

Office Taste Test

By: IndigoRho

Joel nervously fussed with his tie and dress shirt as he hurried through the office. The rather timid lemur had been unexpectedly summoned by his boss Mr. Gaines, and on instinct he expected the worst. What if he hadn't been meeting quotas, or his attire wasn't up to standards, or the company was downsizing, or—

The lemur's escalating worries continued until the moment he reached the conference room. The shades of its windows had been lowered, preventing Joel from seeing if anyone else was inside. His paw hovered over the door handle, shaking. Eventually Joel managed to pull himself together and cautiously enter.

“Ah, good to see you Joel!” Mr. Gaines said cheerfully as soon as Joel was inside.

Mr. Gaines was a fairly hefty spotted hyena, at least twice as heavy as the only slightly chubby Joel. His suit was tailored to compliment his curves, with not a single button strained. The tips of his mohawk were frosted to match his golden eyes, and the hyena always seemed to be smiling. At a glance he came across as jolly, inviting. Joel had heard enough rumors to worry it was all a guise, though; no one became a regional Vice President being nice.

“H-hello sir!” Joel said, standing before the room's center table.

“No need to be so formal, just call me Leon.” The hyena was slowly coming around the table. “I'm sure you're curious about why you're here. You've been chosen to help me select treats for the office break room!”

Joe was silent. Despite all his rampant speculation, he certainly hadn't expected his purpose there to involve food. Only then did he notice the towers of pastry boxes sitting atop carts along both walls. It looked like an entire bakery had been emptied into the conference room. The sheer quantity of food made the lemur even more confused. Perhaps others would be taste testing as well and he'd simply arrived first.

“I was expecting a bit more enthusiasm about free food,” Leon said with only the faintest hint of disappointment. “If you're not up for the task then I can find someone else...”

“N-no sir, I mean Leon! It's an honor!” Joel stammered. “I was just, um, taking in all the food here.”

Something about Joel's response made Leon grin. “Ah, of course! I made sure no expenses were spared, ordered a little of everything the city's best bakeries had to offer. Sweets are a wonderful source of motivation, trust me!”

The hyena gave his ample belly just enough of a pat to make it jiggle. Joel blushed at the sight, unsure of how to react.

“That's very thoughtful! I, uh, assume there'll be other testers?” Joel didn't know why he suddenly had doubts.

“No no no, just you,” Leon replied. “Best way to keep it a surprise for the rest of the office. And don't worry, you'll only need to eat enough to create an informed opinion.”

The vagueness of Leon's words went over Joel's head. “I'll do my best then!”

“I know this'll be a *huge* success.” Leon grinned, gesturing towards the chair at the head of the table. “Now why don't we get started.”

Joel complied without a second thought, eager to please his boss. As he sat in the chair he was caught off-guard by how wide it was. Someone three times his size could probably have fit in it comfortably, and he couldn't help but feel small. He guessed it made sense for Leon to have a chair big enough to handle his heft.

While Joel had pondered the chair, Leon had been busy grabbing pastry boxes. Three now sat before Joel, wide open and practically overflowing. Donuts, cupcakes, and cookies—the tempting mixture of aromas made Joel's stomach growl.

The lemur proceeded with caution, not wanting to disappoint his boss but not sure how he should even approach the daunting task of sampling such a large variety of pastries. Almost at random he chose a sprinkled donut and bit into it. The taste was phenomenal. While he wasn't much of a sweet tooth he still hadn't expected the donut to be so, so addictingly delicious. The bakery it'd come from must have been a high-end one.

Joel ravenously devoured the rest of the donut, only to realize Leon was smiling down on him. "T-the donuts are fantastic, they've definitely got my support."

"You should try out more of them," Leon replied. "Just to make sure each flavor lives up to the first one."

The request made sense to Joel. He gladly selected a chocolate donut next. Just as hoped the donut was equally wonderful, and Joel finished it off in seconds. Joel didn't need anymore coaxing from Leon to sample a third donut, nor a fourth or fifth. Soon the lemur lost track of just how many donuts he was consuming.

Eventually Joel's paw went for a pastry and found nothing. Baffled, his face flushed red once he noticed the box was empty; he'd somehow eaten them all. His middle was noticeably tauter, yet he didn't feel the slightest bit full. His breakfast had been light, and maybe there'd been less donuts in the box than he'd thought. Though the excuses for his unusual gluttony were weak he blindly clung to them.

"So, how were the donuts," Leon asked, as perpetually cheerful as ever. He didn't *seem* to think Joel had acted oddly, just...expectedly.

"They were all as amazing as the first! I'm sure the rest of the office would love them." *Maybe a little too much, even. If the break room were stocked every day with donuts that great half the office might end up looking like Leon.*

"Wonderful, wonderful." Leon took the empty box away, but returned with one of elaborate brownies to take its place. "I'll note that these particular donuts have approval, but feel free to start taste testing again."

After devouring a whole box by himself, Joel had hoped he'd be dismissed, or at least given a break. He worried about whether or not he could handle his usual work while stuffed.

"Um, Leon. C-could I, um..."

"No need to say another word Joel, I know exactly what you're thinking." Joel's few seconds of relief were dashed as Leon merely brought out a large pitcher of milk. "Having something to wash all these pastries down with is very important!"

Unwilling to say no to someone so much higher up the corporate ladder, Joel nodded and put on a fake smile. He'd have to hope Leon would be satisfied sooner rather than later.

Unfortunately the new assortment of desserts was just as unbelievably delicious as the donuts had been. The lemur's paws darted from one box to another, pastries vanishing into his maw faster than he could comprehend. No matter how hard he tried he couldn't resist the intense urge to consume everything in reach. In between bites Joel was gulping down milk, Leon always ready to refill his glass, even when it was over half full. The hyena was also constantly urging Joel on, imploring him to try more and more, to not leave a single crumb behind.

Naturally the nonstop eating was taking a toll on Joel's middle. His belly was swelling with pastries, pushing against his increasingly tighter dress shirt. One-by-one the buttons strained, threads creaking. When the first finally snapped his pot belly jiggled in response, relieving the strain and buying the others some time.

It wasn't until a second button popped off and skidded across the floor that Joel was jolted from his compulsive gluttony. His mouth full of brownie, the lemur let out an *mmmph* of dismay as his eyes widened.

"Best to keep your eyes on the food rather than your middle," Leon smirked, waving a cookie in front of Joel to distract him. "You have a job to do, after all."

Leon's tone was just stern enough to force Joel to ignore how obviously overstuffed he was and return to eating. The intoxicating taste of the treats themselves quickly washed away his lingering concerns. All he could do was eat...and eat, and eat, and eat.

The remaining buttons of Joel's dress shirt didn't last long. They flew off left and right as the growing dome of his furry white belly broke free, until only the top-most button remained. His gut expanded against the edge of the table, and then slowly pushed him backwards in his chair to make more room.

No matter how many pastries Joel ate or milk he drank, there was always more, so much *more*. All were to his liking, nothing even remotely bland or underwhelming. His eating became mindless, instinctual. Nothing else mattered to the lemur, who would have dutifully—albeit reluctantly—eaten until nightfall if Leon had commanded it. He lost track of time and how much he'd consumed, practically in a daze.

Meanwhile, Leon looked on with glee. Thorough research had told him Joel would be one of the easiest employees to coerce into ridiculous gluttony, but the lemur's sheer willingness to gorge without question was incredible. Leon had come prepared to issue threats or even outright force-feed Joel if resistance was encountered, but he was rapidly doubting either would be necessary. Fattening a subordinate had never been easier.

Once Joel's gut had become a two foot wide globe Leon moved a paw to rub it. He could *feel* how full the lemur was, his paw barely sinking in at all even when force was applied. The special additives he'd included in the food would ensure his *lucky* test subject wouldn't feel full, while every bite he took would make him crave another, and another, and another. Best of all, each pastry was loaded with far more calories than normal; Joel was likely going to outgrow his entire wardrobe by day's end.

It didn't take long for Joel's massive belly to interfere in his gorging, though. Reaching the table became harder and harder as time went on, and the increasing delays in eating were becoming unacceptable to Leon.

The hyena pushed one of the pastry carts right up to Joel and began shoving donuts into his mouth, whole. Joel squirmed a little at first as his boss began to feed him, but once again the taste won out. The chair groaned as he leaned back into it, his immense gut pushing against and over the arms. Against the odds he was managing to test its limits. Leon ignored the chair's protests, more than willing to demolish furniture in the name of expanding Joel; replacing such things would be trivial, after all.

Joel's awareness gradually faded, the unfortunate office drone more pastry than lemur by then. Stuffed silly, he simply passed out and fell into a deep food coma.

Leon chuckled once he realized Joel was out cold. As the lemur snoozed the desserts he'd gluttoned on would be converted into pound upon pound of soft, wobbly fat. He could already imagine Joel's cheeks getting rounder and his jawline vanishing. His small chubby belly would become a true doughy gut, his butt jiggly and his thighs thick. Joel wouldn't be as delightfully fat as Leon was, but he'd be well on his way to never weighing under two hundred pounds again.

Leon was a man of vision, and all he saw was an office filled with employees who could barely pass each other in the hall without getting stuck. A building of suit-clad butterballs all at his beck and call, spending as much time eating as they did working. Was it merely coincidence he had stakes in local tailors and take-out franchises? Of course not. Though he wasn't eager to count the small fortune he'd be making until after the rest of the office took to the new break room pastries as well as Joel had.

"Hope you get used to waddling soon, Joel," Leon laughed and gave the dozing lemur's gut a small pat.

The hyena strolled out the door to the conference room and turned out the lights, leaving Joel to sleep off his "taste testing" session.