

The Blimp Job

“Alright, Rai, hand me the glass cutter...glass cutter...hey, jackass! The glass cutter!” The raccoon gave the distracted kitsune a jab in the side, distracting him from his reading.

“Alright, here! And watch it, Gabs, it’s kind of cramped here. Almost gonna have me knocking something over.” Raigeki fumbled in his bag and grabbed the small roller, handing it to the irate raccoon. Gabor hastily took it and began making scores in the glass surrounding the score of the night: a brilliant blue jewel embezzled in an oddly shaped, pure gold pendant.

“It’s not that-,” before Gabor could finish his sentence, he stood up to stretch his back and, without thinking how much space he took up in front of him, knocked a vase off its pedestal with his gut. The raccoon could only look at it as it fell in slow motion, fearful of when it would shatter on the ground. Thankfully, the shatter never came as Raigeki, in a display of either extreme luck or deft ability, caught the vase in the opening with his foot. Gabs let out a quick, nervous chuckle before finishing his sentence, “...cramped. Anyway, what’s got you all distracted?”

Rai gave an exasperated sigh, annoyed at the raccoon, “I was just reading up on our little friend here. Get a load of this: ‘This gem, lovingly called the ‘Porcine Gem of Opulence, is said to bring its owner great riches. A brilliant blue gem set in pure gold, its shape almost mimicking that of a pig with the gem appearing to be its belly. While the gem supposedly brings riches to the owner, the locals of the area the gem came from say that those who take it for selfish reasons will find their riches to be empty. Archaeologist’s note: Wealth for these locals was measured not in gold or money, but, rather, on size of crop. Also, those who were wealthy were also quite overweight. Because of this distinction, it’s hard to understand what “empty riches” could me- “

“Are you done?”

Rai's eyes narrowed, ready to throw daggers at the raccoon. "You of all people could do with a history lesson. Now, are you done?"

“Almost, just give me the drill.” Rai handed the raccoon the small power drill he brought, watching as he immediately set to work drilling into the glass.

"So...you've done this before, right? This seems like a pretty risky way to get through glass."

“Well...no, I have not. But I read up a lot on the process, thank you! I’ve got all the edges taped, scores made where I need them, and it should be all set up for a perfectly controlled break. Just...need...to drill...a bit...”

CRACK

...

BWEEP BWEEP BWEEP BWEEP BWEEP BWEEP BWEEP BWEEP BWEEP BWEEP BWEEP BWEEP BWEEP

Ten minutes later, Gabor and Raigeki were in the alley right next to the museum which had just shut off its blaring alarm as they panted their lungs out. The kitsune held out a shaking hand to grab the raccoon's collar, bringing him to his face. "You...idiot!"

"Hey, at least we got the damn thing!" Gabor grabbed the gem from his hat to show Rai, as if that would make everything better.

"But now we have who knows how many security guards looking for us!"

"Oh, come on, it's not like they'll be able to-," boots treading down the sidewalk just outside the alley could be heard, "...find us."

"You just gotta use that big mouth of your-grrk!" Gabor suddenly shoved the gem into the kitsune's mouth, setting up for one of his impromptu plans.

"Yes! So, let me use this big mouth to get us out of this, and you use yours to keep that thing hidden! Alright?"

"Hey! You two!" The pair flinched as a flashlight shown on them. "You're sure out late. State your business."

"Our business? Uhh..." Gabor tried to think quick on his feet, a cold sweat forming on his forehead. "Loitering!" Rai shot a dirty look to the raccoon. "Yep! Simply loitering! We'll be on our way right this minute officer, no need for us to trouble you! Let's go, friend, and cease our loitering. You have a good night, officer!" The raccoon ended his cheesy defense, motioning the kitsune to follow with him out of the alley.

"Wait, just one second!" The two gulped hard. "You, chubby. What's this get up you've got. Are you trying to make yourself look like trouble?"

"Trouble? Me? I hardly even know the word! Neither my friend here! Right?" Gabs gave Rai a hearty slap on the back, eliciting a sudden coughing fit from the kitsune.

"You two sure are acting suspic-," suddenly, the officers shoulder radio chirped, a small voice calling for officers to go to the museum. "10-4, I'm just outside. Will report ASAP." The officer lowered his flashlight, turning to walk away. "You two stay out of trouble. And you...change that outfit."

"I'll definitely consider it, officer!" As the officer walked out of the alley, Gabor let out a sigh of relief. "Phew! See? What've you gotta say about this big mouth now!" Raigeki only looked at his cohort with a look of dread over his face. "Alright, let's see the gem."

"..."

"Rai, the gem?"

"..."

"Spit it out!"

"..."

"...No." In a panic, Gabor lunged at the kitsune, holding the Rai's mouth open, searching as much as he could before letting go. "You swallowed it?" He could hardly contain his rage at the realization before throwing his hat at the ground.

"It's your fault! I wouldn't have swallowed it if you hadn't slapped me on the [urp] on the back like that!" Raigeki cleared his throat, feeling a bit of indigestion, most likely due to the gem.

"You sure about that? It's not 'cause you missed snack time? Don't think I haven't noticed this thing you've been packing on!" Gabor lightly thwacked the slight bit of pudginess that laid on Rai's waist, which coaxed out a few more burps from the kitsune.

"Oh, you're one to talk! [urrrp] Get back to me when you don't have your own gravitational pull!" A harder thwack fell on the raccoon's globular gut in return.

"Uhh, excuse me? That's my whole thing, remember?" Gabor lightly jumped, going a few feet into the air before slowly floating back down.

"Oh yes, who could forget that you can make yourself float like a balloon. Or in your case a [buuaAARRRP] ugh, a blimp!"

"That's rich coming from a gasbag like you. Seriously, what's going on with all the burping?"

"My stomach's upset. Which I blame you for, since you made me swallow that damn [BUAAARRP] gem!" This time, a strange glimmer coated the air coming from the kitsune's gaseous eruptions, which both thieves were able to pick up on.

"...Was that-"

Rai quickly interjected, "Magic...I-I'm burping up magic." A gurgle came from the kitsune's stomach as another raucous belch erupted from Rai, a faint and shimmery aura flowing from his maw. Fanning the ethereal fumes away, a realization dawned on him. "The gem! It's...doing *something* to me!"

"It better be more than just giving you gas. Maybe it's them riches you were talking about back there!" Gabor's mind already became lost in a fantasy of sitting on a bed of gold coins as his cohort sits to the side belching and causing more coins to appear and clutter to the ground.

"Weren't you listening back there? The people this gem came from didn't believe in money or whatever." Rai looked over to Gabor, who was still blissfully lost in his fantasies. "Hey!" He started angrily, "Did you not hear a thing I said- [BUUAARRRP]" After that outburst, he felt another feeling along with the uncomfortable gurgling. Something almost like a tightness. Looking down, it was easy to see why; sitting just under his line of sight was a slightly bloated paunch where an only slightly soft stomach used to sit. "Gabs, stop your daydreaming and look at this-[URRRP]!" As Gabor snapped back to reality to see what Rai was going on about, the both of them caught a view of Raigeki's stomach bloating out a few inches after another shimmering burp which confirmed his growing suspicion.

"What's uh...going on there?"

"It's the gem you dolt!" Rai's insult was punctuated by another belch and another inch of growth in his sprouting belly. "That plaque in there said something about wealth being measured in how much food they produced, and it also said something that if the owner took the gem for selfish reasons, the riches they'd receive would be empty. This is what it means!" Rai gestured to his belly and gave it a thump, producing a hollow sound. The kitsune looked to the raccoon, but rather than a look of concern, Gabor looked like he was holding back the worst laughing fit of his life. "What...is so...funny."

“Hehe...you...accidentally swallowed-tch...a cursed gem. And it-haHA...it’s blowing you up like a balloon!” With his thoughts finally spoken, the raccoon erupted into a fit of laughter, much to the chagrin of the kitsune.

“You dumbass! Stop laughing and help me figure out a way to fix thi-[BUAAARRRP]” Another spurt of swelling came over Rai’s belly as it started to look like a small beachball. All the while, Gabor could not be enjoying himself more.

“I’m sorry what was that? All I heard was BUUWWAAARRRP AHAHAHAHA!” The raccoon was practically clutching his own gut in pain from how hard he was laughing. Rai let out an annoyed growl before belching and swelling once more. “I’d keep a level head buddy! Looks like the gem doesn’t like it when you’re mad!” The kitsune’s blood was practically boiling, thinking of ways to kill his raccoon companion, his thoughts only interrupted from an even more violent belch, followed by an equally violent surge of growth, making it so Rai looked like he was practically cradling an exercise ball. “Well, look at you! You’re catching up to me already!” The raccoon thrust forward, bumping his own belly into the kitsune’s growing one, prompting another belch, and even more growth. “Oh, this is so much fun.”

“Well, then let’s see how you like it!” Having had enough of Gabor’s prodding, Raigeki lunged, or rolled, forward, gripping Gabor by the collar. Gabor braced himself for a fist in the face, but, unexpectedly, found a pair of lips pressed against his. Before he could pull away, a strong belch was forced into his mouth and down his throat. When Rai finally let him go, Gabor immediately went into a coughing fit, spewing the same shimmering glow Rai was.

“What the hell was that all ab-[BUAAARRRRRPPPP]!” To Gabor’s surprise, and disdain, more of that ethereal gas came from his own mouth, and he nervously gulped as he felt a strange feeling in the pit of his stomach. An ominous gurgle came from his belly as he looked at in in fear, watching as it rapidly swelled out a foot all around. As it dawned on him what happened, his blood began to boil in kind with Rai’s. “Why, you-!”

The argument to end all arguments then ensued in that alleyway as the pair hurled verbal insults left and right, the both of them belching and swelling due to the effects of their latest heist. Had their annoyance with each other had not been at such a peak, they probably would have noticed when their clothes began to shred around swollen bodies. However, when they began to lose control of their limbs as their expanding torsos engulfed them, it was obvious that the two would not stop until one of them gets the last word.

“And now we’re [URRRP] stuck! Happy?” Rai’s speech was just barely understandable between his swollen cheeks, but his anger was perfectly clear.

“Well, we wouldn’t be stuck if you [BUARRP] knew how to spit instead of swallow!”

“Oh, real mature!” The argument continued, and it almost seemed like nothing would put it to an end. At least, not until an ominous sound could be heard.

crack

Rai quickly held back another insult as he heard the faint sound. “What was that?”

craCK

Gabor's ears perked, having not heard anything, "What was what?"

crACK

"That! That sound." Rai searched around trying to discern where it could be coming from.

CRACK

"Wait, I heard it! I think it's coming from behind me!" Gabor wrenched his neck side to side but found it too swollen to allow him to turn it much. Rai, however, was in a decent spot to look behind his partner.

"It sounds like it's coming from the wall..."

CRACK

Rai saw the cracks forming around Gabor's backside, immediately realizing what's happening.
"Oh no..."

"Is it the wall?"

"Yes..."

"Isn't this..."

"One of the walls making up the museum? Yes..."

"...Oh n-"

CRASH

As sudden as it happened, the pair found themselves rolling into the museum, unable to control where their orb-like bodies were going. Rai found himself rolling into countless priceless artifacts, leaving a trail of destruction behind him. Gabor was not as lucky, however, as what felt like a boot dug into his side and suddenly stopped his rolling.

"Well well well...looks like you don't need to change your outfit."

"Gulp...h-hello officer...j-just loitering?"

THE END