

Rafberry Soda

By: IndigoRho

A light drizzle had just begun as Raf waddled up to the entrance of the Columbia Bottling Collective, the hefty hyena taking a moment to sigh at the building in disdain. Normally he'd have been standing behind the counter of the Lucky Yeen bakery, glaring at potential customers and failing to resist the ever-present—and painfully free—pastries surrounding him. Today, though, the bakery had received a rare request for delivery, and Raf's boss had dropped the task on him without a second thought. While Raf hated delivering, he hated arguing even more, and the hyena had begrudgingly agreed after offering only token resistance. He'd expected a large order, perhaps for a business or party, but instead his boss had simply handed him a single, bright blue raspberry pie. His mood understandably grew worse after.

Not wanting to get his clothes soaked or his pink mohawk disheveled, Raf pushed through the entryway and out of the rain, finding himself in a rather sparse lobby. There were some old chairs and obviously fake plants, along with a handful of small paintings on the wall that appeared painfully generic. The front desk itself was abandoned. Raf trudged onwards, his wet sandals squeaking loudly with every step, and let out an uninspired “anyone here?” more out of obligation than actual interest; the customer had already paid, so the less personal interaction the better, at least as far as the hyena was concerned. Only when he was right in front of the desk did Raf notice the small sign answering his question: “At lunch. Back at 12:45”. The time was 12:16.

Raf rolled his eyes and placed the pie gently on the desk, along with the receipt. His job technically complete, Raf let a sliver of happiness interrupt his dour mood before preparing to return to work...only to feel a sharp prick in the back of his neck. The hyena growled and brought a paw up to the source of the pain, but his limbs abruptly felt wobbly and he stumbled forwards, his vision beginning to blur. He managed one last, frustrated sigh before passing out completely.

* * *

“You awake yet tubbs?”

Raf stirred as the familiar voice questioned him. His head ached and a tiny spot on the back of his neck was sore, but as the hyena slowly came to the biggest thing bothering him was the strong taste of raspberry lingering on his tongue. The fact he couldn't move his arms or legs was a close second. Already able to guess what had happened—in large part due to multiple, annoying past incidences—Raf resisted opening his eyes purely out of spite to whomever had kidnapped him. A fairly pointless gesture, sure, but Raf preferred being a hassle in these situations.

“Pretending to still be unconscious isn't gonna work, you're obviously frowning right now ya giant grump,” the voice said. Raf knew who it was, of course, but not acknowledging that was also important.

Raf responded with a terribly fake snore.

“Always nice to be reminded you have a sense of humor. Why don't we see if you remember how to laugh, though.”

Before he could even throw out a token threat, Raf felt a pair of paws rush under his strained button-up shirt and begin furiously tickling his sensitive gut. He thrashed about in his bindings and bit his lip in a desperate attempt to hold back, but his resolve soon failed him, and Raf let out a loud cackle that echoed off the walls of the room he was being held in. His eyes shot open and his mouth contorted as he tried to fight the embarrassing display. The tickling ceased as quickly as it had began, though the paws took a moment to squeeze his pudge before their retreat. Raf clamped his jaws shut as soon as the paws left and glared daggers at the one responsible.

Another hyena stood in front of Raf, and despite some obvious differences there were definite

similarities between the pair. Like Raf, the other hyena was very obese, though his dress shirt did a much better job at containing his blubbery middle. His mohawk was a tad bit shorter, the tips frosted a bright blonde as opposed to solid pink. While Raf seemed to never stop scowling, the mystery hyena was perpetually smiling, his gold eyes staring right back into Raf's pink ones. Besides his rolled up sleeves and loosened tie, he appeared to be a normal—though potentially gluttonous—office worker. That was true, to an extent.

"I don't see why you always get so upset about that laugh, bro. Most people find our cackle adorable," the hyena said with a subdued chuckle.

"I've got shit to do, Michael. Have fun then fuck off!" Raf growled. He didn't exactly get along with his twin brother, for many, many reasons.

Michael's smile didn't waver. "Raf I'm not here for fun, I'm here for business, silly! I've got a wonderful opportunity for you, one you'll be unable to turn down."

"Oh my God stop with the stupid theatrics and just get on with it!" Raf groaned. "I'd rather be back at work than dealing with you right now."

"But work is exactly the reason I invited you here today. Dabbling in entrepreneurship would be a boon to my resume, and you'd make the perfect business partner." Michael said.

Raf snorted. "You didn't invite me here, you tricked me over and drugged me you ass. And why do you think I'd ever want to be your business partner?"

"You always get so caught up in semantics, bro! Though once you hear my proposal I'm sure you'll be practically bursting at the seams in anticipation." Michael's grin briefly grew more sinister, though Raf was too busy being annoyed to notice. "Now, Columbia Bottling Collective is a really fun group that lets individuals rent out space for small-scale bottling. It's a bit niche, but rather convenient for anyone wanting to dip into local brewing or just drink production in general."

Raf showed no signs of caring.

Michael continued his pitch. "Local soda brands are becoming really popular—though I'm sure you've noticed that yourself, considering how much you've blimped up lately—especially ones that offer unique flavors. *That's* where you come in, brother."

"Already said I'm not interested, and rambling at me sure as Hell isn't--" An unexpected popping noise stopped Raf mid-sentence, and the wobble of his belly that followed drew his gaze downwards in confusion. Raf's eyes went wide as he realized a button was missing and his belly appeared bloated, even more-so once the stretching of his shirt became obvious; his gut was expanding.

"Excellent, the pie's finally kicking in!" Michael beamed with satisfaction. "I didn't want it to go to waste and I know how much you love stuffing yourself so I fed it to ya while you were napping. Of course, I gave it my own special touch before hand."

Though the growth had initially been subtle enough to go unnoticed by Raf, his belly was now swelling dramatically. There was a definite weight building within his stomach, too, though the hyena had no way of knowing what exactly was filling him. "Wow, how original, you're fattening me. Thought you would've gotten bored of that back in high school."

"Trust me Raf, tormenting you will always be the most reliable way to brighten my day." Michael knew better than anyone else just how much Raf was aggravated by growing larger, and his twin's snarky remarks couldn't hide that. "And I'm not fattening you. Right now you're rapidly filling with a *hopefully* delicious blue raspberry soda, or at least the base ingredient of it."

Two more buttons burst off Raf's shirt in quick succession, exposing most of his massive light-brown gut. The fur around his naval was turning a shade of bright blue, and he twitched as he felt a tiny trickle of something cold leak from its depths. "There're easier ways to get your soda fix," Raf grumbled.

"Silly Raf, I'm not the one who's gonna be drinking the soda, our customers are! A properly converted host can produce an incredible amount of soda at a high rate for practically pennies, which means a good profit is almost guaranteed," Michael said. "I'm very confident Blue Rafberry Soda will

be a best seller in the area.”

Raf could feel his limbs starting to bloat along with his middle, which was now a big, fuzzy blue ball. A series of tears along the seams of his shorts gave some relief from the pressure that'd been building. His pink tie was beginning to loosen as his neck puffed up, and he was certain he'd burst out of his shirts and sandals soon, too. The chair he'd been bound to was groaning beneath his weight. “Yeah, great plan. You'll sell a blimped hyena's worth of soda for pocket change. Who's gonna get stuck cleaning up the mess after you've popped me over a storage tank?”

Michael seemed far too delighted at the question. “Raf, no one's getting popped any time soon. Once I've got you hooked up to some tubes for draining, your stomach's soda production will be kept in check, allowing me to keep producing new batches for as long as I want.”

Loud creaks heralded the chair's end, and Raf yelped in surprise as it fell apart around him. The hyena landed squarely on his puffy butt, a small stream of bright blue squirting from his naval. Free of his bindings, Raf tried to stand up so he could wail on his twin a bit, only to be met with embarrassing failure. His middle and limbs had simply become too bloated. Raf rocked back-and-forth frantically, but returning to his paws was simply impossible. He was more blue than brown, and his belly and chest had ballooned to the point of merging, giving Raf the beginnings of a spherical shape.

“Not funny Michael, I'm not a damn soda machine!” Raf shouted as he wobbled, his head turning bright blue while his dyed mohawk and eyebrows remained pink.

Michael waddled over to the mess his brother had made, generously kicking away the sharper remnants of the shattered chair so there wasn't a risk of Raf prematurely popping. “Honestly Raf you should just consider it a paid vacation. You'll get to sit around all day doing nothing, and no one around to annoy you. I'm sure you'll be thanking me after the first month.”

“Month!” Raf's original frustration quickly gained a hint of fear. “That's insane, you can't keep me trapped here for a whole damn month!” He was gradually rising off the ground as the soda mixture filled him more and more, the color of his fur now completely changed.

“Well I've got the bottling line rented for a solid month, it'd be a waste of money to not use it to its full potential.” With Raf effectively immobilized once again, Michael amused himself by prodding his twin's ballooning body, listening to the resulting sloshes with joy. “And the waiting list for a spot like this is surprisingly long, so if initial sales of Blue Rafberry Soda are promising then it would make perfect business sense to renew the rental.”

Raf's clothes had been reduced to tatters and drifted off entirely. His limbs were swollen to the point of barely being recognizable, and had already begun to sink into his massive, round body. An obnoxiously delicious raspberry taste filled his mouth as his cheeks swelled. The small leak of soda from Raf's naval had turned into a steady stream—though not nearly enough to impede his expansion—a growing pool of blue forming beneath him. Every time his brother teased him he'd growl and wobble in his direction, but even that was becoming more difficult. Worst of all, Raf's scowl was fading, replaced by a genuine look of concern.

“Michael this is way out of line! Fatten me, pop me, humiliate me, whatever, I'll deal with that, but this is fucked up!” Raf actually whimpered slightly as he felt his paws swell, no longer able to move even his claws. “What if this becomes permanent!”

“You adjusted pretty well to your weight doubling in just a few years, I bet you'd get used to being a permanent Rafberry just as easily,” Michael taunted. He'd played a slight role in his twin's weight ballooning out of control, and the thought of Raf ending up as a berry filled him with glee. “Berries can live perfectly normal lives with the right equipment, and you pull off the bright blue look rather well!”

Raf was almost entirely spherical now. He tried to plead with his brother once more, but a spout of soda gushed from his mouth instead of words.

“I'm glad you agree,” Michael said. “Now it's time for you to settle into your new residence for the foreseeable future.”

Michael placed his paws on the taut sides of his bloated twin and firmly pushed, causing Raf to slowly roll forwards. The sheer weight of the soda and Raf's original body mass made the process difficult, but once Michael was able to build some momentum things went smoothly. Raf whined and wobbled as he was rolled to his fate, leaving behind a messy trail of fresh soda. Their destination was an enclosed area at the far end of the conveyor belt and machinery, essentially a shed with padded walls to protect a living ingredient tank and heavy tubes for transferring the soda. With no effective way to resist, Raf could only watch in horror as a muzzle was strapped to his head and a tube pushed down his throat, still hopeful the pressure building within him would grow too great before any draining could begin. Popping wouldn't be fun, but it'd be far better than what Michael had in store for him. The muzzle muffled his yelp as a second tube was jammed straight into his naval.

With Raf secured, Michael flipped the start-up switches on the machinery and smiled as the pumps roared to life along with the rest of the bottling line. He could hear the soda being sucked up through the tubes to fill the storage tank, before continuing on to be carbonated and finally bottled. Though his brother was a blimp with most of his face covered, Michael could still clearly see the despair in Raf's eyes, and he couldn't help but smile even more. Michael always took joy in proving he was the better twin and putting Raf in his place. In his opinion Raf was better off as a berry, preferably a bloated one kept out of sight. If profits were strong and no accidents happened, maybe Michael would get his wish.

Michael gave his brother a final, mocking pat on the side before leaving the enclosure and shutting its door. To his delight, a few sealed bottles of his new product had already slid into place at the end of the line. The clear glass bottles showed off the bright blue soda perfectly, guaranteed to catch the eyes of potential customers, and the caps were colored similarly to stand out just as well, even after being discarded. He was most proud of the label, though. A filtered head shot of Raf with his signature scowl, the words "Blue Rafberry Soda" printed in an arc above it. Few would be able to forget such a sight. Michael let out a happy sigh as he thought about all the money his grump of a twin was about to make him.