

A Gradual Swell

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Professor Raf mumbled under his breath as he sat in his office, draining the last of his meal replacement shake while grading math papers. Well, trying to at least. His most recent attempt to diet was going just as poorly as all the others, and his stomach had been rumbling in complaint all day. The temptation to sneak off to the nearest dining hall was strong, but thankfully his reluctance to be seen gorging by students was enough to keep his round butt firmly planted in place.

An unexpected belch left his lips, and Raf blushed in embarrassment, hoping he hadn't been heard by neighboring faculty members. Another, louder belch followed, and the flustered hyena quickly gave his gut a thump with one paw to free any remaining rebellious air from his stomach before it could humiliate him further. Fortunately his brief bout of gassiness appeared to be over. As the Professor returned to his papers, though, far more embarrassing changes were beginning to occur in his body.

Raf's almost-loose vest and dress shirt were gradually growing more comfy, forced to contain not only an expanding belly, but thickening arms as well. Having undone his belt after sitting, Raf remained blissfully unaware of how gradually unnecessary it was becoming, his thighs and rear not immune to his mysterious fattening. Of course, even once his clothing started feeling tight, Raf unconsciously shrugged the sensation off. After all, it was rare for anything he wore to fit well for long.

The Professor's gains remained steady, yet slow enough that a casual observer likely would've doubted their eyes had they glanced at him long enough. For someone so easily lost in work as Raf, such subtlety was dangerously effective. He continued softening, his clothes growing snuggler and snuggler but still relatively effective. The first sign something was off occurred when Raf absentmindedly went to scratch his middle, and found his fingers pressing against his dress shirt rather than his vest.

A quick glance down at the minor curiosity didn't faze him, the hyena's gains not registering at first. Seconds later his pen came to a halt, though. Raf looked back down, this time rolling backwards a little in his chair to get a better view of his belly. He gave it a nervous prod, hoping he was simply suffering from bloating, something sensible; of course the finger sunk right into pudge. By then he was more attentive to the slight discomfort of his clothing, sneaking a feel of his shirt collar and how tight it'd become.

The sudden realization he was gaining weight didn't cause Raf to panic or break down. Instead he simply sighed and rolled his eyes. Raf was a frequent victim of such occurrences—either through maliciousness or poor luck—and was woefully accustomed to them. Not that he wasn't any less frustrated. Grumbling under his breath, Raf hefted himself out of his cozy office chair, belly wobbling lightly in the process. Without knowing who or what the culprit was, Raf couldn't even begin to guess as to how large he was going to grow. At times he'd only plumped up a little, burdened with just enough extra weight to demand a new wardrobe. Others had left him just barely mobile, a lumbering butterball who needed help squeezing through most doorways. He didn't like to linger on the few occasions he'd ended up filling whole rooms; that month trapped in his own office was the worst of his life.

Despite all the uncertainties involved in his current predicament, Raf knew his best option was to swiftly make his way over to the nearby campus clinic. At the very least they would have something to neutralize his weight gain. The Professor hastily grabbed some essentials before fleeing his office and huffing over to the elevators. Moving only strained the fragile buttons of his vest further, and the first had popped off only half-way to his destination. A second failed just as he reached the elevators, jiggling his gut briefly.

Raf was about to undo his vest to save the remaining buttons when the doors slid open, revealing a plump lion who he vaguely recognized from a recent class. Uneager to draw attention to his shameful middle, the Professor pretended to adjust his pink tie instead, hoping the student somehow

needed off on that floor. Of course Raf wasn't so lucky. With his signature sigh Raf slid into the frustratingly small elevator. Even on a good day the aged car was a bit too cramped for comfort, but the combined girths of the hyena and lion denied either much personal space. To make matters worse, Raf had no good way of disguising his gains, which he feared were speeding up. He did his best to angle his gut away from the student in preparation of the buttons inevitably fated to burst. The low screeching of the doors concealed another button flying out into the hall just in time.

The Professor's belly wobbled as the elevator lurched to a start, Raf too lost in thought to notice the student's gaze keenly shifting towards the pudge in motion. Columbia State University had a reputation as one of the fattest campuses in the country, so naturally quite a few individuals with a fondness for flab had been drawn to the school; Raf seemed especially talented at stumbling upon them. The lion, meanwhile, silently celebrated his luck. He'd spent most of Professor Raf's class last semester admiring the hyena's sporadically expanding waistline, always arriving early and leaving late, choosing a seat right up front to maintain the best view. Sure the distraction had played a role in his C grade, but math wasn't really vital to his intended degree.

As the lion took full advantage of his pleasant surroundings, he couldn't shake the feeling the Professor's middle was actually growing larger. The few buttons left on Raf's vest seemed to be struggling more and more with each passing second, and those on his dress shirt underneath weren't faring much better either. Tufts of tan fur were visible in the widening gaps, a sight that'd been delightfully common during class. From the student's perspective Raf didn't seem to notice the changes, though his permanent scowl was often difficult to read. The last two vest buttons finally flew off, Raf's grumbling not loud enough to cover the noise of them clattering about the faux wood walls and floor. Without saying a word Raf straightened his vest as if nothing had happened.

Denial could only go so far, though. The Professor's dress shirt was already straining, the seams of his sleeves threatening to tear apart and the shirt itself slowly being untucked by his swelling gut. He tried sucking in his stomach to buy more time, but the desperate effort did little to alleviate the pressure his increasing pudge was inflicting upon his clothes. One by one threads began to fray as a steady stream of light ripping sounds echoed throughout the elevator. Raf's whole outfit was coming apart at once, and there was nothing he could do but stand by and let it happen.

His face flushed red as bits of flabby tan and brown fur peeked from under the tears. The entire ordeal dragged on painfully long, Raf adjusting his gate to handle his increasing weight. He wanted to simply try "flexing" out of everything, but the thought of ending up nude in public sent shivers down his spine. Besides, he wasn't eager to give any gratification to the lion who was now obviously ogling him. Why was it always lions? And zebras, too. Raf swore he'd never met a lion or zebra who *didn't* want to see him massive, and their intentions were rarely innocent. For a moment he suspected the student of being the culprit of his condition, before quickly brushing aside the baseless paranoid thought. More than likely the lion had simply had good timing.

With his clothes barely intact, all subtlety in Raf's fattening came to a sudden halt, the pounds now starting to pile on far more swiftly than before. Raf grumbled loudly as a series of tears heralded the final destruction of his shirt and pants, his loose tie the only article to not fall to the floor in tatters. The lion was blushing harder than Raf, and while he was plainly enamored by the sight before him he soon found himself backed into a corner to evade the Professor's swelling girth. One of Raf's love handles pressed into the elevator doors, the hyena forced to side-step to make room, gently pinning the student against the wall with the other side of his belly.

Shifting was pointless *and* impossible for Raf now. His face contorted between annoyance and embarrassment as his bulk dutifully filled every spare inch of the elevator. The student was fidgeting beneath the wall of flab gradually engulfing him, face flushed red and incapable of disguising his joy. Raf quietly fumed, his frown made silly by the massive, wobbling globes that were his cheeks. He wondered if the lion would still be having fun if he ended up completely buried under blubber. Fortunately for both Raf's expansion slowly came to an end. The massive Professor couldn't move

anymore, able to feel his pudge touching all four walls and even the floor, and the only sign of the student was his head poking out just barely above Raf's belly, chin resting on flab.

The elevator groaned as it finally arrived at the ground floor, Raf's bloated form jiggling in the process. As the doors opened Raf could feel his wobbly sides ooze out in to the open air, providing some relief from the pressure but not much. There were a couple gasps outside, followed by chuckles, a single bystander bothering to call for the fire department. Though Raf couldn't see what was going on, he knew someone was likely filming him, or at the very least taking pictures. Suddenly being immobilized in his office again didn't seem so bad. With a long wait in the elevator ahead of him Raf lowered his head into his soft chest and sighed, trying to ignore his growling stomach...