

Prosperity — Failures and Gains

By: Indi

Every board creaked and groaned beneath Sloan's boots as the large cougar waddled down the second-floor hall of the hotel. The place wasn't a total shithole, but it sure as Hell didn't leave a good impression, either. Faded white-and-blue striped wallpaper covered the walls. A few photos had been hung up, all shots of the distant coast. The rooms weren't any better decorated.

A loud, wall-rattling belch echoed out from behind the door of a room on his left.

Next to Sloan, a thin coyote grinned. "Someone just ate well," he said, then looked towards Sloan's bulging belly. "Shame it's not me."

"What, Irvin, the pred or the prey?" Sloan asked. He didn't smile back or laugh.

Irvin glared. "The pred, you ass. Why are you so damn uptight?"

"Because of the damn plan!" Sloan hissed through his teeth. His gut lurched as the rabbit trapped within began acting up. The squirms received only passing acknowledgment.

Sloan had spent weeks coming up with the plan to kidnap and ransom a higher-up in the Prosperity Steamboat Company. He'd researched who all held power in the company, learned their routines, and done stake-outs. He'd narrowed the list down one-by-one until a single executive remained. Ambushing the rotund snow leopard's stagecoach had been easy. No bodyguard, just a plump, unarmed driver. But perhaps that had been the start of Sloan's bad luck.

Circumstances had required Sloan to eat the driver. He hadn't planned on gaining weight during the job, but it would've been worth it if things had actually gone as planned. And for a while, it'd felt that way. They'd delivered the ransom note and gotten an answer back without any complications. He'd convinced another member of the gang they were part of to handle the exchange, an easy-to-manipulate skunk named Gabe; someone who didn't ask questions, for better or worse.

Then everything had fallen apart. Sloan and Irvin had spotted a deputy spying on the exchange; a lone rabbit oblivious to everything aside from Gabe and the company official who'd brought the ransom. Sloan had snuck up on him and scarfed him down without making a sound, assuming he'd averted a potential crisis.

Meanwhile, Gabe was busy getting swallowed whole. The fool had somehow let himself get snagged, and was halfway down the official's gullet before Sloan and Irvin noticed. By then the sheriff and other deputies were converging on the exchange point. Sloan hadn't even considered the possibility of a set-up, a fact that pissed him off as much as the failure itself.

From their hiding spot, Sloan and Irvin had watched the law celebrate their success. They'd overheard the sheriff asking the official if Gabe should be interrogated before being digested, and the answer had been a firm "no". The company wouldn't

negotiate with outlaws, and the official would be in line for a promotion if his colleague happened to vanish. There were no objections from the law. Once Gabe's struggles had ceased, Sloan and Irvin had retreated to the hotel.

Sloan didn't care that Gabe got eaten. He'd chosen the skunk for the job *because* they were expendable, a dope who'd barely contributed to the gang in the past. If anything, Sloan considered Gabe's loss the sole success of the job. But it didn't make up for the failures.

Sloan was tired of how stagnant the gang was, how their leader promised so much and delivered so little. Unfortunately, his beliefs weren't shared by the others. Even Irvin, his only worthwhile reason for sticking around, rarely backed him up. Pulling off a high-reward job on his own would've finally won the rest over so things could change. Instead, it'd been as much a disaster as anything else the gang had taken part in lately.

When they arrived at their room, Sloan had to stand beside the door to unlock it so his gut didn't get in the way. He turned, nudging the door open with his belly, and stomped in. The snow leopard was sitting against the wall, bound and gagged. He cowered as the outlaws entered, his gaze on Sloan's middle. Sloan ignored him.

"I should've known the damn company would be greedy and set us up!" Sloan growled.

"It was just bad luck," Irvin said. He glanced over at the snow leopard, his eyes settling on their doughy gut. "Just like it was bad luck Gabe got snagged." At least the coyote had also realized how useless their former comrade had been. "Uh, how are we gonna explain that to the others, though?"

"We won't," Sloan said. "No one else knows about the job, or that Gabe was in on it. They'll all assume he got eaten doing something stupid at a saloon. They'll drink some booze in his honor and forget he existed within a month."

"Guess that sounds about right."

Sloan finally turned his attention to their captive. "You're worthless now, by way. All because someone wants a promotion. I can't believe I've gained so much weight for nothing!" He punched his gut, prompting a sloppy *buwourrrrrrrrp*. A soaked deputy's badge flew out of his mouth and bounced along the floor, landing close to the snow leopard.

"You could've just let me eat them both. I'd be okay with the weight," Irvin said.

"Oh no, don't you *dare* start thinking about getting fat."

"Why not?"

"Because it's not going to make you a better pred, and we both know that's what you're thinking!" Sloan shook his head. "All it'd do is slow you down, which would slow the rest of us down."

"Bullshit! Plenty of the other guys have gotten fat and no one's complained. We always have strength in numbers, anyway."

"Relying on that lot to have your back all the time will get you eaten one day," Sloan said.

"Will not." Irvin pouted and looked away.

Sloan leaned in close to the coyote, his belly pressing against him. "I'm telling you this because I care, not because I'm an ass," he grumbled.

"Hmph, hard to tell half the time." Irvin gave Sloan a quick kiss on the cheek, slapped his gut, and walked to the other side of the room. Sloan was left blushing and scowling.

"I'm gonna go wash up," Sloan said, flustered. "Keep an eye on our worthless guest so he doesn't try anything stupid." He waddled out of the room and down the hall.

The washroom of the hotel was as cheap and unimpressive as everything else there, but it was better than nothing. Sloan took a good, long look at himself in the mirror. His face was round and his pecs had softened into moobs. When he ran a paw over his wobbling gut he felt the layers of pudge covering it. He'd gotten fat—and once the rabbit in his stomach finished churning he'd be even fatter.

Sloan knew he wouldn't be the fattest in the gang by morning; he couldn't compete against an elephant's appetite. He'd be close, though. He did his best to stay on the leaner side, preferring to keep some muscle when able. Being fat slowed him down and made him think about food too often. And once it'd nearly cost him everything, playing a role in an even greater failure than the ransom attempt. Despite the bad memories, he still felt he carried the heft well, at least. Not that it meant much to him.

"Uh-uh, never getting that huge again." Sloan scowled at the mirror as he thought of his past, rotund self. "There won't be an ounce left of you on my gut in a few months," Sloan told his wobbling middle. All he got in reply was a weak kick.

The cougar took his time washing. The struggles of his meal gradually diminished to nothing. His stomach was gurgling loudly as he left the washroom, his mood marginally improved.

Sloan opened the room door just in time to see the snow leopard's wiggling legs jutting out of Irvin's open mouth. The coyote was sitting on the floor, his shirt opened and his massive, writhing belly spread out between his legs. His eyes widened when Sloan entered. He stopped swallowing for a brief moment, before beginning again with haste, slurping up the last of his indulgent meal.

"Really?" Sloan asked, raising his paws in frustration.

"What, you said he was worthlessuworrnnnnnnrrrrp!!" Irvin's gut wobbled as he belched.

"Not that you gluttonous idiot!" Sloan closed the door and walked over to his grounded companion. He bent down, grabbed the sides of Irvin's gut, and shook it. Irvin let out a string of belches and groaned. "Do you know how fat this damn cat is gonna

make you?"

"It's just one meal."

"An over three hundred pound meal! And when you eat twice your damn body weight in food, you tend to get fat. *Really* fat!" Sloan let go of the coyote's belly as he felt himself blush. Sensibility and arousal were dueling in his head. He didn't have preferences towards weight, but he appreciated the way a pred looked after a meal. Seeing Irvin with a bulging gut after a successful robbery was how he'd discovered his feelings for the coyote in the first place. That wouldn't stop him from berating Irvin, though.

Another groan interrupted the look of annoyance on Irvin's face. "So what if I get fat? I'll lose the weight fast; I always do."

"That's because you *usually* eat smart. You find prey that's thin but still filling. The kind that gives you a small belly in the morning and maybe a fatter ass." Sloan growled as he thought of how much rounder and softer the coyote's rump was about to get. "This time it's gonna take a whole lot of God. Damn. Effort!" He prodded Irvin's gut with a finger, emphasizing each word.

Irvin belched. "You're making a big fat deal about nothin'," the coyote grumbled. "The cat was worth it. Tasted great and I've never felt fuller."

"Obviously I'm not gonna knock any sense into your skull tonight," Sloan said. He'd make Irvin understand how stupid they'd been later. Hopefully that way the coyote wouldn't go on an eating rampage and balloon in size. He silently cursed the fact he blushed thinking about it. "And you're not eating anyone else until you lose the weight."

"No fucking way!" Irvin whined.

"Won't be any of that, either, if you do," Sloan smirked as he heard a whimper from the coyote. He wasn't against being petty and hitting Irvin where it hurt. "All we'll be doing together for the next few months will be jogging and lifting weights."

Irvin lay on his back and frowned. "God, fine. Ass."

"There's also no way I'm lugging you onto the bed, so you're sleeping on the floor tonight. Alone."

The whines from Irvin returned, but Sloan pretended to ignore them. He waddled past the coyote and eased himself into the bed. He had to sleep on his side, his gurgling gut taking up half the bed on its own. A sharp breath blew out the lamp beside the bed, plunging the room into darkness.

When Sloan woke up the next morning, he was on the floor beside Irvin, an arm wrapped around the sleeping coyote. His paw was pressed against Irvin's belly, gently squeezing it.

"Damn it," Sloan mumbled. He quietly got up, his back sore from spending at

least some of the night on the floor. Irvin had gotten his pillow, and the blankets were tossed haphazardly atop them both. The coyote stirred. Sloan grabbed the blankets and threw them back on the bed, just so Irvin wouldn't know what'd happened during the night. Getting caught cuddling would make his threats useless. He'd think of an excuse for the pillow later.

Both their meals had fully digested overnight. Sloan's pants felt tight, and he guessed his vest would be struggling to contain his softer gut if he bothered buttoning it up. The extra wobble he'd gained from the deputy made him fume. He had months of hard work ahead of him, all to get rid of pudge from a failed job. Motivation to not fuck up the next time.

Irvin was still smaller than him, but far from thin. Sloan had never seen the coyote so plump before. His paunch was a small dome, rising and falling with his every breath. He'd burst the button on his pants and his buckle, either while eating the snow leopard or just from swelling up afterward. Sloan saw a few ripped seams already.

Irvin opened his eyes and yawned. He stretched, tearing seams on the sleeves of his shirt. His eyes widened and he blushed. The coyote sat up, looking over his new, fatter body with curiosity. He poked his belly and squeezed his ass. The extent of the change appeared to shock him. He smiled, nervously. "Damn, cats look good on me."

"And so do clothes that fit," Sloan said. "Now get up; we've got jogging to do." He nudged Irvin's exposed belly with a paw.

"Already?" Irvin's smile vanished. "Can't we get something to eat first?"

"After gorging last night? No. If you behave and don't slack off, then I'll let you have lunch. Otherwise you're not eating again until dinner, got it?" Sloan said with a scowl.

"I got it, I got it." Irvin stood up, tearing more holes in his pants along the way. "Still worth it."

Sloan slapped the coyote hard in the ass, making him yelp. "We'll see if you still feel that way after a couple of loops around town."

The two outlaws gathered their few belongings and left the hotel, a rough day of exercise ahead of them.