

Gluttonous Shadow

By: IndigoRho

Lee's eyes skimmed across the massive bookshelf lining the wall before him, trying to find another useful source for his research project. The zebra didn't hate the topic, but so far the library hadn't been helping as much as usual. At least he could distract himself with music thanks to his headphones. While Lee remained relatively still in his quest, his shadow was a stranger, different story. The shadow seemed to sway back and forth—almost impatiently—and anyone taking more than a casual glance would realize it didn't seem to belong to a zebra. Two straight horns extended from its head, and its tail was much longer and thicker than a zebra's. At the right angle the shadow could be mistaken for that of an eastern dragon.

No one nearby in the library was paying much attention to the shadow, though. Lee was too busy listening to music, and the plump siamese cat swiftly approaching didn't have any reason to be suspicious of the seemingly-clear path ahead of him. As soon as the cat stepped foot on the shadows peak it twitched abruptly, causing it's target to lose his balance and fall flat on his face. The cat's belly cushioned the blow a little, and the sound of Lee's music kept him blissfully unaware of the accident.

While the cat moaned and put a paw to his bruised nose, the shadow's form began to shift dramatically. It's color grew darker till it was a solid, inky black, like a stain on the floor. The normally flat end bulged, taking on the form of a grinning dragon. Shadowy arms that *had* been mimicking Lee's movements now moved and formed into claws. When the cat finally came to his senses he gasped as he saw the monster that awaited him.

The shadow wasted little time striking its prey, digging into the cat's shoulders with its claws and dragging him into it's open jaws. Pure darkness greeted the cat as his head was engulfed. He could feel himself being pulled deeper into the shadow, almost as if it were swallowing him. No, *exactly* as if it were swallowing him. The pulls were rhythmic, like gulps, and the cramped space he was entering had soft, squishy walls like a gullet. All that was missing was saliva. As the flailing cat was slowly consumed, the shadow's "middle" began to swell and bulge. A couple minutes later the shadow's jaws sealed around the cat's footpaws, and the shadow itself sunk back into the floor and faded back to looking almost normal.

Lee's slim middle suddenly bulged, straining the buttons of his vest to their absolute limit. The zebra grimaced and dropped the book he was reading, eyes immediately moving down to his stomach, which continued to grow. He clenched his teeth and looked over his shoulder, growling as he spotted the odd movements in his shadow. His vest buttons finally gave in, shooting off against the bookshelves and clattering to the floor. Lee's belly bounced as it was exposed. There was nothing he could do to stop his shadow from transferring whoever it'd eaten over to him, leaving the zebra to fume as his gut ballooned outward, sagging towards his knees. At least no one was around to witness his embarrassment.

Once Lee's belly settled down—relatively speaking—he took a moment to chew out his shadow. "Seriously Kai!" He clamped a hoof over his own mouth upon realizing how loud he was.

A dragon's head formed from the shadow again, still grinning. "You always forget to eat when you study, hun, I'm just looking out for you. Besides, I was bored."

"I can't do research lugging a gut this size around!" Lee grumbled, shaking his squirming middle for emphasis. "I'd just end up knocking over a whole row of bookshelves or something."

"If it's really that much of a hassle then you can always throw him back up." Kai shrugged.

Lee rolled his eyes, already putting his headphones back into his bag. "Last time I did that you ate the poor guy again as soon as he was free. I'm not dealing with that today."

"Eh, was worth a shot," Kai said. "You gonna take something to speed up the digestion when you get home? It'd be nice to see you less emaciated again."

Lee glared at Kai. "You think I'm emaciated any time I weigh less than three hundred pounds."

You were a horrible menace to my waistline when you were still alive, I can't believe you managed to get worse after!"

"A little extra pudge never hurt anyone!" Kai insisted.

"You were literally crushed to death under my gut after spiking my drink with a weight-gain potion," Lee seethed.

The shadow laughed. "I got better! Kind of. Having my spirit bound to your shadow is rather enjoyable, *and* it means we're never separated."

Lee sighed. As frustrating as Kai could be at times, the zebra still loved him. He just wished the former dragon would use his odd powers for more productive purposes than constantly trying to make him huge.

"Alright, alright. We'll discuss this more when we get home. Why don't you go incognito so we draw less attention," Lee asked.

"Sounds good. I could use a break anyway," Kai pretended to yawn. "See ya later, hun."

Kai sunk back into Lee's shadow, which twisted and morphed till it actually resembled the zebra again. Lee waddled off in the direction of the exit, muffling a few short belches as he did. His belly was still bouncing back and forth as the cat within struggled frantically, doomed to become unwanted layers of fresh zebra pudge soon enough. He *wanted* to feel a little bad for the unlucky cat, but the thought of how much weight he was going to gain because of him just made Lee grumpy. Why were the ones clumsy enough to get caught by Kai always so fattening!