

The Volunteer Couch:

By: IndigoRho

Xander rubbed sweat from his brow as he descended a ladder, his obnoxious task finally complete. The white and brown otter had spent all morning dusting the highest corners of the Tau Tau Psi frat house in preparation for the start of the new semester. No one had wanted to get stuck with the job, and Xander was somewhat bitter about being chosen by default since he was the slimmest frat brother. He felt like he was being punished for not gorging like the others did, though his declaration that “you tubbos could use the damn exercise” hadn't won him much sympathy. His only solace was the fact that his friends were probably just as exhausted despite their much less labor-intensive chores. Xander was proven right just seconds later when his friend Jordan waddled into the room.

The obese jaguar huffing with every step looked like he'd run a marathon, his round gut inflating and deflating with every breath to the lament of his tank-top. While a year before he'd often resembled Xander in figure, the toll of excessive consumption as a Freshman had gradually shifted his natural weight higher and higher; now it was rare for him to re-form as anything but a hefty, three hundred pound cat. Jordan occasionally complained about his size—especially whenever he tired out easily—but he hadn't made any real conscious effort to do something about it. His overall increased appetite and reluctance to exercise didn't help.

“Dude I...I feel like I'm gonna pass out,” Jordan said in between breaths. “Why'd I get the hardest job?”

Xander wished there was something, anything, within arms reach to toss at his complaining friend. “All you had to do was wipe down the kitchen counters and take out the trash, how is that hard!”

“The curb's not close and I had to make two trips!” Jordan's defense wasn't nearly as effective as he assumed.

“Oh my God, I've taken out the damn trash while three hundred pounds, it's not that exhausting ya fat baby!” Xander stomped closer to Jordan and gave the jaguar's gut a hard poke. “And don't think I can't see the frosting on your cheek; you probably spent half the time stuffing yourself with donuts, didn't you?”

Jordan cowered and blushed in embarrassment. “I-I just took a quick snack break, that's all!”

“Xander, you know Jordan's boyfriend likes him plumper, don't be a dick about it,” a newcomer said.

Xander rolled his eyes and turned to glare at the chubby orange and white rabbit who'd just entered the room. “I'm just pointing out the facts! And damnit Kyler, why weren't you in the running for dust duty? The other blimps used their waistlines as an excuse, but you can definitely still climb a ladder!”

Kyler shrugged. “I was in charge of the prepping the insta-couch canisters for the new pledge thingy tomorrow. And maybe you shouldn't have gotten on the frat president's bad side. You're lucky dusting's the only thing Xavier did to ya.”

“Not my fault Xav can't take a joke. Or that the chandelier was so pointy,” Xander smirked. “Honestly I just wanted him to bounce around the ceiling for a bit after all that gloating about how he'd never been inflated.”

“A smart otter wouldn't have immediately taken credit for the prank and taunted his brother before being pelted by flying hide scraps,” Kyler said.

“A prank's not worth it if you can't rub it in afterward!” Xander insisted. “Vann would back me up on that! Wait, where is the woolball anyway?”

Kyler took a moment to think. “I thought he was helping you.”

“Pfft, he'd break the ladder faster than Jordan! Wasn't he cleaning the rec room or something?” Xander said.

Jordan shook his head. “Nope, Jerome did that. I haven't seen Vann since this morning; dude snoozed right through my alarm.”

A thought came to Xander. “I swear, if he ditched chores I'm gonna wail on him with his own horns! Let's check his room.”

With Xander leading the way, the three friends hurried up to second floor, where all the Sophomore rooms were. The door to Jordan and Vann's room was cracked open slightly, and Xander nudged it to take a look inside. Just as he'd feared, Vann was sprawled out on his bed, fast asleep. The dark gray ram-dragon was as large as Jordan—maybe even fatter—and had managed to toss aside all his sheets during the night, his round woolly gut rising and falling as he slept peacefully. Xander was barely able to resist charging into the room and waking the lazy loaf with a barrage of curses. Instead he leaned back and let the others see the situation for themselves.

“I can't believe that fat bum slept through everything!” Xander fumed just loud enough for his friends to hear. “When I was late to chores last year he berated me about it for a whole damn month, and now he misses them completely, right when the year's beginning! Let's throw him down the stairs!”

“Whoa whoa whoa, that's a little extreme man,” Jordan said, trying not to giggle at Xander's ridiculous response. “Besides, he'd probably flatten you if you tried.”

“Ya know, if you *really* want to get back at him, you could always use this,” Kyler said, before pulling out a shiny metal canister the size of an apple. “He'd make a great test subject for seeing if the gas mixtures in the insta-couch canisters are good.”

Xander's scowl transformed into a sinister grin. “Yes yes yes! The rec room could use a new couch and I bet the woolball would make a great one!”

“You want to do the honors?” Kyler said, holding out the canister in his paw.

The otter didn't even reply, he merely snatched the implement of his revenge and crept into the room, doing his best to avoid making noise. Kyler and Jordan followed after. Unfortunately for Vann, all three mischievous frat brothers made their way to the ram-dragon's bed without waking him. Xander diligently positioned the canister above Vann's partially open snout, waiting for the perfect moment to strike. After a couple boring minutes, Vann finally made a fateful yawn, and Xander practically shoved the canister down his throat. Vann sprung awake, instinctively swallowing the strange object that had been forced into his mouth and frantically struggling against the paws wrapped around his snout. Both Kyler and Jordan held down their friend's legs to prevent escape.

A faint click and a hiss prompted Xander to release Vann's snout, and the ram-dragon wasted little time in expressing his annoyance. “What the hell bro! Do you want me to sit on you *that* badly, cause I'm about to...”

The unmistakable sensation of bloating abruptly shifted Vann's attention from his treacherous friends to his dome of a middle, which was rapidly swelling. He let out an embarrassing *baahaha* of confusion and pushed his hooves into his pillowy gut in a desperate attempt to halt the expansion. His efforts accomplished nothing besides forcing a small belch. Vann tried sitting up in bed—a difficult task even when he *wasn't* blimping up—but all he could manage was rocking back-and-forth in a rather comedic manner. Convinced their victim was well immobilized by the inflation, Kyler and Jordan let go of Vann's legs to watch their prank unfold. The canisters were designed to release a potent mix of chemicals that, once combined, would swiftly expand and solidify into a harmless foam. While injury-prevention had been its original purpose, the potential for inflation had quickly dominated its use.

Vann's bloating had spread to his chest and limbs, impeding his pitiful attempt to right himself even more. To the relief of all in the room, Vann's boxers held strong, being made of incredibly stretchy expandex material. Xander decided his friend's inflation was nearing an end, and roughly grabbed a hold of the ram-dragon's puffy arms to drag him off the bed. Kyler and Jordan followed suit, securing Vann's legs in order to lift the puffed up ram-dragon into the air. Together the three began carrying their flailing friend out the room. Despite outnumbering the couch-in-making, the frat brothers still struggled to control their victim, nearly tripping over their own paws multiple times as they blindly stumbled

towards the door. Vann's swollen body became wedged in the door frame almost immediately.

"Ha, serves ya right you jerks!" Vann shouted, cringing as he felt Kyler and Jordan trying to shove him through. "I don't know what stupid thing you're plotting, but I'm not surprised you've already failed!"

Xander gritted his teeth as he twisted and turned his balloon-of-a-friend in an effort to jostle him loose. "Ugh, couches shouldn't be able to shit-talk. Remind me to wrap his snout shut with duct tape once we're downstairs!"

"I'm not a damn couch, rudderbutt!" Vann growled, painfully aware that his kidnappers were making progress. "Though once I've hacked up this stuffing I'm gonna be releasing three taut weather balloons over campus!"

Kyler laughed at his friend's empty threats. "Bro, I was gonna be content with letting you off on a couple hours of couch duty for ditching chores, but now I'm thinking we should leave you wobbling downstairs for a few days! Might give you time to calm down."

"You wouldn't dare!" Vann yelled with increasing doubt. "You can't just keep me blimped up as a couch for days dude!"

"Well now it sounds like a challenge!" Xander said, far too willing to up the scale of his petty vengeance. "I wonder how long we could keep you all fwoomped up in the rec room before you either manage to deflate or convince someone into showing ya mercy. We could take bets from the whole frat, it'd be awesome!"

Vann's mood had completely shifted from rage to terror. "W-w-wait a minute, just think this through! I'll handle all the chores for a month, I swear, just don't turn me into a couch!" His frantic squirms were only hastening his fate, as more and more of his puffy body inched through the doorway. "If you do this I'll miss classes and fail the semester!"

"We'll make sure someone brings ya notes and homework for your classes, and we can get a frosh to "be" you during tests or whatever," Kyler said. "I've seen your schedule, you barely took any classes and they're all general studies crap!"

"Being filled with this junk for weeks is dangerous, what if I start re-forming as a damn couch!" Vann hoped his friends were either joking, or could see reason.

"Then we'll buy you a nice couch-cover for Christmas!" Xander said, right before Vann finally lurched free of the doorway. "Man, I forgot how annoying it is to move fat furniture. We may have to put our new couch on a diet!"

Kyler and Jordan snorted at the joke and continued helping to wrangle the very concerned Vann to his new home. The stairs somehow proved less formidable than the door had been, though Vann nearly got wedged between the banister and the wall on a couple occasions. They were passed by a handful of other frat members at various times, but most simply laughed off Vann's pleas for help, one even drumming on his bloated belly as he walked by. Most would happily let a frat prank run its course, especially if it increased the likelihood of their own future pranks being uninterrupted. Not to mention the frat's general mentality that if you fell for a trap you deserved whatever consequences resulted.

After a long journey of struggles, pleas, threats, and mocking insults, the new inflatable couch inevitably arrived in the spacious rec room of the frat house. While the fraternity had spared few expenses in filling the room with all sorts of toys to entertain its members, the aging second couch had finally succumbed to the expansive waistlines of the gluttonous frat boys just days before. Buying a new one wouldn't be an issue, but until then Vann would make a delightful—albeit unwilling—replacement. Vann was unceremoniously dropped onto the floor in roughly the right spot, then nudged into place while he wiggled about and complained. Xander quickly dug through drawers in search of some duct tape to quiet the couch, while Jordan retrieved rope to bind Vann's flailing limbs and make him more suitable for sitting. Vann continued begging for leniency till the very moment his snout was wrapped shut with tape, but soon he was just a puffy, wobbling couch.

Xander looked at his handiwork in smug satisfaction. “Ha, serves ya right for being lazy! Now everyone else can relax at *your* expense!”

“Um, are we *actually* gonna keep Vann inflated as a couch for weeks?” Jordan asked sheepishly, despite having actively aided in the capture.

“Who knows. I’m just gonna let fate decide how long woolball here gets to be furniture,” Xander said. “Time to test how comfy he is!”

Xander pushed into Vann's bloated gut and lifted himself atop the ram-dragon, grinning in delight as he felt his paws sink into the puffy surface. The increase in muffled noises from Vann were even better. With little effort he was able to find a stable spot on the new couch, and signaled the others to join him. Kyler went next, practically leaping onto Vann and nearly ejecting Xander in the process. His ascent was much more forceful than Xander's, and Vann whimpered as he felt a momentary sharp increase in pressure, unsure if he was lucky or unlucky to not have popped. Jordan was far less enthusiastic. Already nervous that Vann would likely seek revenge on him once he *did* deflate, Jordan didn't want to increase that chance by sitting on his friend. Of course he also didn't know if he could even lift his fat butt onto the couch. A little teasing of encouragement finally convinced the jaguar to try, though, and with a lot of help from Xander and Kyler he managed to wiggle himself atop Vann.

Vann's whole body creaked faintly as it struggled to handle well over half-a-ton of frat boy. Every sudden shift or playful bounce made Vann clench his eyes shut as his hide strained from the internal pressure, but his body was just barely able to hold itself together. Eventually Vann began to gradually adjust to the situation, his sides feeling less likely to tear apart with each passing minute; he felt little relief from this. Bursting was Vann's best bet for escaping his confinement as a couch and ensuring the prank didn't accidentally become a permanent one. If he could handle his friends then there was a terrifying chance he'd also be able to handle everyone else in the frat, unless the fattest frat members all piled onto him at once. At this rate he'd have to hope a drunk popped him at the first big party. The next few weeks were gonna be very rough for Vann the Couch.