

Winterberry Pies

By: IndigoRho

A wonderful aroma of pastries filled the spacious throne room of Aiden Azureflame, mighty Emperor of the Flame Legion. The smell alone was enough to make the charr's mouth water and his large gut growl, despite the fact he'd finished off a multi-course meal for lunch a short while before. Of course, the gluttonous feline hadn't acquired his pudgy belly through moderation. Aiden finally managed to tear his gaze away from the covered platters concealing the treats, returning his attention to the hefty chef beside them, the aptly-named Doomgut. Chef Doomgut had played a not-so-insignificant role in the Emperor's growing waistline, specializing in food that was notoriously fattening and addicting. He restrained himself somewhat when preparing Aiden's meals, but his impact was undeniable.

Aiden cleared his throat, belly wobbling beneath his thankfully flexible Envoy armor. "I wasn't expecting a dessert showcase like this Doomgut. I guess I can try to find room in the tank for it!" He let out a bellowing laugh and smiled.

"My liege, the delicacies I've prepared for you today are more than mere desserts," Doomgut replied, taking a moment to unveil the dishes and reveal a small bounty of freshly baked pies. "I promise these pies will bolster your magic abilities considerably!"

As expected, the pastries looked irresistible, but now Aiden was intrigued by the chef's claims. "That sounds a little too good to be true. I've never heard of dessert providing anything more than a short-term boost, unless this is another joke about my belly..."

"Emperor I'd never besmirch a gut as regal and ample as yours," Doomgut grinned. "The secret to these pies is a brand new ingredient I procured from the far northern Shiverpeaks: winterberries. They've been infused with unbound magic, so every bit is guaranteed to be dripping with power."

Aiden was impressed. Edible magic was something the charr craved greatly, and he could only imagine how delicious it would be after Doomgut's signature touch. "Well in that case I should dig in right away!"

Doomgut stepped aside, the Emperor waddling up to the table while licking his lips. Aiden was sorely tempted to scarf down the first pie on the spot, but knew maintaining an air of dignity was important for a charr of his standing. Besides, glutting recklessly on one Doomgut dish was a surefire way to lose control and end up stuffed into a food coma. Instead he cut a rather modest slice for himself, marveling at the noticeable glow coming from the red berries within. The first bite was almost indescribably amazing, dazzling his taste buds and forcing a wide smile on his face. As he swallowed he felt a cool sensation spread throughout his body, rejuvenating him and shaking off the lingering desire to nap he'd been dealing with since lunch. What Aiden neglected to notice, though, was his belly swelling a curious amount considering how little pie he'd eaten thus far.

"Just one bite and I can already feel the magic!" Aiden exclaimed with glee. "Perhaps these berries should be included in all my meals, or at least every dessert."

Doomgut beamed proudly at the praise his creation was already receiving, though his attention had drifted to the Emperor's middle. He'd sampled the dessert beforehand—as any good chef would—and was well aware of the side effects. Warning Aiden would ruin the fun, though from experience he doubted the charr would've deemed it a deal breaker. Aiden, meanwhile, was already busy ravenously finishing off his initial slice. Of course his meager sample wasn't nearly enough, his next being three times larger. The gentle sag of his gut was gone, his belly more rigid and round, swirling with magic. For the moment he remained unaware of his bloating, the feeling overpowered by the far superior presence of the taste and energy. His legendary armor's ability to stretch to contain him no matter also helped to disguise the changes. Aiden's belly expanded with every bite, the charr essentially inflating from unbound magic. Only once he'd finished a whole pie did he realize something was up, and by then

his middle was almost prohibitively big, an unmissable boulder.

Aiden jumped a little as he came down from his pie high and was confronted by the cost of obtaining more power. He gave his swollen middle a few curious prods, his four ears picking up the hollow sound reverberating back. In the process he noticed his fur had gained a shine as well. Despite having such an unwieldy gut Aiden felt more energetic than ever, like he had before the pampered lifestyle of Emperor had caused him to pile on the pounds. An unquenchable craving for magic and dessert swept away the few concerns Aiden had, the charr knowing he needed more and he needed it now. With gusto Aiden picked up a fresh pie and began swiftly devouring it, not even bothering to cut out slices anymore. Right away he started blimping up once more, the expansion spreading beyond his middle as the volatile magic sought additional space.

The Emperor's chest swelled as it joined his bulbous belly, his limbs puffing up too. Holding the pie tin up was increasingly difficult, but Aiden's solution was to simply eat even faster, hoping his jaws could outpace his expansion. The tactic worked surprisingly well—at least to an extent—ensuring he could down a third pie before his arms ended up too bloated with magic to be of real use. Aiden was well on his way to becoming an armor-clad orb, his round middle gradually engulfing the rest of his body. An aura shimmered around him and his eyes glowed, the charr absorbing the immense amount of magic he'd consumed. He felt strong enough to fight an army on his own, to cleave a mountain in half, to fell an Elder Dragon in one blow. Despite this—and his preposterous size—Aiden still needed more.

Thoroughly immobilized himself, Aiden ordered the nearest guard to feed him the last pie, lazily opening his mouth to accept the empowering pastry. He could hear his hide stretching further with each gulp, his limbs swelling till they became mere domes atop his spherical body, his wiggling paws jutting out from them. Aiden's head sunk into his body and his cheeks rounded out. The Emperor was barely recognizable anymore, his flowing mane and crown just enough to prove his identity. Such issues were of no concern to Aiden anymore, though.

Practically more unbound magic than charr now, Aiden could think of little else but devouring feasts of winterberry to obtain more power. “Doomgut these berries change everything! I don't care how much it costs, from now on they'll be in every dish I eat!

“Of course my liege! I'll get started on preparing dinner right away.” Doomgut bowed and waddled off to the kitchens, thinking up a slew of berry-centric recipes for his berry Emperor.

Aiden made a mental note to have winterberry snacks made as well, wishing he had some already to satisfy his cravings till dinner. Oh well, he'd just have to find some other way to distract himself. “Guards, roll me to my chambers at once. I'd like some privacy to test my enhanced abilities.”

The guards nervously took a moment to decide on the most dignified way to roll the massive charr, before dutifully pushing him towards a route they hoped would be wide enough to handle Aiden. If the pie sampling was a hint of things to come, the entire citadel might need some expanding soon...