thought his skate board had fled, every sway of his belly causing the aches to flare up again. Dane followed after him, leaving the stunned Jordan all alone.

“Uh, Clyde, that *was* an accident, right?” Dane asked once he'd caught up to the horse.

Clyde glared at the sparrow. “Of course it was, why is everyone so obsessed with doubting me today! Why would I want to deal with all the dumb flab Paulie's gonna stick me with *and* lose out on a hundred bucks!”

“I...uh, I don't know.” Dane wasn't eager to annoy his way into being a surprise second-course for Clyde.

“I bet neither of you were recording me, either! This was *such* a waste of my time!” Clyde snorted in disgust. “I'd better at least get a decent trophy once Paulie's all processed. My collection could use a badger skull...”

Far behind the trio of broken friends a pair of sneakers and a shirt lay abandoned, just another uncomfortable obstacle for skaters trying to enjoy the day, trying to avoid ending up like their former owner.