

Treetop Shorts Collection
When in the City of Jackals - Requested by Thellos

By Smokescale Aquatos

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"So, you're saying there's this fountain in this city, Navarre, that we're headed to, and if you drink from it, it can enhance your magical power?" Brian seemed quite intrigued by this, wondering all sorts of things about it.

A dusty jackal sat amidst the group of three travelers, "Yes, but only citizens are permitted to."

Sirius nodded quietly, "But there was that thing you mentioned... if an outsider does something on behalf of the people, a great deed, then they are honorary citizens?"

Jolan nodded, "Yes, but I don't know what you might find to do since it sounds like you are all so very interested in it. It is a rather peaceful city."

The silvery-grey fox grinned, "Oh you never know what could happen."

His lupine husband returned the grin and both turned to gaze at their blue dragon companion.

The scaled fellow just looked back at them after taking a sip from his canteen. "What?"

The night passed relatively quickly. Smokey was still his usual self, restraining his complaints about traveling through the desert. He was a water dragon after all, and he was deeply missing the lake. Sirius and Brian seemed to handle it all fairly well. Jolan, their guide, led the trio through the sandy stretch towards a powerful storm, the very one that guarded the vast city of Navarre, home to a race of jackals. They had heard a great many stories about this place and wanted to know more about them. After hearing about the fountain, the two canids seemed quietly obsessed. How they convinced the blue drake to accompany them was something of a magic trick.

As they approached the storm, swirling furiously about, seeming to stretch for miles and miles, their guide stopped and took a seat on the sand. He didn't seem at all bothered by the fringe winds just on the edge.

"How long until it opens?" Sirius spoke, needing to raise his voice, almost shouting to be heard.

Jolan kept his eyes fixed on the wall of moving sand ahead of them, "Not long. And remember, it will only be open for ten minutes. After that, the storm will pick back up and it will be another year before it opens again."

Their timing had to be perfect. But then that was why the jackal was there. He knew when it would happen and where. Others arrived, waiting to enter alongside them. Half an hour passed as

they waited, the dragon doing his best to keep from grumbling about the sand getting under his scales. Their patience ultimately saw the storm weaken, then open. Immediately, all who had been waiting outside raced into the gap. There would be little margin for error. As they ran, they passed a group looking to leave. They were past the midway point. It had taken most of the ten minutes to get that far! They weren't going to make it! The storm began to close on both groups, neither having crossed the distance. Thankfully, it began in the middle and proceeded to slowly fill back out behind them.

By the time the storm had returned to full strength and concealed the path once more, both parties had emerged unscathed. All those who had entered immediately went about their business except for Sirius, Brian, and Smokey. The three boys huffed and panted softly as they stood just inside the wall of wind and dust, watching it with incredulity. Brian was the first to speak.

"So I guess we're here for the duration then. We don't get out until next year." The fox mused.

Jolan nodded, "Unless you have some mystical manner of escape, yes."

Brian shrugged, "I'm sure I could find a way... but why spoil the fun? Gives us all the time we'll ever need in order to explore and absorb the culture."

Sirius nodded, having looked forward to the stay, "And really embrace our inner jackal!"

Smokey flopped onto his back, trying to catch his breath as best he could, "I certainly hope there's at least a public bath house or something. I gotta find a place where I can submerge from time to time. It's gonna get really old if I have to stay dry the whole time."

The jackal that had guided them nodded, reaching down to pat the dragon's shoulder, "Do not worry, we have many bath houses. You will be able to quench your body's thirst whenever you need. We also have a vast lake you can go swimming in."

That caught the blue dragon's attention. His eyes flew open and he sat up, "A lake!? Really!?"

Jolan chuckled, "Yes, a lake. Come, I will show you."

Smokey turned to look at his two traveling companions, "Guys... I gotta go do this. Please..."

Brian nodded, slipping in close to give the scaled fellow a warm hug, "It's fine. You were a good sport getting here. Go take a dip. We'll be along in a while." Before he released the dragon, the fox leaned in and offered him a firm, tender kiss. It took the blue beast by surprise, but he didn't fight it. He didn't seem to really mind the subtle tingle that passed over him as they remained locked together.

Sirius chuckled and stepped in after a moment, "Okay, break it up you two. You go have fun, Smokey. Brian and I are gonna take a bit of a tour."

The dragon nodded and turned to dart off behind Jolan, weaving this way and that between the crowd of canids shuffling to and fro. They didn't really seem to notice the newcomers, at least for anything more than a greeting. After a few moments, Smokey's horns disappeared past hundreds of jackal ears. Once he was no longer in sight, the two canines that did not belong grinned, not even needing to look at one another.

"So, how was the kiss?" Sirius teased.

"It was great until you interrupted," Brian nudged him softly with an elbow, "But 'the package has been delivered' if that's what you're asking."

The wolf nodded, "And does he have a clue?"

The fox shook his head, "Not at all. And next time, maybe let me enjoy kissing my boyfriend a little longer? I don't get to spend much time with him, you hog."

Sirius laughed, "Okay fine... I'll let you play with my boy toy as much as you want. But I get to keep his wife occupied while you two are fooling around."

"Deal." Brian wrapped an arm around his husband's waist, tugging the wolf in close and kissing him passionately. Their tour might end up delayed if they let themselves get too carried away.

Smokey hurried along behind Jolan, all too eager to ease into the lake. When they reached the shore, the dragon immediately stripped out of his clothes, thanked his guide, and threw himself into the water. Oh it felt so wonderful, a touch warmer than he liked, but wonderful. He could feel every grain of sand caught in his scales fall away. He instantly felt so much cleaner. With a kick of his tail and legs, he propelled himself out into the deeper waters. He wouldn't surface again for at least an hour he thought to himself.

At least, that was the plan. Unfortunately, it wasn't really in the cards. The 'package' Brian 'delivered' began to take effect. The spell he cast activated and the blue found himself beginning to grow. He gasped in surprise and whimpered, trying to keep himself submerged. Unfortunately, there was little he could do. His feet hit the rocky bottom and his head began to rise up out of the lake. It was only thirty feet deep. He had to be at least forty, and he hadn't stopped growing. He waded back towards the shore, emerging like a monster out of an ocean in a terrible B movie.

As he came ashore, cries of terror spread through the town. The dragon held out his hands to try and convince the locals of his placid nature.

"Sorry! Sorry! I didn't mean to scare everyone! I don't know what's going on, I think I got pranked by my friend! Please don't run away!" Smokey whimpered. At least it seemed he had stopped growing. He was already taller than most of the buildings, but seemed to be at eye level with the fifth story of what few stood that high. Just what was that blasted kitsune up to?

More screams came from below, drawing his attention back down as he tried his best to step carefully around anyone and anything he might damage. He wasn't exactly graceful in his new

size. The blue dragon felt one of his feet slide out from under him and he began to tip backwards, landing in the water with a powerful splash and thud. A wave raced across the lake, striking the distant shores with terrifying strength. Smokey whined and groaned as he rolled onto his side, holding his head. He landed on it pretty hard. The city was in an uproar by now, demanding something be done to stop this monster, no matter how polite he was.

That was when a brilliant flash of light streaked across the sky towards the scene. It stopped at the lake's edge and faded to reveal a curious figure, appearing to be a mix of wolf and fox, a blending of white and grey pelts, with a black star over one eye. Smokey looked up at the floating canid and squinted.

"Brian? Sirius? Is that you?"

"Silence foul beast! You'll not torment these fine people so long as I'm here!" And with that, the two boys, fused into the 'superhero' they were playing, lunged forward, racing down towards the dragon's face from the place in the air they had been hovering.

Smokey's eyes widened as he saw the wolf-fox open his mouth wide, aiming for his head. And then the impossible happened. The flying canine consumed the dragon's entire skull. A loud, lewd gulp sounded in his ears as his traveling companions began to devour him. Sirius and Brian, joined together, wrapped their lips around his neck and continued to move lower, gulping and swallowing. Together, they were taller, about ten feet from crown to paw, but it was still quite a gap between them and the fifty-foot tall dragon. Smokey's hands had been trapped in the initial swallow, having been holding his head in pain. Dumbfound, all he could do was lay there and get eaten. Why on earth would they put on such a show?

A crowd gathered to watch the spectacle, seeing a relatively tiny fox-wolf hybrid devour a dragon five times his size. The gulps were audible from quite a distance, and they sounded labored. The hybrid's progress was slow, inching his way down over the blue creature's form. Shoulders and wings passed out of sight, stretching the glowing canid's neck, and then his chest every inch he managed to shove into him. And yet he seemed to power on without any sign of difficulty. His stomach bulged ridiculously, the dragon's head making a distinct shape as he complained. His noises could be heard easily enough by the onlookers.

By now, the 'hero' was resting on top of his vastly swollen stomach, pulling the remainder of the giant scaled monster in out of sight. How he managed to get so far without ripping open was a mystery to all who watched. And still he continued on! The dragon didn't seem to be fighting against him. Was he too polite to even defend himself against being devoured? The hybrid's ability to stretch was put to the test as he reached the drake's chest, grunting around his enormous feast. His progress was steady, and his stomach quickly becoming legendary as he swallowed. In only a few short moments, faster than anyone expected, Sirius and Brian had reached their giant boyfriend's hips, cramming his groin into their shared mouth. Oh how badly they wanted to hold there and lick him into submission, but it likely would give away their plan. So they held off, working towards the dragon's powerful legs, built for swimming.

All Smokey could do was whimper and curl up in the impossibly stretchy gut his boyfriends were imprisoning him within. The blue knew he wasn't getting out of this anytime soon. Once those boys had a plan in mind, there was almost nothing anyone could do to stop them. That and they rather enjoyed gobbling him up and hauling him around. Only this time, there would be no hauling done by the over-stuffed canid. He would be so huge he wouldn't be able to reach the ground.

Moments passed and the 'hero' reached Smokey's knees. Progress was beginning to slow. With his gut sprawling out under him, it was getting a little tightly packed inside. He wasn't deterred in the slightest though. He pressed on, reaching the dragon's calves. His jaws yawned wide and he began pulling more. The hybrid's stomach continued to surge outward, losing definition and becoming more rounded as the giant monster filled it out. A great many lewd slurps followed as his lips surrounded a pair of giant ankles. It was almost over. The canid tugged and grunted, trying to swallow up the last of his enlarged friend, finally managing to stuff those paws out of sight. One final gulp sank the whole of the blue monster into his belly.

An earth-trembling belch shook the surface of the water lapping up at the sides of an impossibly huge gut. The hybrid lay atop the engorged tummy, patting and stroking it as the dragon inside whimpered. There had to have been an easier way to do all of this. And his head still hurt a bit. After better than half an hour's work, the blue menace had been sequestered safely in the stomach of the smallish hero. A cheer rose from the crowd as they rushed in, hefting him up. His gut, at least twenty feet across, made the going difficult, but they managed somehow.

"People! Please! I'm just doing my... hic... duty!" The hybrid chuckled. He rumbled happily as hands caressed his giant, tightly stretched stomach. The crowd carried him out of the shallows of the lake and onto the shore where one of the town's leaders waited.

"Stranger, for your brave efforts, and impossible feat of... gluttony, we thank you. You have saved Navarre from a giant dragon that would undoubtedly have caused horrific damage."

"Oh he's not so bad once you get to know him," The wolf-fox snickered, "He was just a little too excited to get to the water."

"None the less," the officially-dressed jackal continued, "In honor of your service to protect the city, we welcome you to drink from the sacred fountain."

"It is an honor, sir." Before he could say another word, the crowd began hauling him off again. The hybrid's stomach gurgled and groaned around its occupant, unhappy that it had been asked to contain something so large. Through the streets he was carried until they reached the very pool in question. A large chalice was dipped into the clear waters and carried aloft to the hybrid. He dipped his head in respect as far as he could given his recent meal, and then brought the cup to his lips. In mere moments, the water had drained into his mouth, drunk with great zeal.

A powerful surge passed through the wolf-fox, making him shudder and his belly gurgle noisily around the dragon inside. Strength untold claimed him and he shivered in delight. It was a

euphoria he had not felt before, and relished greatly. A tingle passed over his form, teasing away relentlessly.

"What... what is that!? It tickles something awful!"

The town's leaders grinned up at him, "You are becoming one of us. Welcome to the fold."

When the sensation finally passed several minutes later, the wolf-fox opened his eyes, finding his fur was now a lovely ebony, and rather short. His features were quite different as well. He now fit in with the crowd almost perfectly. A new jackal had been brought into being. Even the dragon inside seemed to be undergoing some sort of change, shrinking down some. Oh how interesting this new form would be to explore, especially once Sirius and Brian split again!

He gave his gut a firm pat as it shrank to a manageable size, small enough for him to move, but still quite enormous. Another belch escaped him and he chuckled, "Hope you're comfy in there, it's gonna be a while before I feel like letting you out. You know how I love feeling stuffed."

Smokey grunted as he felt his world compress around him. Had the boys shrunk themselves without shrinking him? He knew they could conceal his presence and in turn make the bulge he created much more manageable, but it often left the 'victim' feeling a good bit more restrained. At least it wasn't uncomfortable. He kicked softly, making a huge foot-print in the smaller jackal's still rather enormous gut, far too large for the dome that housed it.

"Yeah, I know. But don't be surprised if I turn the tables on you when I get a chance!" He threatened, a playful growl sounding in his throat. It wasn't a dragon's growl. He paused and began feeling over his form, finding he had undergone a change like the hybrid, though he had not been aware of their transformation.

The fountain, that's what all the muffled voices outside had been talking about! That had been Brian and Sirius' plan the whole time! Oh he would have to get them back real good for this later.

A hearty belch shook the chamber around him as the world began to sway, and then moans of passion sounded from outside. His revenge would have to wait. The boys were enjoying the rest of the ceremony. Maybe they'd send someone in to keep him company too.