

## The Ghostly Feast

By: Indi

Captain Kai glided through the water effortlessly, the blue-and-white koi dragon's arms at his sides and his legs kicking. A few feet away was his second-mate, Gaius. The blue, striped shark dragon pulled off fancier movements as he swam, darting and spiraling, always a short distance ahead. Excessive, but harmless while they were alone in the ocean with no enemies in sight. The two pirates had learned of a sunken palace in the area and had decided to investigate on a whim. The rumors were old and unlikely to be true, but the chance for riches was too hard to ignore.

Past a forest of towering seaweed. Through a twisting underwater canyon. They were on the verge of giving up when they swam around a bend and saw the marble structure sitting on the ocean floor. It appeared intact, two stories in height and more of a mansion than a palace. They circled it at a distance in search of guards but found none. It'd been abandoned. Towards the front of the sunken mansion was a tunnel; the entrance. A short swim down its length brought Kai and Gaius to a moon pool, where they surfaced.

Kai walked up the steps leading out of the water and into the mansion. Dim light came from glowing stones set in recesses in the walls. The floors and walls were made of polished stone, a mix of grays, blues, and greens. The air smelled fresh and he didn't see any obvious leaks. Of course, being intact increased the likelihood others had reached the place before them and looted it.

Gaius left the water, stopping beside Kai. "Think there's anything left here?"

"Only one way to find out," Kai said, strolling down the wide hall leading away from the moon pool.

Statues of dragons lined the walls, too massive to steal. Their depictions were far more rotund than Kai was used to. Most of the dragons looked barely mobile, so round they could be mistaken for boulders rather than statues. Every curve and roll of fat on their bodies was lovingly carved. There were mosaics, as well, depicting more hefty dragons. Kai guessed the original owner had been just as massive and decorated their home accordingly.

At the end of the long hall stood a set of incredibly wide double-doors. The two hybrid dragons each pushed on one, causing them to creak open and reveal a spacious great hall.

Windows on the second story of the great hall gave grand views of the ocean outside. Two long tables made of stone took up the center of the room, while a pair of stone thrones stood at the back. They were low and wide, more bench than chair. The mosaics and statues were still prominent, but no treasure was in sight.

"Starting to feel like it's been cleared out," Gaius said, looking around the room. "Pretty nice if we want a vacation home, though." His laugh echoed through the room.

"Oh don't give up on it yet. If there's treasure anywhere it'll be in a vault or private chamber, not piled up against the walls," Kai said. A strong aroma suddenly filled his nostrils, as if he'd just entered a kitchen.

"I'm not the only one smelling all that good food, right?" Gaius asked.

"No, and I've got a bad feeling about it," Kai said.

“Visitors at last!” A voice boomed throughout the great hall, coming from all directions at once.

Swords were drawn, the two dragons searching for the source of the voice.

A ghostly kobold rose from the floor before Kai and Gaius, prompting them to jump back in surprise. He had a fin running down his back, vaguely reminding Kai of an eel. “And not just any visitors, but dragons! Two of them!” The kobold looked ecstatic, as if they were about to jump up and down. “The estate has been without a proper dragon for too long. Welcome to your new home.” He bowed.

“I was only joking about vacationing here,” Gaius said with a nervous chuckle.

“This is so much more than a mere vacation,” the kobold said. “This is a grand new chapter in your lives. One worth celebrating—let the feast begin !”

Kai had heard enough. He swung his sword at the kobold, who burst into a cloud of mist on impact. His fading laughter echoed out.

Bright blue portals appeared on the surface of the tables, eight at least. From each food rose out, floating in the air. Meat, potatoes, diced fruits and vegetables—the contents of a feast poured out. A chorus of cackles filled the room as dozens of ghostly hands emerged from the floor. They flew towards the food, grabbing what they could before diving towards the two dragons.

Kai dispersed one hand with his sword, but another swooped in behind it, forcing a large chunk of meat into his mouth. The koi dragon felt compelled to chew, gulping the food down in seconds. It tasted amazing and made his stomach rumble for more. Distracted, Kai was soon fed a piece of bread, which he again ate without question. The next hand was swatted away, but two more made it through his defenses. He’d never faced such a strange attack before.

Gaius wasn’t doing any better. He created a globe of water and threw it at a cluster of hands, but all dodged it with ease. He deflected fewer hands with his sword than Kai and was being fed faster as a result. His grip on his sword weakened, the shark dragon wondering if he should just accept the delicious feast. Seconds later he forced the thought aside, determined to fight off the ghost hands.

More portals opened and more food arrived. Despite their best efforts, Kai and Gaius found themselves nearly eating non-stop, attacking even as they ate. Their flat middles had started to swell, filling up with food. Gaius was growing faster than his Captain, the hands giving him extra attention once they realized he was an easier target. His white belly bounced as he swung his sword and cast spells. The sensation made him blush.

“There’s gotta—*braap*—be an end to them, right?” Gaius asked, slurping down pasta. He hated how good the food tasted, how he had to actively resist the urge to give in and glut.

“*Uworrrrrrrrrp!* Probably, but that won’t matter if we’re both too stuffed to move!” Kai was beginning to slow down some, his bulging belly interfering with his attacks.

“I don’t understand why both of you are so eager to turn down food!” The voice of the ghostly kobold had returned. “All dragons have mighty appetites and those appetites must be sated. You need to grow bigger to reach your true potential!”

The portals doubled—and so did the food.

The onslaught swiftly overwhelmed Kai and Gaius. Their struggles were reduced to a token effort, utterly ineffective against the feeding. A tingling sensation spread through their bodies, and both dragons felt themselves starting to gain weight as the food magically and rapidly digested. The pounds piled on.

“We need to get out of here before we’re too fat to waddle!” Kai shouted in between bites. The koi dragon abandoned his sword, his claws almost too fat to squeeze around the hilt. He turned and fled towards the great hall exit, huffing and belching the whole way.

Gaius was right behind him, the shark dragon struggling to keep up. A good deal heavier than the Captain, Gaius jiggled with every lumbering step, belly swaying and rump wobbling. His tail smacked against the floor like a thick club. He soon realized he’d only slow down Kai.

Gaius stopped by the exit and turned to face the swarm of ghost hands and food. “You go on ahead; I’ll try to hold them off as long as I can!” He cast the most powerful water spell he had, forcing a wave ahead of him that sent dozens of ghost hands flying.

Kai opened his mouth to protest but then clenched it shut in frustration. “Don’t enjoy the meal too much! It’ll be a pain if the boys and I can’t even lug your fat ass out of here when we get back!” He waddled off as fast as he could, still harassed by ghost hands.

The realization he was bound to end up immobile made Gaius blush hard. He could already hear the relentless teasing the rest of the crew would engage in. There’d be jokes about him being the fattest shark in the sea, or how his dragon hoard was blubber. Gaius’ future would be interesting, to say the least.

The shark dragon cast spell after spell, the ghost hands continuing to stuff and fatten him. His belly ballooned, becoming a boulder of blubber that reached the floor. His legs were so thick he doubted he could move, while his arms had fattened up to the point of barely being mobile. His doughy face sat upon multiple chins, which rest upon his pudgy chest. Before long Gaius lost the ability to accurately hurl spells, becoming utterly defenseless.

Numerous ghost hands swarmed Gaius, massaging and poking and squeezing the shark dragon’s enormous body. He wiggled and wobbled, but nothing he did could force them away. Eventually, they grabbed ahold of him, lifting him off the floor. He squirmed nervously as they carried him across the room, towards the thrones. They turned him around and plopped him down on one, his sides spilling over the arms. The stuffing continued the entire time, Gaius swelling well past the point of immobility.

Kai pushed his body to its very limits. The jiggling of his growing body made him woefully aware of the sheer amount of weight he’d gained; the weight he was *still* gaining. Compared to his usual, lithe form he was massive. His tail, his cheeks, his snout, his arms—everything was doughy. Even if he made it back to his ship mobile, he’d more than likely be too fat for it. The crew would have to fish him out of the water and hope the deck didn’t cave beneath his weight. At the very least they could toss him at enemy ships to sink them.

The thought made the ballooning koi dragon let out a nervous laugh.

Kai saw the moon pool at the end of the hall. The magic food wouldn't be able to follow him in the water, so he just needed to reach it to be free.

Portals swirled to life on the walls, floor, and ceiling ahead, too many to count. Kai cursed as a flood of desserts and ghostly hands flew forth, all heading in his direction. Gaius had been overwhelmed, then. He couldn't let the shark dragon's sacrifice be in vain.

Kai held his arms up and charged, hoping to block as much of the food as possible. Pastries splattered and bounced off him, but many more slid around, forcing their way into the koi dragon's maw. The desserts tasted even better than the previous food. They were also far more fattening.

With each step Kai's belly swelled bigger and bigger, threatening to knock him over with every heavy sway. As his thighs grew thicker he was forced to adjust his pace, his waddle becoming more pronounced. Kai carried hundreds of pounds of pure fat on his frame now. A sprint that normally would've left him merely winded had him exhausted. Despite all the huffing and puffing, he refused to give up.

Willpower alone couldn't counter tremendous heft, though.

Kai lowered his arms so he could hold onto his pillowy gut. He felt it growing heavier, pulling him down. Inevitably his claws buckled beneath the weight and he toppled over. The koi dragon let loose a loud, rumbling belch as he landed on his massive belly, within reach of the moon pool. A single pudgy finger dipped into the water, but he would get no closer.

"Damn it!" Kai cursed, a whole pie making its way down his throat.

The ghost hands descended on Kai. They grabbed a hold of his side, gently squeezing the blubber the koi dragon had gained. Then they pushed. Kai flailed and swatted as he was rolled over onto his back, then onto his belly once again. He blushed, realizing they were rolling him back to the great hall.

The embarrassing journey was drawn out. Kai was fed the entire way, growing rounder and fatter as he rolled along. He rolled through the great hall, ending up at the throne beside his blimping companion. Gaius was a hill of a shark dragon, a series of rolls dominated by his rubbery, blubbery belly. Kai saw a mix of dismay and joy on his face, no doubt influenced by the incredible food they'd both been forced to indulge in. He couldn't blame him.

"Didn't quite—*bworrrrp*—make it," Kai said as he was rolled into position.

"At least the food is—*urrrp*—good," Gaius managed, his fat cheeks pressing against his snout.

The ghostly kobold appeared again before the two swelling dragons. "You've both plumped up so well! No longer are you scrawny and emaciated—you've finally begun to take on the forms of true dragons." Kai rolled his eyes at how proud the kobold was for fattening them. "Yes, off to a good start indeed. And this is only the first course!"

Kai and Gaius' eyes widened in shock as they saw even more portals appear, with food twice as large as before pouring out. Both wondered if they'd ever be mobile again...and how long the underwater mansion would be able to contain their swelling mass.