

A Disappointing Pupil

By IndigoRho

Ivan stood just outside the lecture hall, almost too nervous to enter. The portly zebra was a student at a mage college, with a focus on illusion magic. He'd been studious enough the first couple years, breezing through courses and rarely missing lectures. Then he'd grown lazy. *Very* lazy.

The zebra spent more time hanging out at taverns with friends than honing his skills, and treated lectures as optional. Ivan had gone from being a little chubby to undeniably doughy, his tunic clinging to the dome of his gut. Much of the weight had come from drunken arguments that ended with Ivan "victorious" and his opposition squirming in his bulging gut.

From his point of view the year had been going great. Eventually failing half his classes had proved him otherwise.

For the last couple months Ivan had been stuck attending supplementary courses in a desperate attempt to salvage his grades and remain in college. He'd only met with limited success, and none of it was in Professor August Days' class. Ivan didn't expect his final presentation to go any better.

With great reluctance Ivan walked into the lecture hall, which was empty aside from the Professor himself. August was a somewhat hefty gray lion, belly wrapped in a light blue vest and white undershirt. He wore glasses, and a silver bangle on his flicking tail reflective the light.

The Professor grinned as he spotted his pupil arriving. "Welcome Ivan, welcome! I'm excited to see if you've improved."

Ivan gulped. Though August was generally friendly, there were rumors that more than a few students had ended up adding to his waistline. He hadn't personally witnessed the lion eat anyone so far, but he swore he'd shown up to classes unusually fatter a couple times.

August continued. "Alright, your final is simple--at least it should be for a third year. I need you to create an illusory replica of me. It needs to be life-sized, an accurate duplicate. No glowing aura, no vague shape, and it has to be solid."

Meeting the Professor's expectations exactly would have been challenging to any experienced illusion magic student, but Ivan doubted he could even meet a fraction of them. He silently cursed himself for not practicing forms more. Oh well. At worst he'd done alright in his other makeup courses, and having to redo Illusory Manifestation wouldn't be *too* bad. Ivan just hoped the Professor wouldn't chew him out too much when he failed.

The zebra concentrated on the space in front of him, muttering an incantation under his breath that usually helped him shape magic.

A swirling ball of icy blue appeared in the air, expanding and stretching as Ivan focused. Slowly the mass was molded, a pair of arms and legs forming, then a tail. The illusion's middle swelled out to match August's own. Details were added erratically. There was a face and paws, a lumpy mane, a few creases of vest and pants. Colors shifted, but a blue tint persistently remained.

Eventually Ivan stood back, avoiding eye contact with his Professor.

August looked the illusion up and down and shook his head. "Oh where to start. You've clearly created a lion—I'll give you that—but this could only be mistaken for me at a distance. it's closer to a clay statue or a doll, too many smooth features. Color is done well at least, though a bit bluer than I'd like." He gave the illusion's middle a prod. "Feels like the real thing, if noticeably fatter *and* shorter."

Ivan blushed in embarrassment. With professor and illusion side-by-side, it was obvious he'd plumped his fake August up a bit on accident. Still, the zebra felt like he could've done much worse.

A casual wave from August dispersed the illusion. "I have to say, Ivan, I'm very disappointed. This course was meant to get you back on the right track, but you've barely shown any improvement whatsoever. With how much extra tutoring you've been given you *should* be creating high quality duplicates with ease."

“Or at the very least knowing when you’re staring right at one of those duplicates.”

Ivan turned in confusion towards the back of the hall...where another Professor August was sitting. When he looked back at the August who’d been lecturing him he saw his eyes briefly glow an icy blue.

The apparent illusion began talking once more. “Well Ivan, you’ve failed your final. To be honest, I just don’t feel you’re taking your education seriously enough to remain in the program, but fortunately I know where you’ll excel.” August abruptly grabbed both of Ivan’s arms, much to the sullen zebra’s surprise. “On my waistline as a few dozen pounds of magically infused fat~”

Ivan was too shocked to react, even as the illusion’s maw opened wide, looking far, far too real. Jaws clamped over his head, his muffled shout echoing uselessly down the back of the illusion’s throat. He staggered and squirmed but his every movement was matched. One swallow, then another and another, shoulders slipping from view. Had he not been about to be eaten alive, Ivan might have appreciated that the illusion was just as accurate on the inside as the outside.

The real Professor August got out of his chair and made his way to the front, smiling as he watched his copy consume the underwhelming pupil. Eating others was delightful, but actually being able to see what it looked like for yourself to eat someone could be just as fun. The way his neck bulged, how his belly began to balloon as Ivan emptied into it, how the zebra’s struggles did little to slow his inevitable descent.

It was something you couldn’t appreciate when you were focused on eating.

“Ivan I really didn’t expect you to pass today. I was honestly looking forward to you failing!” August chuckled, giving his pupil’s belly a teasing prod right before it was slurped up by his illusion. “You just look so *juicy*. I was always tempted to find an excuse to keep you after class and just scarf ya down on the spot! Course giving you a chance to prove yourself ensured you plumped up even more in the end.”

Upside down and kicking his legs wildly, Ivan could barely hear his professor from within the illusion. He desperately thumped on the stomach walls, but nothing he did seemed to affect his attacker in the slightest.

The illusion angled his meal high in the air for the final swallows, and the real August happily knelt down to rub and squeeze their swelling gut. He adored feeling the weight, the squirms. Every gulp sealed away a little more of Ivan, until finally the illusory lion closed its mouth.

With a bounce Ivan fell completely into the illusion’s stomach.

August hefted up his clone’s gut and let it drop, amused by the panicked wiggling of the prey within it. “I’d get comfy if I were you, Ivan. I was blessed by quite a few treats this year, and I’ll likely avoid glutting on them all at once. Though I must admit a grand feast is tempting~”

Ivan’s response was hard to hear, though Professor August could certainly guess its nature.

“Alright, I’ve got another final to oversee soon, so it’s time to put you in the pantry. Next time we meet you’ll be able to compare an illusory stomach to the real thing!”

The stuffed illusion began to waddle off, idly rubbing its gut and smirking. A door at the back of the lecture hall led to a storeroom, where three more lion illusions were relaxing, each sporting a bulging belly of their own. One was essentially beached, having consumed a massive elephant who was still wiggling around every now and then.

Each engorged lion represented a pupil who’d let laziness get the better of them, and they would soon learn the hard way what happened when August was disappointed. At least the Professor would get a filling meal out of it...