

The Bandits and the Wyvern

By: IndigoRho

“Of course cattle is a good investment! Everyone needs food, and all the respectable inns in the city empty their coffers for high-quality beef!”

“You’ll lose everything the second tastes change! Or when you simply eat all of your stock!”

August groaned, no longer bothering to disguise his disdain for the endless bickering. The lean gray snake had almost instantly regretted his decision to travel with three other mages he barely knew. Unfortunately his boyfriend and business partner Rho had been insistent he not make the journey alone while bandit attacks were so frequent. He understood the sentiment, but a group of four wasn’t any less likely to be targeted than an individual, and August’s illusion magic was more than enough to handle simple thieves. Besides, he was just as likely to join the bandits as fight them if it meant being free of his companions. They’d all proven unbearable in their own unique way.

Most prominent—both in size and *status*—was Tolis. A platypus as big as a hippo, Tolis was more of a merchant than a mage, to the degree that August couldn’t remember his specialty. He seemed incapable of talking about anything aside from business or the latest obscenely expensive trinket he’d acquired.

Tolis’ sole redeeming quality was that he wasn’t Emeric. The horse argued with Tolis constantly and pointlessly. When he wasn’t feuding he was an appraiser of some sort, though he rarely talked of his work. Still, such an aggressive act would be a hassle in the long run.

“I think I’ll take a quick stroll in the woods,” August said as he suddenly stood, his stomach growling. “Try not to brawl while I’m gone.”

Tolis and Emeric both snorted at the snake’s comment, though the break in their argument was short-lived.

For nearly half an hour August wandered, just far enough from camp that he couldn’t make out conversation. Though relaxing in some ways, walking also made him hungrier, and his thoughts persistently drifted to how utterly satisfying it would be to have Tolis crammed into his belly. Even Gideon would be nice. Watching the boar squirm and churn might calm the troublemakers down as well.

Worried that his hunger was tempting him towards brash choices, August decided to head back. As he neared the edge of the woods he realized the other mages were no longer alone. Five strangers in leather armor had just dismounted from their horses a bit up the trail. They didn’t bear any visible coat of arms or insignia, didn’t carry the supplies travelers would have needed this far out. Most suspicious, though, was how portly they all were. There was little doubt in August’s mind they were bandits, and likely ones who intended to feast on victims rather than steal from them.

Tolis appeared to come to the same conclusion. After a short exchange of words the platypus conjured lightning in his flippers—a show of force. Strangely, none of the bandits recoiled or fled. Their probable leader—a massive squirrel almost too fat for his armor—spoke again and started walking closer.

There was a final unheeded warning, and then Tolis launched a small ball of lightning right at the bandit.

The squirrel opened his mouth wide in response, and the ball was sucked right in. He showed no signs of injury or strain—it was as if he’d merely gulped down a mug of beer.

Tolis was more surprised than anyone else. Larger bolts cackled around his palms, a barrage of ball lightning launched at his approaching foe. One-by-one they were gobbled up, the squirrel’s belly swelling a little with every bite. Once Tolis had exhausted himself and given up the bandit leader gave his gut a satisfied pat and belched up a spark, grinning.

Ah, magic eaters.

Plenty of techniques existed to counter or nullify magic, and one of the strangest involved

literally eating any spells thrown at you. August had heard the practice could get addicting, leading to a strong craving for everything magical, *especially* mages.

Streaks of flame flew past the squirrel and towards the other four bandits, an attempt by Gideon to even the odds. Unfortunately the four all opened wide, gorging on the delicious fiery snack they'd been provided.

An entire group of magic eaters? And a successful one at that considering how fat they were.

The bandits quickly converged on the three defenseless mages, consuming every spell thrown their way with the ease of experts. By the time they had their targets surrounded they were all a little rounder, their bellies wobbling and stuffed. The squirrel grabbed Tolis by the arm and began to taunt him, squeezing his gut and licking his lips. August was sure he was probably referring to Tolis as a snack or complimenting him on how fattening he'd be, all things the snake would have done himself.

After plenty of gloating and teasing the bandit leader shoved Tolis' head right into his mouth. Tolis struggled frantically, but the squirrel was just as heavy and a fair bit stronger—not to mention hungry. Swift gulps pulled Tolis' shoulders and moobs into the greedy maw, a bulge forming in the bandit leader's throat.

A second bandit swooped in and grabbed Tolis' legs, lifting the platypus up to help his boss. Every swallow undid a strap or two on the squirrel's leather armor, forcing it to come undone as his belly swelled outward.

Emeric and Gideon were held in place and forced to watch their companion get eaten. Both were cowering, wondering whose stomach they were bound to end up in. They were being teased in the same way Tolis had. Exaggerated looks of disappointment were given towards Emeric's chubby, unfilling frame, while Gideon was treated like the centerpiece for a banquet. Undoubtedly there were jokes about roast boar after his display of pyromancy.

Soon Tolis was reduced to just his thick flailing legs, and it didn't take much to slurp them up.

The bandit leader dropped to his knees, a thunderous belch echoing out as his bulging gut bounced off the ground. He groped and kneaded his wobbling middle, sharing a round of laughter with the others. Once it subsided he pointed towards Emeric, who shook his head wildly and shouted as he was lifted into the air and carried hooves-first towards an eager ram.

August hadn't moved from his hiding place in the woods. If he charged in all he'd end up doing was stuff the bandits more, both with magic and himself. Despite his disagreements with the other mages—and admitted jealousy in the bandits getting to eat them—August knew he needed to do something.

The snake's claw slipped into a pouch on his belt and pulled out a vial. His boyfriend was skilled at making transformation potions, though he'd always sternly been warned to never use the one he was about to drink unless he'd run out of options. He hadn't quite gotten the hang of controlling the wyvern form, yet, but its brute strength was just what August needed against bandits.

The cork was popped and the vial drained, August shuddering as a chill surged through his body. Chill turned into tingling, and August began to grow. The seams of his vest and pants strained and ripped, not enchanted to handle such drastic changes. Membranes appeared along his arms as they turned into wings.

Transforming was disorienting. August stumbled as he tried to adjust to his changing size, unable to remain upright. His hunger was intensifying, his thoughts constantly drifting to the need for food—*lots* of food. He made an effort to maintain control, but giving in to hunger was hard to resist. Oh well, at least he'd get that feast he'd been fantasizing about...

When the gray wyvern finally felt the tingling subside, the scent of delicious prey flooded his nostrils. He looked out into the clearing and smiled wide as he saw a six-course feast simply waiting for him. Stomach rumbling, August flapped his wings and surged out of the forest, gliding low as he swooped in.

The ram had just finished swallowing Emeric's head when he saw the serpentine wyvern

approaching. He let out a panicked shout interrupted by a belch, and suddenly all eyes were on the new threat.

Not a single weapon was drawn before August plowed into the group, sending bandits flying. A donkey never even reached the ground, belly-deep in the wyvern's maw from the initial strike. Though he kicked up a storm a simple tilt of the head was all it took to send him sliding across the tongue and down the gullet, August's flat middle bulging from the addition of the first course. Chaos ensued.

Amidst shouts a lemur found himself coiled up by August's tail and lifted up above an open maw. While he couldn't see the pit below him he could sense it, squirming and begging for help until the moment he was dropped. His cries were swiftly muffled, August's belly swelling further.

One of the bandits—a panda—actually unsheathed his sword, though he immediately regretted it as he sized up his opponent. August pulled off a waddling charge, slamming his engorged gut into the bandit and sending him sprawling. Barely conscious, the panda offered no resistance as he was grabbed and gulped, making the wyvern even fatter.

The ram—with Emeric bouncing on his waistline—attempted to flee, but there was no way he was going to out-waddle even the overstuffed August. With his massive gut dragging on the ground August slowly caught up to the ram, tripping him with his tail. Emeric was very nearly belched up on impact, but a quick, instinctive swallow sealed him back up.

August gobbled up the ram's hooves, greedily pulling him in inch-by-inch. The ram clawed at the dirt and shouted in vain. As his horse-filled belly slid onto the tongue August lifted his head up, turning the ram into a sizable lump in his throat on his way to the stomach.

With five prey tightly packed into his gut August was barely mobile—but still hungry. The bandit leader was beached thanks to Tolis, and he exhausted himself squirming as August wobbled his way. When he'd found the three mages he'd thought luck had been on his side. How had a wyvern even ended up in the area, and why had it stumbled upon them while they were at their most vulnerable, unable to flee?

The squirrel's eyes darted between the wyvern's belly and his maw, whimpering as a shadow loomed over him. Just like the others he was snatched up, squeezed down a tight throat and soaked in saliva by the time he was dropped into the stomach with the rest of his men.

August celebrated the defeat of the bandits with a belch that sent birds flying and rattled whole trees. His slick belly was immense, bulges pressing out from all sides as his prey protested their fate. He had no hope of waddling let alone flying, and it would have taken a small army to roll him anywhere. Immobility didn't bother him, though.

Gideon had been too terrified to move throughout the ordeal. He recognized the colors and patterns on the mysterious wyvern, saw the clear resemblance to August in its features. It wasn't a secret that August enjoyed taking on other forms from time to time—he wasn't even usually a snake—but Gideon had never heard of his fellow professor becoming a wyvern. The display of gluttony had been impressive, and while Tolis and Emeric had gotten caught up in the feeding frenzy, *he* was still safe and sound.

The boar stood, nervously walking up to the wyvern. “T-Thanks August, I'm pretty sure I was about to fatten a donkey. I, um, assume you'll stay like that until you've finished digesting your meal?”

August didn't say a word, only smiled. His tail snuck behind Gideon and nudged him forwards, until he was less than a foot from the wyvern's lips.

“Surely you've had enough to eat already!” Gideon insisted. “And you'll need someone to help you carry the rest of the—*mrrmmph!*!”

A single bite took in half of the boar, and a second left only his wiggling hooves sticking out. August's belly swelled a final time as he consumed Gideon, who proved to be a delightful finish to the massive feast. Stuffed beyond imagine, August happily sighed as he lay atop his gut, falling into a deep food coma as his stomach let out a sloppy *glrrrrrgle*. Churning eight meals into fat was going to take a while...