

Kuya's Three Course Gum

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Kuya cackled in delight, his laughter echoing around the walls of the research chamber, one of many in the luxray mage's floating castle. In his paw was the culmination of hours of experimentation and study. Of course such an accomplishment was par for the course for Kuya. To the untrained eye he merely held a piece of gum, colored red, cream, and blue. Each color represented a considerable portion of a full, three course meal—red for a hearty tomato soup, cream for a roast beef and potato stew, and blue for a juicy blueberry pie.

The mage's endless quest to hone his skills often required long bouts of research and practice, and finding the time for a filling meal could be difficult. His three course gum promised to change that. If all had gone as planned he'd be able to gain the benefits of a regular meal just by chewing the gum, without having to miss any valuable study time.

Kuya *should* have grabbed an assistant to test the gum on first, but a sudden rumbling in his stomach made him more than willing to take risks. With a grin the luxray tossed the piece into his mouth and began to chew.

Almost immediately the clear taste of tomato soup flooded Kuya's mouth. For a second he stopped chewing, caught off-guard by how spot-on the taste was; he couldn't even tell it wasn't the real thing. Ecstatic over the degree of his success, Kuya continued, eager to learn how long it would take for the other courses to kick in.

While the luxray basked in his apparent triumph, his blue middle abruptly started to swell. The faint sloshing of liquid echoed from within, though both it and the bloating went unnoticed at first. Kuya was rather prone to expanding—both on purpose and not—and his outfit was especially designed to stretch to handle him in such situations. The lack of tightness *did* prevent him from realizing he was growing, though.

The more Kuya chewed the more he swelled. A wide strip of his belly had become exposed, and gaps had formed in between the buttons of his shirt. Normally on the chubby side, Kuya now sported a sizable round middle.

Kuya couldn't ignore his steadily increasing weight forever. When he tired to stroll away from his table he was surprised to feel something heavy splashing inside him. A look of shock came over his face as he saw how big he'd grown, but he quickly realized the swelling only happened when he chewed.

The gum had meant to be filling, but not in quite such a literal way. Shaking his head at the unexpected side-effect, Kuya cast a simple spell on himself to ease movement so he could get to work figuring out where he'd gone wrong. What should have been a small burst of magic instead turned into a gusher of mana. The rush of power made his whole middle glow, and he didn't feel like any of his energy had been expended in the process. Not only had the meals been condensed within the gum, but so had the magic used to create it.

A wicked grin came across the mage's face, and he started chewing once more. Kuya coveted power more than almost anything in the world, and the three course gum promised to give it to him in spades. He didn't care that such a well of mana would come at the cost of being too round to move—after all, spells could solve that problem with ease.

The chewing intensified until Kuya was steadily inflating like a balloon. His belt creaked as it was forced to match his ever-expanding width, potions and ingredient bags swaying about. Kuya's chest and middle became one as his body took on a spherical shape, legs and arms gradually enveloped. The mage still smiled, sensing his available mana building and building with each passing second. He waddled about the room in joy, thoughts dominated by how strong his spells would be at that size. If only he were *even* bigger.

Kuya was entirely spherical by the time the tomato soup flavor finally faded from his tongue.

His shirt and jacket barely covered the top half of his body, still fitting but comically stretched. His cheeks had become rounder as well, resting atop his mane and wobbling with every chew.

No sooner had the tomato soup vanished did the beef and potato stew arrive. The taste was incredible, as perfect as the soup. Kuya felt as if he were guzzling a whole cauldron of stew down, yet not missing even an ounce of flavor. To his absolute delight the swelling continued, the mage expanding in every direction.

Kuya's sides pressed into the myriad of furniture and objects cluttering his research chamber. Tables screeched as they were pushed along the stone floors. Vials, tomes, notes, and candles went flying, only to be swiftly buried beneath the glowing mass of luxray. With a wave of his almost buried paw Kuya made his hide more durable; he didn't want to waste any precious mana springing a leak.

Wooden chairs crunched and splintered, and eventually so did the sturdy tables. Demolishing the contents of the room only emboldened Kuya, who simply saw it as another sign of his growing power. One-by-one the his sides pushed against the four walls of the chamber, Kuya filling every nook and cranny. Even stone walls couldn't impede the mage's ambition, though.

Cracks formed all over and the ceiling warped and creaked. With a terrible crash the entire room crumbled apart as Kuya cheerfully grew out of it, chewing away contently. Spells dealt with the unsightly dust and debris, keeping the mage clean.

The blueberry pie course of the gum arrived just before the stew could outstay its welcome. As expected, the dessert didn't disappoint. Kuya momentarily forgot about the additional walls of his castle he was knocking over, engrossed by what might have been the most delicious pie he'd ever tasted.

Without warning Kuya's red nose turned blue, matching his fur until shifting a few shades darker—like that of a blueberry. The change in color spread outwards steadily, affecting the rest of his face and even his dark mane. When Kuya eventually spotted the changes out of the corner of his eye he just shrugged and continued chewing. Being an enormous berry wouldn't make his spellcasting less potent, after all.

Towers and gardens were crushed before the increasing might of the expanding blueberry mage. The obscene pool of mana sloshing within Kuya was intoxicating, exponentially spurring on his cravings for more and more power. Reducing his whole castle to rubble didn't matter in the slightest to the luxray. A mage of his greatness deserved a *much* larger one anyway, or a city, or a kingdom! The whole world could be his if he wanted it to be, and as he grew to fill the entirety of the floating island he'd once called home he was beginning to feel like only a planet could make him content.

When the last of the gum's flavor finally faded Kuya gave a brief frown, sad the incredible meal had ended. Kuya looked out upon the horizon, distant lands spreading out before him. He chuckled as he imagined people from all over glancing up at the massive, glowing blueberry luxray on an island in the sky. Some would be confused, others amused. The smart ones would be preparing to offer tribute to their new berry mage king.

As the sun began to set Kuya happily mused about his new place in the world—and how much more three course gum he'd need to make to get even bigger...