

## Fit For a Prince

By: Indi

“Thank you, thank you again for making all of this on such short notice!” the one-eyed arctic fox told the exhausted bakers behind him as he carried one last basket into the royal carriage. Eli was an adviser to Prince Royce Chazington the Third, a job that should’ve been prestigious but felt more like babysitting.

“*Finally!*” Prince Royce said in between bites as Eli arrived. He was a short, white ferret, dressed in expensive flowing robes that highlighted his noodly body. “I thought I was gonna run out of food with how much time you were wasting out there!”

The Prince, of course, was never in such danger. His whole side of the spacious carriage resembled a buffet, with built-in tables surrounding his wide, cushioned seat on all sides. They were overflowing with food, mainly desserts the bakery had been kind enough to produce en-masse. Royce’s paws darted from one plate to another, plucking up pastries and cramming them into his mouth.

A stranger may have thought the Prince hadn’t eaten in days. In reality he’d already consumed three similar feasts that morning alone, and it was barely noon.

He came from a long line of hearty eaters, and the palace was decorated with portraits and statues of numerous rotund ferrets who’d led the kingdom. Royce’s gluttony was on a whole different level from them, though. He was terribly spoiled, especially in comparison to his siblings and parents, and convinced it was his royal right to feast on whatever he desired, in as high a quantity as he desired. An entire team of chefs were dedicated to handling his demanding appetite.

Expressing no interest in actual responsibilities, Royce had been given a small palace to laze about in, while his other siblings governed and led and at least pretended to work. He was less of a nuisance there, but advisers like Eli still had to put up with him.

“Your Highness, I’d like to once again suggest showing a tad bit more...restraint when it comes to eating. I feel your studies would benefit from it.” Eli knew the answer already, but he always felt the urge to ask, if only because it annoyed the Prince.

“You sound just like father!” Royce scoffed while downing a pie. “A powerful appetite is a Chazington tradition. I won’t deny my taste buds the treats they deserve just because others won’t indulge! And those lessons are a waste. I’m an adult--I don’t *need* to learn anything else.”

*The “tradition” involves spending as much time working as eating, not forgoing it all for feasting,* Eli thought. “Well, there’s also the issue of your, um, figure.”

“Hmmp! Does my figure *look* wrong to you?” No matter how many plates he finished off, his middle remained as lean as ever.

“With all due respect, we both know that’s just because of the enchanted compression robes you’re wearing,” Eli said. “The ones you have to wear to even be *mobile*. Now you’d only need to slim down to about six hundred pounds or so to not require them, which is practically a royal standard.”

“*Or*, I can just keep wearing these robes and not have to bother with such stuff!” Royce guzzled a jug of cider, his gaze already on a cake. “I bet this is all an excuse for the cooks to be lazy. If they can’t keep up with my needs then just fire them and find someone capable!”

As the cider was finished there was a very, very faint creaking noise, like a seam being strained. A button on Royce’s robe loosened. Suddenly the ferret plumped up slightly, softening all over until he was chubby instead of thin. The change went unnoticed.

Eli was avoiding looking at the feast as much as possible. He himself had been fairly lean when he’d started the job, but the Prince’s sedentary nature and gluttony had proven contagious. The fox was now modestly plump, his tunic doing little to disguise his belly. He refused to wear enchanted compression clothing, convinced it’d only encourage him to eat as much as Royce did. And how could an immobile adviser help an immobile prince?

“Prince, our mage tailors have been struggling to keep up with you, though. They’ve been needing more and more enchantments to keep your clothing compressing properly,” Eli said. “If the spells were to fail it could be catastrophic!” Or at least thoroughly embarrassing.

“Their inadequacies aren’t *my* problem,” Royce said in between bites. Eli rather hated the fact the Prince only seemed to remember complex words if he could use them to belittle others. Or praise himself. Another button loosened, and in an instant the ferret was plumper than Eli. Even he couldn’t ignore the jiggling of his belly as the carriage continued along. He blushed and frowned as he realized how fat he looked. “Speak of the devil! These robes are defective!”

Eli glanced up, and his one good eye widened in surprise. “See! Those were enchanted just two days ago. They used to last months! Prince, you *need* to cut back on the sweets, otherwise you’ll be too fat for even magic to handle!”

Royce frowned even harder. He didn’t take criticism very well. “A prince can eat whatever he wants, whenever he wants, in as big a quantity as he wants!” The ferret began to stuff himself, practically cramming desserts down his throat out of spite. How *dare* Eli judge his royal eating habits! He’d order even more food that week, maybe even add an extra meal to the schedule. That’d put Eli in his place. Perhaps he should force him to join the dinners more often as well, if only to plump him up more, too.

More buttons loosened as Royce gorged with renewed vigor. His body wobbled as it fattened up, more and more of his real form pushing past the enchantments of his outfit. By the time he’d finished everything in front of him, he looked positively blubbery. His face was as round as his gut, which pressed hard against the built-in tables. His lavish jewelry dug slightly into his pudgy arms and doughy neck. The buttons of his robes looked on the verge of popping right off, and a few seams were just as strained. Royce appeared crammed into his clothes.

“Well that was a passable snack,” Royce said with a smug grin. “What do you have planned for my brunch?”

It took every ounce of restraint for Eli to not roll his eye. “Please, Prince. With how well you’ve already eaten this morning, shouldn’t you at least *consider* skipping brunch today?”

“Preposterous!” Royce slammed his fat fists down on the table, rattling the empty dishes and his belly. Before he could go into a rant, though, a button popped off. “Oh dear.”

The ferret swelled, and the rest of the buttons burst as well, one after the other. He grimaced as his enormous middle was squeezed by the tables, but they were no match for his royal girth. They were swiftly torn away and knocked over, giving the ferret’s gut plenty of room to balloon outward. The fatter Royce got the more his outfit was ripped, and the more his outfit ripped the fatter he got. It was just the kind of chain reaction Eli had feared. There wasn’t any time for Eli to scold the expanding Prince, though.

“Eli, help!” Royce whined as he swelled, his rump filling out more and more of his seat. “Fix the spell!”

“I’m not a mage!” Eli hissed in frustration. The Prince was rapidly filling up the carriage, and he knew it was too late to flee. He could only watch and flatten himself against his seat as room ran out.

Royce’s immense belly pressed against one side of the carriage, and then the other, spilling forwards like a slow tidal wave of furry blubber. The carriage was slowing down from the increase in weight, the wheels groaning. Eli tried to push back against the princely belly when it pressed against him, but his paws practically sunk into the mass as it enveloped him, the fox letting out a few muffled curses before he was buried completely.

The windows were smashed out, and the wheels gave in, the whole carriage coming to a screeching stop as it fell to the ground. The driver barely avoided falling off, but as he heard wood start to creak he fled in fear. Onlookers backed away as the walls of the carriage bulged, and what looked to be soft white fur peeked through the cracks. After lots of groaning and splintering the carriage finally

burst apart, revealing the blob Prince Royce had become.

Royce jiggled upon being exposed, whining as debris from the carriage bounced off his blubber. He couldn't move at all, only wobble. At the very least he'd stopped growing, having reached his true size. There were gasps from the crowd. Then the laughing started.

"Stop it! I am your Prince, I *demand* you help me!" Royce squeaked, shaking his doughy fists in fury. He was ignored, of course, and the laughing only increased. His face bunched up and he blushed. "Eli, do something!"

There was faint movement from below the mass of the ferret, the only response Eli could muster. Flattened beneath the one-ton prince, Eli sighed. He was in dire need of a vacation.