

Columbia State - The Taste of Victory

By: Indi

It was a terrible day to play ultimate. The clouds in the sky were dark and the sunbreaks few and far between. The field used for the game was nestled between the library, the football stadium, and a couple of old gyms. A breeze blew through intermittently, disrupting throws every time. Temperatures were in the forties; they had been all week.

Most players would've canceled the game and done something warmer. The six frat boys on the field were far too stubborn for that, though.

Gage flicked his tongue out, watching his breath form a fleeting cloud of white. The fat anaconda was well-insulated by thick layers of blubber and his hoodie. He'd worn shorts out of laziness, but didn't mind the chill. Wrangling his ass into jeans would've been too much of a hassle. He doubted he even had any left that fit.

Gage watched his opponents pass the disc closer to the goal, and moved for a possible intercept. His team had a commanding lead—over twice as many points as the other—so he didn't need to excerpt himself much. Playing passively would be enough to coast along to victory.

On the opposing side were Sheen, Cade, and Dash. Sheen—a gray wolf—and Cade—a pine marten—were just plain out of shape. Both had grown plump from recent meals and were struggling to acclimate to their size. Dash was taller and actually fit, but the white speckled horse had only played ultimate a couple of times before and it showed. His throws were the worst of the bunch, and his attempts to knock the disc out of the air failed often.

Gage's eyes followed their jiggling bellies more than their throws. They all looked delicious, even the lean Dash.

Columbia State University was a campus of predators, and Gage was amongst the most voracious. He didn't care how little or well he knew a person, he treated everyone like a potential meal. Friends and acquaintances were actually his favorite prey of all. His very first meal had been a close friend. Their taste and furious squirms had cemented his love of eating others. Most people considered his preferences to be an outrageous betrayal of trust at worst or downright rude at best. He had no qualms about adding them to his waistline as well.

Despite everything, the anaconda had made plenty of friends in his four years at college. They were all preds, a mix of those convinced they would be the exception or be on-guard enough to avoid his hunger. A few even thought they'd be the ones to eat *him* one day. Thus far, he'd proven the majority of them wrong. And, of course, he'd turned a good many of them into permanent snake pudge.

One of Gage's teammates—a short alligator named Wes—darted around in front of Cade, trying to block the pine marten's shot. A quick fake-out later and the disc passed safely to Sheen. Wes' ultimate skills were mediocre, but Gage thought he'd

make great snack potential one day. Tended to linger within arm's reach and looked easy to swallow. Gage had tried to eat him on a couple of occasions already. Each time he'd stumbled into someone tastier-looking. He'd get him before the school year ended for sure.

Sheen aimed for the nearby Dash, but a chubby deer blocked the horse, preventing the shot. Cooper had gotten fairly good at ultimate since losing weight. At his peak he'd been over five hundred pounds; now he weighed a third of that. He'd slimmed down so he could get back into skateboarding after Sheen had bugged him about it for weeks on end.

Gage had befriended Cooper while pledging for Tau Tau Psi. They'd dated for a few months their freshman year, before realizing they weren't close enough to continue. They'd remained good friends, though.

Cade darted down the field past Gage, putting himself in position for a point-earning catch. The disc flew out of Sheen's paw—Wes' claw once again missing it by a mile—and glided towards Cade. Gage swung his heavy tail like a club and smacked the disc out of the air. He could still move fast in short bursts despite being huge, much to the frustration of his opponents—and his prey.

"Saved again by the tail block!" Cooper cheered. He walked over to Gage with Dash. "If Wes moved that fast we'd be invincible."

"Gage had way more time to react than I did!" Wes insisted. The gator was almost out of breath from all the pointless running he'd been doing.

"Not like your team needs any more advantages," Sheen grumbled. The wolf hid his paws in the pockets of his pink jacket and frowned. He loved to play games, but he was the sorest loser out of all of them. He could be a brat at times, which made beating him a delight.

"Think the teams are unfair?" Gage asked. He couldn't pass up a chance to annoy his friend. Short tempers led to unwise bets, and unwise bets led straight to the belly of a hungry snake.

"No shit they are; your team's stacked!" The others had gathered around, the two teams facing each other. "Cooper's actually good now that he's not a fatass, and you take up half the field!" Gage snickered, but didn't bother pointing out how the two claims contradicted each other.

"What about Wes?" Cooper asked. "He's not doing much." The deer grinned, ignoring the foul look Wes gave him. Shit-talking was contagious amongst the group.

Sheen shook his head. "He's doing more than my teammates are!"

"Fuck you!" Cade said. Dash remained quiet.

"Dude, you should've gone wide so Gage wouldn't have been able to waddle over and intercept so easily!" Sheen said. Cade flipped him off in response. "And Dash doesn't even know how to play!"

"You're the one who begged me to join," Dash laughed.

“We chose the teams at random and there aren’t any stakes. Why do you even care?” Cooper asked Sheen.

Gage wished there were actual stakes. He’d suggested it before leaving the frat house, but been outvoted five-to-one. None had been in the mood to give him a chance to eat them.

“There’s still bragging rights!” Sheen said.

“Do you want us to have a handicap, then?” Cooper asked.

Sheen’s frown turned into a smile. “Yeah, if you’re offering.”

“We don’t have any extra players to give you,” Cooper said. He tilted his head a little, as if deep in thought. Gage knew him enough to tell he was faking it, though. The deer had decided on a handicap already, probably before he’d even asked Sheen if he wanted one. “We could always slow down Gage by having him snag a meal.”

Gage’s eyes lit up and he smiled. The game had finally become fun. “I’m down to grab a bite to eat.”

“Yeah, I guess that’d work,” Sheen said, shrugging. His wagging tail gave away his true feelings. He undoubtedly believed Gage would stop caring about the game after eating. A fair assumption.

“Then it’s settled. Shouldn’t take Gage long to eat, since there’s prey all over the place.” Cooper gestured towards the various people sitting around the edges of the field, both on the grass and on benches. It was a buffet to preds like them.

“Don’t worry, I’ve already got lunch picked out.” Gage flicked his tongue at Sheen, then glanced at Cooper, who was standing less than two feet to his right.

Gage wrapped his tail around the deer with shocking speed. The thick coils pinned Cooper’s arms to his sides as they slithered up his torso. His smug smile turned into confusion, then fear in a matter of seconds. He tried to force the coils away but Gage tightened them.

“Wait, shit!” Cooper cursed, right before his muzzle was pinned between two coils. The tip of Gage’s tail ended up around the base of Cooper’s antlers.

Everyone took a step back from Gage once the anaconda began coiling his prey. It didn’t take long for their worry to become relief.

Gage lifted Cooper off the ground. The deer wiggled in his grasp, his attempts to speak muffled beyond comprehension. Gage tightened his coils.

He could feel the utter desperation coming from the flailing deer. Cooper had avoided Gage’s stomach for four years, longer than anyone else. He’d gloated about it before, but only while safely out of reach. Gage considered him to be a prize greater than any other; a close friend *and* an ex.

Cooper had been too huge to be a casual meal before. Gage could’ve eaten him at his peak—there was no doubt about it—but meals of that size required planning. Smaller prey had been more convenient. He’d done his best not to act too excited when Cooper had started shedding weight.

The coils tightened again.

Cooper's legs stiffened. His squirms grew frantic, but couldn't budge Gage's coils an inch. The deer's antlers bent and creaked. A squeeze snapped them off, leaving behind short nubs.

Cooper's struggles ceased after only a minute. Gage brought his prey around front and loosened the top-most coils. His friend's eyes were half-open and unfocused. Cooper let out a quiet groan. The deer was barely conscious.

"Been a long time since we last kissed, babe," Gage said, smiling at his meal. "I promised you a nice and deep one eventually, remember?"

No response came from the captive deer.

Gage wrapped his jaws around Cooper's head and swallowed. He steadily unraveled the deer, his tail retreating as his lips moved forward. For years he'd dreamed of consuming the deer. He'd imagined all sorts of scenarios, from voracious board game nights to spontaneous roadside snacking. The grand event occurring in the middle of a casual game of ultimate was unexpected, but amusing. He appreciated the sheer random chance involved.

By the time Cooper began recovering from getting squeezed, his rump had already slid into Gage's gullet. The deer's legs twitched, then kicked. Gage grabbed and angled them up, sending Cooper into an inescapable dive down into his stomach.

"Took him long enough to fight back," Sheen smirked.

"Can't believe the idiot offered himself up as food like that!" Cade bent over laughing, the pine marten pointing at the flailing legs of his friend.

"I doubt he realized he was volunteering," Dash said.

"Dude knew he was on the menu. Encouraging Gage to eat is the last thing he should've done," Cade said.

"And it was!" Sheen burst into laughter.

Gage let his friends revel in their moment of assumed-superiority. Cooper had done so himself on plenty of occasions, mocking both strangers and friends as they vanished down the anaconda's throat. Everyone would get their turn to gloat—but everyone would also get their turn as prey.

The last of the deer vanished for good, sealed away with a gulp and a grin. Gage's massive middle rocked from side-to-side as Cooper emptied into it. The deer wasted no time in renewing his struggles, futile as they'd be.

"I'd forgotten how delicious venison is," Gage moaned. He patted his gut. "Damn, can't believe I waited so long to do this. Not that you'd have been easy to eat at five hundred pounds. Hey Sheen." The wolf's smugness faded. "Thanks for convincing Cooper to slim down to snack-size."

Sheen's smile returned. "Was my pleasure." It was painfully obvious the wolf believed he'd won his argument with Cooper by virtue of not getting eaten.

"So, now that Cooper's been nice enough to weigh me down and we're short a

player, are the teams fair enough for ya?" Gage asked. "If not, I could always try having a second meal." His gaze drifted slowly between the members of the opposing team, who all took another step back. He liked having smart friends; they kept the hunt challenging.

"N-No, this is fine," Sheen said, his cocky demeanor cracking as he remembered the extent of Gage's gluttony.

Gage's gut lurched as Cooper slammed hard against the stomach wall. "God damn it, let me out!" Cooper shouted loud enough for the others to hear.

"No can do, bro. I don't believe in wasting food~" Gage grabbed the sides of his belly and squeezed, laughing as Cooper squirmed around within.

"This is bullshit! I'm on your fucking team!"

"Not my fault you let your guard down. And it's not like I've ever given food a heads-up before I eat it." He felt the struggles intensify. "Keep squirming—you know it's one of my favorite parts~"

"Oh fuck you, dude!"

Gage didn't think he'd ever heard Cooper so angry before. "Bit too late to do that again~"

"Are we gonna continue the game, or are you too busy flirting with your lunch?" Cade asked.

"Oh, I can do both, trust me," Gage said. "Pretty sure I had the disc before we took that quick lunch break." He waddled to the disc and picked it up with his tail, one claw rubbing his rowdy belly the whole time.

Despite the new handicap, Sheen's team couldn't seem to catch up. Gage intercepted fewer throws, but his bulging gut dissuaded anyone from getting too close to block him. He conserved his energy, moving only when he had to. Every time he made short sprints his belly would bounce up and down, tossing Cooper around. Gage constantly shook and squeezed the deer, ensuring they never received a moment's rest.

Cooper never gave up on trying to escape. Gage felt hooves groping around in the pit of his stomach, desperately searching for the sphincter. Every so often Cooper would get lucky and find it. He'd push a fist through, back into Gage's gullet. The victory would only last a few seconds before Gage simply swallowed and sealed Cooper away again.

When Wes caught the winning point, Gage's team still maintained a solid lead on Sheen's.

"We outnumbered them and we *still* couldn't win?" Sheen asked in exasperation as they all gathered up.

"Numbers don't always beat skill," Gage said. "That might have been my best game of ultimate. Guess I should eat someone during every game from now on."

"There won't be anyone left in the frat if you do," Dash said.

"Goals," Gage replied, rubbing his belly.

Cade laughed. "If anyone could wipe out a frat on his own it'd be Gage."

"Glad you're willing to help me out with my dream." Gage flicked his tongue at Cade, who winced. All his friends were competent preds, but it didn't take much for him to scare the shit out of them.

The anaconda's belly shook, causing him to burp. "I carried him to victory and he's still upset with me. Such an ungrateful preyuowrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrp!!
Braaaaaaaaaaap!!"

With the last belch, Gage felt a big lump pull into his throat. His neck bulged as something traveled up it, the anaconda caught in a belching fit and unable to swallow. He opened his jaws, panting. The lump reached his mouth, forcing him to open wider.

"Pull me out, you fuckers!" Cooper demanded. The furious deer's head was resting in Gage's maw. He was pushing hard against the stomach, trying to stand and force the rest of himself out.

"Hell no!" Sheen said. "Not after you still won."

Dash shook his head. "Sorry, dude, it's rude to interrupt a meal."

"Just accept it's your fate to be pudge," Cade said with a cackle.

"You're all the damn worst! I'm gonna eat every last one of—*mmmph!*"

Gage had placed a thick claw over Cooper's face. Giving his meal a final, teasing glimpse of freedom had been fun, but he was ready to have his belly full again. He pushed the deer right back down his gullet for the final time.

"Hope everyone's got a picture of Cooper to remember him by, because the next time you see him he's just gonna be a skull." Gage grinned wide.

"Damn it, damn it, damn it!" Cooper thrashed about in the anaconda's gut. "I was so close to graduating! Sheen this is all your fault!"

The wolf rolled his eyes. "How is it my fault *you* got ate?"

"I lost weight because you wouldn't stop bugging me about skateboarding!"

Sheen stormed up to Gage and gave his belly a sharp poke. "Yeah, and even when you stopped being a blob you didn't come out to the new skate park at all! It's an awesome hunting ground!"

"I had to study for finals you shit!"

"Not all month, snake pudge!"

"Laugh all you want, I bet you're next!"

"As if! I'm not dumb enough to get. Caught. By. A fatass!" Sheen jabbed Gage's middle with every word, prompting a small belch from the anaconda. The wolf's eyes widened as he remembered where he was. He scrambled away from Gage, doing a poor job of regaining his composure once he was no longer the closest meal to his ravenous friend.

"Can't avoid this gut forever, Sheen~" Gage chuckled while wobbling his belly."

Sheen shuddered. "It's getting too fucking cold out here. Let's head back to the frat."

The rest of the group agreed, their eyes drifting between each other and Gage's squirming gut. "Fine with me. I've got a long afternoon of working down Cooper ahead of me." A fist struck the wall of his stomach. "Oh don't be a poor sport."

"This fucking blows," Cooper grumbled, almost too quiet to hear.

The group left the field. Everyone maintained a safe distance between themselves and Gage, glancing back on occasion to keep an eye on him. He made sure to smile extra wide for them when they did, and sometimes rubbed his gut.

If he were lucky, they'd all meet the same fate as Cooper one day. Just thinking about it made him feel hungry. Resisting the urge to pounce another one of his friends took every ounce of willpower the anaconda had. He couldn't be greedy, otherwise he'd run out of friends to devour. He'd have plenty of chances to gorge over the next few weeks, with parties planned to celebrate the end of the semester, Solstice, and the New Year.

December was guaranteed to be a very fattening month for Gage. He let out a short, low laugh, wondering who he'd add to his waistline by the time January rolled around.