

Good Taste in Friends

By: IndigoRho

Nommz checked the time on his phone and just barely resisted banging his head on the counter in despair. The brown dragonmutt hadn't expected working at the Columbia State University thrift store to be exciting, but the job was proving to be almost agonizingly boring lately. His store rarely seemed to get the good clothing drop-offs from preds, so students had begun shopping at the ones closer to frat row or the larger dorm blocks, leaving the official store somewhat barren. As a result, there weren't nearly as many cute preds for Nommz to admire during the workday.

To make matters worse, two of his coworker friends had decided to go on a fun camping trip without him, leaving Nommz to cover part of their shifts. At least they'd stopped taunting him with texts and pictures shortly after arriving at their campsite a couple days before; he might've snapped otherwise. Instead he'd just hope something happened in the last half-hour before close to make the time pass faster.

Distracted by boredom, Nommz didn't notice two new customers enter the store until they were practically in front of the counter, an impressive feat considering their size. Nommz's eyes widened as they focused in on the massive belly of a hefty red panda. He wished with all his might for the red panda's school hoodie to inch up and reveal even a slight glimpse of his gut, but the clothing clung securely despite the belly swaying somewhat from waddling; for once Nommz cursed the existence of stretchy expandex clothes. The palomino horse accompanying the red panda wasn't quite as fat, though still large enough for Nommz to passively ogle. He was almost certain he'd seen the horse a couple times on campus before, but slimmer. If they were the same student, then he was obviously a pred.

The red panda quickly read Nommz's name-tag and gave the dragonmutt an uncomfortably familiar smile, as if he recognized him. "Still accepting drop-offs at this time of night?"

Nommz had the oddest feeling the customer already knew the answer. "Yeah, yeah. Right up until the store closes. Watcha got?"

"Not much, just a few things that don't fit anymore," the red panda said, dropping a plastic bag on the counter.

Nommz was surprised to find the contents neatly folded, and began examining each piece individually to make sure they were in acceptable condition; the thrift store wasn't just a dump, after all. The first was a plain shirt with some light, likely recent dirt stains, nothing a quick wash couldn't deal with. He slyly checked the tag while looking it over, which told him the shirt was a mere large, and definitely not made from anything special. Both customers had to be wearing at least 2XLs, so it was a safe bet the shirt was from someone they had eaten. That was the usual story with donations, though.

The shirt was followed by a pair of jeans in much rougher condition, their color faded and a few decent-sized holes scattered about.

The horse noticed Nommz giving a questionable look at the pants and piped in. "Acid-wash jeans are pretty popular right now, I'm sure someone will snag it."

Nommz responded with a polite chuckle and placed the jeans aside. The horse was technically right. He swiftly moved on to the next donation, a thin hoodie that seemed strangely...familiar. Cyrus—one of the coworkers who went camping—always wore something similar, and in the same size, too. Nommz tried to shrug it off as a coincidence, until his eyes honed in on a very out-of-place pink marking inside the hood itself. At a party a couple months before, Nommz had gotten a little mischievous while drunk and attempted to draw a smiley face in pink marker on Cyrus' hoodie while he wasn't looking.

The red panda and horse noticed Nommz becoming visibly nervous, and their grins widened further. Nommz's paws trembled slightly as he dropped the hoodie and dug a bit into the bag, uncovering a rather unique shirt he knew was a favorite of the other friend on the camping trip, Jared.

He carefully retrieved his phone and sent off a one-word text to Cyrus while poorly pretending to be looking something up. A muffled—but unfortunately familiar—tone came from somewhere on the red panda.

“Anything wrong with the clothes, Nommz?” the red panda politely asked. “We’re usually good about not tearing stuff when we pull them off prey, and the campground hadn’t seen rain recently so at worst they should only be a little dusty. Unless their previous owners didn’t take good care of them...”

Nommz’s heart was racing. “N-n-nothing wrong. I...I...uh.”

The dragonmutt suddenly started looking for an exit, but was too late. While he’d been trying to come up with an answer, the red panda and horse had both waddled behind the counter, their girth blocking the easiest escape routes. He backed up as the pair closed in, trying but failing to insist that customers weren’t supposed to be there. The red panda’s huge belly pinning him gently yet firmly against the wall ended that conversation quickly. Nommz couldn’t help but blush as he felt the red panda’s flab hold him in place, offering only a few timid struggles in response.

“Thought you’d like to get a closer look at my gut,” the red panda said, making Nommz blush even more. “Looks like I was right. I’m Liam, by the way.”

“N-nice to m-meet you,” Nommz managed.

Liam pulled out a phone—the case of which Nommz immediately recognized as Cyrus’—and started skimming through a gallery of pictures on it. “Ya know, you’ve got really good taste in friends Nommz. Very plump, very juicy. Squirm in all the right ways and convert into wonderfully soft flab.”

Nommz grimly realized a portion of wobbly belly that restrained him had once been a friend, presumably Cyrus. Just two days ago Nommz had angrily waved the fox off as he left for his simple camping trip. Now he was only pudge.

“I’m rather disappointed in how...malnourished you look in comparison to your photo, though.” Liam turned the phone around so Nommz could see. The dragonmutt was indeed much fatter in the picture, which had been taken last year on a slow day at work with Cyrus and Jared.

“I i-indulged a lot in the dorms, roommate’s were surprisingly tasty, heh-heh.” Nommz continued blushing as he remembered his past gorging. “I cut back a bit, started using the gym!”

Liam gave a somewhat exaggerated frown. “What a shame, you look even cuter when you’re rounder. Almost...mouthwatering.”

Nommz had never before been so simultaneously flattered and terrified by a compliment. “T-thanks?”

“Fortunately it’s fairly easy to regain that shape. Clyde, I’m pretty sure I saw a mouse earlier, why don’t you retrieve him for me.” The horse nodded and waddled off as Nommz grew more worried. “Now Nommz, I had a lot of free time the last couple days as I digested away that take-out snack I grabbed at the park, and admittedly I spent a fair bit of it skimming old chat logs and texts involving you.”

Nommz tried to avoid eye contact with Liam, instead focusing on his captor’s hefty gut.

“Obviously I learned you were a fan of ample bellies, especially when someone’s trapped inside them,” Liam grinned as he watched the dragonmutt’s face turn red. “You like being pinned to the wall by my gut like this, don’t ya? I bet a part of you’s even glad my middle’s softer thanks to eating your friend.”

He didn’t want to admit it, but Nommz couldn’t deny there was truth in Liam’s words. The red panda’s belly was absolutely delightful, and the addition of Clyde had undoubtedly improved it. In the back of his mind he even wished Liam had gobbled up Jared too. Some distant noise and a faint yelp went unnoticed by him.

“Now just imagine how huge I get when I’ve swallowed a prey or two whole. When I’ve actually had a filling meal I’m practically immobile. My gut bulges and distends, becoming a big, squirming mountain just begging to be rubbed and hugged.” Liam could see the worry in Nommz’s face gradually fading, replaced by desire and excitement. “Finding someone eager to admire and enjoy the

results of my appetite is far harder than finding a tasty meal, at least from my experience.”

Nommz's thoughts were overrun by fantasies of resting atop the red panda's riving middle after he'd had his fill, of falling asleep to the sounds of Liam's stomach digesting away prey, of burying his snout in his belly once the meal was nothing more than comfortable flab.

“Ya know what, Nommz? I'd love for ya to really, really get a chance to admire my gluttony up close.” Liam backed away ever-so-slightly, becoming delighted as Nommz responded to his renewed freedom of movement by embracing the red panda's middle. “All you have to do is introduce me to some of your friends, and I'll handle the rest.”

“I...I think there's a few I wouldn't mind you meeting,” Nommz murmured, his fears completely displaced by desire. His more blubbery friends would look incredible stuffed inside Liam, and he wasn't necessarily *that* close to all of them.

Liam's grin was large enough to show off his fangs. “Excellent.”

By then Clyde had returned, with a dazed, chubby mouse in his grip. Niall lifted the mouse's shirt up and gave his small belly a squeeze. “Not the best source of calories, but he'll do. Alright Nommz, we've got a long night ahead of us, so I insist you have a hearty dinner before we leave. You'll get plenty of belly rubs if you do.”

Nommz gave the unfortunate customer an apologetic look. He knew there was danger in getting fatter around Liam, but eating the mouse guaranteed Nommz a red panda belly to snug. Besides, he was fairly certain he'd just be force-fed the mouse if he said no. The dragonmutt opened his maw wide in acceptance, prompting Liam and Clyde to pull off the struggling mouse's clothes before lifting and bringing him forward. The first gulp muffled the meal's shouts for help, while the second reduced them to white noise. Nommz had deprived himself of a live meal for months, and the chubby mouse delighted his taste-buds immensely, causing him to moan a little.

The bulge traveling down Nommz's throat stretched his shirt collar and strained his thin purple hoodie, slowly unzipping it with every swallow. Liam and Clyde ensured the mouse could do little more than squirm futilely as he was eaten, his shoulders and chest rapidly sliding past Nommz's jaws as the dragonmutt let his unexpected hunger take control. Whatever weight he ended up gaining would be an acceptable price to pay to for being so full. Nommz's chubby belly swelled outward as the mouse emptied into his stomach, parting the hoodie completely. His gut was mostly exposed now, swaying back and forth as the mouse pounded against the fleshy walls of his prison to no avail.

With just the mouse's legs left Nommz took over, and Liam used his newly freed paws to give the dragonmutt's growing middle a rub. Moans returned as Nommz was lavished by both massage and food. His night had gone from boring to terrifying to euphoric, and there was a good chance things would only get better. The loss of Clyde and Jared was a faint memory now, and he wasn't feeling any preemptive regrets over the friends who'd be getting very, very closely acquainted with Liam soon. Inevitably just the mouse's tail remained, and Nommz greedily slurped it up like a noodle, letting out a triumphant belch as his belly bounced from his excessive dinner.

Despite the assistance, swallowing someone a bit fatter than him was exhausting for Nommz, and the dragonmutt was forced to rely on his two new “friends” for support. Clyde seemed to be eyeing him up as a potential snack, but Nommz was confident Liam wouldn't let the horse gorge on him. The red panda himself hid his hungry intentions much better.

Liam gave Nommz's squirming belly a final rub followed by a few gentle pats. “You practically chugged that mouse! That's your stomach's way of telling you to hunt more often, at least in my opinion.”

“That was...that was soooo good.” Nommz squeezed his own middle a little, savoring the struggles that ensued.

“As long as you stick with me you'll get to enjoy plenty of meals like that.” Liam grinned.

“Though now it's time to find *us* a good, filling dinner. Car's out front. We can count on you to lead the way, right Nommz?”

Nommz struggled to re-zip his hoodie, giving up after a few failed attempts. “Y-yeah. I know a place nearby, the friends who live there will look wonderful on your waistlines.”

Liam let out a boisterous laugh and shook his head. “God, you're so shameless. I love it!”

The trio casually waddled out of the now-abandoned thrift store, though not before adding the still-struggling mouse's clothes to the donation pile.