

Grief was free high in the skies. Unbound, unchained, the great dragon was lord in his own domain. The very clouds bent to the will of his powerful leathery wings, swirling around the draconic being as he soared through the air. The tree tops swayed and bristled beneath the beat of his mighty flaps, rustling the leaves. High in the sky, Grief was massive, enormous, a true spectacle worthy of his draconic lineage.

It was just a shame that was a farce once he approached the ground.

Lowering himself beneath the trees, the dragon felt a pang of anxiety as the very same tree tops started to loom above him. This feeling was exasperated the lower he glided. Trees, rocks, even bushes started rising above him, the self-proclaimed lord now looking like a humble peasant in his own woods. Finally, with a careful flap of his wings, the drake settled onto the grass, frowning as he felt the green blades rise above his claws.

In the sky, Grief felt enormous and imposing.

But back in grounded reality, the dragon was the size of a house cat.

The dragon carefully strode forward, his fluffy tail and scaly back heightened with anticipation. He was easy pickings on the ground, the drake needing a bit of a startup before he could take off flying. He felt impeccably small, a literal snack for any predator who happened to spot the pint-sized drake meandering on his own. The dreaded feeling only grew worse as the blond dragon carefully approached the hole in the rockside. To anyone else, it was simply a large cave, with an entrance big enough to fit a fully grown, normal-sized dragon. To Grief, it was an impeccably large maw ready to swallow him up.

Grief scowled. He shouldn't have to feel so fearful and submissive of anyone, let alone a simple cave. He was a dragon, the mightiest form of life to have ever walked the Earth! With indignation pushing out his trepidation, the small drake marched forward, letting the darkness engulf him.

The drake stepped forward through the shadows for what felt like several minutes, though in reality it was less than one before he saw the glow of light ahead, where the tunnel opened into a wide chamber. Inside, the drake found a bit of an odd sight; it was like someone had combined the aspects of an anthro's home and a feral's den, with standing lamps and hanging lights illuminating the interior, revealing walls made of packed earth or clay. A plush carpet covered most of the den's floor, giving way to wooden floorboards in a section of the chamber that looked like a kitchen, including a refrigerator and stove on either side of a wall-mounted sink. On the opposite side was what appeared to be a mix of a bedroom and living room, with a wooden, ovoid frame that held a myriad of cushions of various sizes, the nest sitting across from a wall-mounted television, a boxy device situated on an entertainment center beneath the screen. The whole home was contained in a singular room, with round walls that arched up into a domed ceiling above, and for the moment, it seemed like no one was home.

It was a very unusual den, at least from Grief's perspective. Granted, his perspective was a little, shall we say, skewed at the moment, but it was still strange seeing so much modern technology situated in a cave in the middle of nowhere. The carpet felt strange on the feral drake's claws, who took a moment to knead into the plush fabric to better get acquainted with it. Forgetting why he was there for a moment, Grief carefully padded around, sniffing and familiarizing himself with many of the strange objects situated in the cave. His keen scent told him that whoever lived here hadn't been gone for long, but there was no way of telling when they would return.

Being the somewhat paranoid dragon that he was, Grief figured his best bet would be to wait at the highest perch he could find: that being the fridge. With a running start, the dragon quickly flapped his way onto the big box, finding it rather difficult for his claws to get a grip on the metallic structure, before finally pulling himself up. There, he gently lowered himself into a more prone position, wrapping his fluffy grey tail around his legs. He could easily see the entire room from his height; all he had to do was wait.

It took a while for the dragon's waiting to pay off, but after a little over half an hour, a new sound joined in the gentle hum of the refrigerator beneath the dragon, the falls of heavy paws padding over earthy ground resonating down the den's entryway, growing in volume as the owner of those paws drew near. As Grief watched the entrance, a large, canine head emerged into the light, revealing quite the odd creature.

Though lupine in shape, the being was much larger than a normal wolf, big enough that he just might have stood an inch or two taller than a work horse. Dark, mossy-green fur coated the critter's back and flanks, with creamy-white fur on his underside, pale belly swaying level with his knees as he strode into den, carrying a wicker basket by its handle in his muzzle. A long, powerful tail slithered behind the oversized wolf, taking several more moments to slip into the chamber after the creature's body, reminding Grief of a fluffy anaconda that ended in a fluffy tuft like a lion's, the same pale color as the creature's ventral side. Two lines of the same creamy color extended back from the strangely-serpentine wolf's eyes, meeting at the base of his neck and joining as one stripe running down the animal's long spine.

Amber eyes glittering with evident self-satisfaction, the critter stepped toward the back of the den, to a blank, empty portion of the dirt wall. Or at least, it *had* been empty, until the creature neared, and in the center of the wall, between two of the standing lamps, a subtle, pale-blue symbol faded into being. Pausing in front of the sigil, the lupine serpent leaned forward and touched his nose against the glowing mark, and as Grief watched, the wall melted away, revealing shelves of books, scrolls, crystals, and strange devices with floating orbs revolving around them or strangely-fluid auras about them. Smiling to himself, the critter took a seat on his pudgy rump, holding the basked in his forepaws as he nosed the lid open, tail coming around to start sorting new crystals out from the container.

Grief let out a quiet gasp as the magically-sealed wall opened up, revealing the strange artifacts. The dragon was expecting someone quite large to come through the doorway when he heard those loud footsteps earlier; turns out, this someone was large in other ways, as evident by

that hanging paunch. For a moment, Grief was starting to believe he had the wrong location; there was no way this doughy dog was a powerful mage!

However, the shining crystals and orbs said otherwise.

The dragon's understanding of technology was archaic at best, but even he could notice the difference between what was anthro science and what was magic. Sitting upright, Grief cleared his throat. He ran a few simulations in his mind and planned out his escape several times over, just in case this feral was, well, feral. Granted, he could surely outrun the tubby lupine even at his diminutive size. "Aaron, I've come to bargain!" He exclaimed, still perched on top of the large reliable fridge.

The snolf let out a yelp of surprise, fumbling with the basket in his paws after his startled jump, before clutching the crystal-filled container to his chest as he turned his head to look over his shoulder, pudgy folds forming along his neck. It took Aaron a moment of glancing around, before his eyes landed on the dragon sat perched on his fridge, the wizard blinking in surprise for a second or two, before a grin spread over his muzzle. "Aww, hey there, lil' guy! I'll be right with you," the lykophis said, taking a moment to settle the crystals he'd removed from his basket back in among the others, setting the collection down on a shelf before getting to his paws. As Aaron padded toward the fridge, the shelves behind him obscured as the clay wall seemed to melt back into being while the snolf padded forward, only to pause when he noted the dragon seeming to tense at his approach.

Smiling as reassuringly as he could, the serpent took a seat in the middle of the den, allowing Grief a respectful amount of space between them. "Now, what can I do for you?" Aaron asked, long tail coiling around himself, the fluffy tip swaying back and forth at a relaxed pace.

"Lil' guy?" Grief mimicked, growling at the over-familiar tone the snolf took with him. He was a mountain dragon, the mightiest of his race, and he stood as tall as he could to show it. His pitch black scales glistened in the lamplight, accentuated by a spiral of sapphire blue that ran along his thick and powerful limbs. His furry grey tail, while not nearly as long as the snolf's, could still wrap around his body easily. Currently, he used it to hide his equally soft and fluffy midsection, which, while being slightly rounder than was typical for his species, did an excellent job of keeping him warm.

He continued to glare at the snolf, narrowing his emerald eyes. "I have...come for your services, overfed mutt," Grief growled, no longer finding it appropriate to call Aaron by his face name after being referred to as "lil' guy" just then. "An impudent sorcerer was running amok in my forest, making a racket and disturbing me from my slumber, among other vile crimes. When I confronted him, he pointed his horrid staff at me and...defeated me. My once grand frame, taller than even the trees surrounding your vista, now reduced to the size of a pumpkin."

While being the serious drake that he was, Grief was known to exaggerate once or twice. The "impudent" sorcerer was simply testing his spells where he thought he wouldn't disturb anyone, and the shrinking spell was simply a mistake. In fact, it was the sorcerer himself who

had offered the dragon to ask Aaron for advice on fixing the matter, but that wasn't necessary information right now. Nor was it worth mentioning that Grief wasn't as large as the surrounding trees, but then again, it would be nice to grow a few feet taller overall by the end of this traumatic experience.

Grief cleared his throat again, ruffling his wings. In his monologue, he had adapted a rather regal poise, sitting upright with his chest sticking out. "As such, I am here to request your service. Restore my height, and I promise no harm will befall you from myself."

The snolf's head tilted slightly as he listened to the dragon's tale, taking in Grief's words and trying not to smile at the squeaky pitch of the little drake's voice, though he couldn't help the slight tugging at the corners of his mouth. Still, when the dragon finished, Aaron's expression had turned understanding, and he nodded as he looked Grief over, snake-like eyes seeming to glimmer slightly. "Hmm... yes, I think I can work up a countercurse," the ophidian wolf affirmed, allowing himself a smile as he reached up and tapped his chin in somewhat exaggerated thought, "Though, as you may have heard, my services aren't free. You want something from me, so you'll need to do something of equal value."

"That...is to be expected," Grief chuffed, sitting himself upright. The idea of owing a service to another creature, anthro or feral, was quite repulsive to the miniature dragon, but owing a debt was even worse. But, he was willing to at least hear him out, perhaps even barter with the tubby snolf should his requests prove unreasonable. "Very well. State your demands."

Aaron seemed to consider, humming as he regarded the dragon before him with a thoughtful expression. "Hm... can't really ask someone your size to help with chores... or gathering crystals and herbs," the snolf mused aloud, apparently missing the indignation the comments brought to the shrunken dragon, though that expression was tame compared to what came after the snolf's own features lit up, and he proposed, "So, I guess you'll just have to be my pet for a while! That would be a fitting payment, yes!"

"A pet?!" Grief practically exploded in anger at the very mention of that word. No longer minding his small size, the tiny drake leapt down from his perch and flapped his way in front of the snolf, scowling. "Who do you take me for?! Someone's house cat? I am a proud and mighty dragon, with a lifespan far eclipsing your own! I am no one's 'pet,' do you understand!" He snarled, marching forward as he roared at the snolf until he was face to face with the hybrid.

The ophidian lupine seemed unperturbed, an attempt at a placating smile on his features. "I mean no offense, really," Aaron insisted, before gesturing around at the den, "Yet with my mate away on his own business, I get rather lonely. So, the most valuable thing you could offer me at the moment is the company of someone I can treat with a similar level of affection; in other words, a pet. Not permanently, just until you've paid for my service fully. That sounds reasonable, right?"

Grief snorted and turned away. "Let me consider it," he spoke gruffly, his scowl still evident on his face. Anyone who relied on others was weak in the dragon's eyes, for company or

otherwise. Could this Aaron really be trusted to turn him back to his original size? When the snolf spoke, there wasn't a hint of hesitation or deceit in his voice, only confidence and an annoying amount of gentleness.

The tiny dragon padded around the den, familiarizing himself with the layout of it. As much as he hated to admit it, the den looked quite cozy; far better than his own with its single grass nest. Even the temperature was a little warmer and nicer inside, compared to the somewhat chilly air outside. He was already getting used to walking on the plush carpet; a grand improvement over the stone floor of his own den. As he thought about it, the small drake realized he wasn't being asked for much else; no labor, no services, just his time and presence.

"Very well, I'll be your...acquaintance," Grief spat that word out. He was still reluctant to ever say the word "pet." The dragon walked back to the snolf. "How long until I've paid for your service?"

Apparently unbothered by the dragon's choice of words, Aaron hummed as he trotted around the little wyrmling, snake-like tongue flickering while he sniffed at Grief from several angles, much to the drake's bemusement. "Hm... that's a pretty potent curse," the snolf mused, his tone akin to a merchant appraising a piece of artwork, judging its value, before his muzzle split into a grin as he straightened himself, "Two months ought to cover it! That's about how long I'd need to get the things for the countercurse, anyhow. So, lucky you, you get to be my new snuggle buddy until I get that pesky spell off of ya!"

Like a frightened cat, Grief stood with his haunches raised, carefully eyeing the fellow feral. He wasn't thinking properly when he flew down to Aaron earlier; the snolf was even more massive up close! It was somewhat intimidating, being so close to a big, powerful, and *very* well fed predator like that, but he endured the sniffing. "Two months...I can last two months," he muttered moreso to himself than to Aaron. "Very well. For the next two moons, I shall deem myself your snuggle buddy...whatever that entails."

Aaron grinned again, nodding in satisfaction. "Deal!" the snolf said with finality, leaning his head down and nuzzling Grief's side softly, "Now, you look like you could use some time to just relax, after all you've been through. Why don't you get yourself comfortable and I'll get you some food?"

The serpent didn't wait for an answer, straightening himself and gleefully waddle-trotting his way into the kitchen, long tail trailing along the drake's side on the way by. "I'm gonna guess you like meat, yeah?" the snolf said, glancing back at the dragon, "Does meatloaf sound nice to you~?"

"Meatloaf?" Grief asked, shuddering as he felt the fluffy tail brush along his flanks. Dragon's were solitary creatures, after all; he wasn't familiar with the touch of another fur, and had come to associate any contact as negative. The tiny dragon was understandably quite confused at the softness behind the brushing, as well as the nonchalant way Aaron did so. This snolf was a very strange creature indeed.

Rather than heed the snolf's advice, the small drake followed closely behind the larger feral, sitting himself around the end of the kitchen. Wrapping his fluffy tail around his legs, Grief watched with wide, curious eyes, eager to watch the snolf in action. "Show me how you procure this 'meatloaf,' wizard."

Aaron smiled as the dragon approached, getting to work preparing the ingredients for the meal, while his long tail gently curled around the dragon in a loose embrace, making sure to be gentle to avoid spooking the obviously-perturbed drake. The lykophis hummed a cheerful little tune while he worked, pausing whenever he passed the little wyrm to lean down and nuzzle at Grief's side or wing, flashing one of his friendly, goofy smiles, before getting back to work. The dragon's pulling away from those overt cuddles seemed to do little to deter the snuggly serpent, either completely missing the signals of objection, or deliberately ignoring them; judging by the seemingly-oblivious nature of the lupine, either one seemed equally likely.

Soon, the snolf's work filled the den with a meaty aroma, the breaded meat coming together into a loaf the size of a large turkey, before being slipped into the oven to finish preparing. "There! Now, just gotta wait for it to bake, and dinner is ready," Aaron chirped, sitting with a big, proud grin on his muzzle, looking to Grief happily, "Want something sweet in the meantime? I've got tons of snacks!"

At this point, Grief had given up trying to shrug off or shy away from the tail's smothering embraces. There wasn't much else he could do other than bite that tail, which would no doubt lead to a fate worse than being shrunk. Instead, he focused intently on the way the snolf kneaded the meat together; why Aaron was rolling food with other food before sticking it into that strange metal box instead of just eating it was beyond the dragon.

Just looking at the raw meat made Grief feel quite peckish; the dragon perking up at the offer as snacks. Again, he wasn't sure why he had to wait for the meat to bake. Perhaps his patience was being tested? "I...would like some snacks, yes." The dragon nodded, grunting as that tail rubbed against his head again.

Aaron smiled as he moved to the cupboards, nosing open one that was lower to the ground and pulling a batch of home-made brownies from the interior, lifting the tray up and settling it on the counter. Judging by the squares missing from the pan, the snolf had enjoyed his own handiwork already, taking two more squares from the batch and setting one on the counter, before nosing through his cupboards to find a bowl to put the second in. That done, the snolf turned and leaned over, setting the confection down on the ground in front of Grief and nosing it close to the dragon, apparently oblivious to the fact that the brownie was at least half the size of the drake himself. "There! That should be a nice snack for ya while dinner cooks," he purred, beaming happily to the wyrm below him.

Grief took a moment to sniff at the strange brown square, trying to process that this was, in fact, food. It smelled nothing like any meat the drake had ever sniffed, although the sweetness

did vaguely remind him of the fruits he had eaten in the past. He was skeptical, but looking at the snolf's kind smile reminded him that he was indebted to this wizard. For now, at least.

Carefully, Grief bit off a small corner, rolling the chocolatey bite in his tongue. "It's...soft," he muttered to himself, trying to gauge this new experience for himself. Soft...and sweet. He took another bite, this one larger, and rolled that one around as well, trying to discern its strange taste and texture. Unfortunately, that bite was quickly swallowed before Grief could get a good feel for it, and so he took another bite...and then another...and then another.

Soon, the dragon was greedily gobbling down mawful after mawful of the rich and sweet brownie, hardly processing at all what he was doing. There was no rhyme or reason to it; that brownie tasted *good!* He had completely forgotten about the meatloaf at this point, fixated on this amazing new treat being presented to him, only taking a break halfway through the large brownie to lick his crumb-stained muzzle.

The dragon's host smiled as he watched, and Grief found that long tail gently brushing against his side as he gobbled down the treat. "Good boy," Aaron purred, already settling into his new role as the drake's owner and caretaker. After all, this wasn't his first such arrangement, judging by how quickly he'd come to this particular method of payment from the dragon. "I have more, if you'd like," the snolf offered, flashing a sharp-toothed grin to his new companion, "You seem like you're really enjoying that!"

"Hmmf," the dragon snorted indignantly, swallowing up his current mouthful. For a moment, he had lowered his guard due to being caught off from the delicious chocolatey treat, which was no doubt magically enhanced to entice his senses. What's worse, he had found himself actually leaning into the gentle strokes of the serpent's tail! He was a dragon! A proud and solidary creature, even as he continuously licked his muzzle for any trace remains of the brownie. "It's...unusual. But not too terrible, I suppose." He snorted.

Aaron chuckled at the begrudging reply, laying down on his middle, before rolling onto his side, plump belly facing the little dragon and giving a broad, friendly grin. "Just one of the many treats a pet of mine gets to enjoy!" the serpent stated a paw reaching out to gently stroke Grief's head, only to pause when the wyrm pulled back from the limb, glaring at the claws with evident distaste. "Now, now, you agreed to this," Aaron chastised gently, smiling as he gestured to the drake, "Part of being a pet is letting your caretaker groom you. And you look like you could use it, after what you've been through!"

"I'm perfectly capable of grooming myself, I'll have you know," the dragon muttered in disdain. He couldn't comprehend why someone would go out of the way to care for someone who wasn't their own young, especially when Grief was supposed to be in debt to the larger creature. Alas, Aaron was right; he DID agree to this. With a sigh, he stepped forward and lowered his head, letting the snolf's chubby paw stroke his shaggy bleached-blond mane and stubby black horns.

Smiling as the drake relented, Aaron scooted a bit closer over the tiled floor, running his claws gingerly through Grief's mane. In spite of how much bigger the lupine was, his movements were surprisingly delicate, those blunt claws tenderly working small snags and tangles out of the drake's hair, all while cooing and purring in fawning adoration. Awkward as it was for the dragon, he bore through it, true to his word, though that didn't stop him from grumbling and frowning the whole time.

Luckily for the dragon's wounded ego, the snolf perked up at the subtle "ding!" given by the stove, grinning as he got to his paws and fetched a muzzle-shaped oven mitt from the drawer beside the stove. Carefully, the oversized canine pulled the meatloaf from the oven, setting the tray on the counter and taking in an exaggerated breath through his snout, before sighing in approval and grinning down to his new pet. "Just gotta wait for it to cool off, then dinner is served!"

Curiosity piqued the dragon's interest as the whole room smelled rich and meaty. As if forgetting his brownie-stuffed belly, the dragon took off at a running start, flapping his powerful wings and soaring onto the tall counter. Puffing from the effort (he was somewhat bloated, after all), the tiny Grief carefully padded towards the heated loaf of meat, his nostrils twitching. "Interesting...I'm starting to see why your belly is so large."

Far from offended, the snolf simply grinned cheekily as his tail patted the side of his paunch. "Not hard to enjoy food when you're good at cooking!" he said with a hint of pride, his attention turning to the meatloaf as he seemed to concentrate for a moment. In the blink of an eye, the loaf of beef split into multiple sections, as though invisible blades had carved it up into thick slices, ready to be served up onto plates. Which the snolf promptly did, his muzzle gesturing and causing one of those juicy slices to hover up onto a small platter, before sliding it toward the dragon with a grin as he crooned, "Another treat for the mighty dragon~"

Unfortunately, Grief was not as amused of the snolf's magic tricks, having leapt back and hissed once the meatloaf started moving on its own. Only once the pile of meat finally settled on his plate did the dragon finally pad his way back, inspecting his meal. Despite looking similar to the wedge of chocolate, it smelled quite different. The meat had been seasoned, making it difficult for even the drake's sharp sense of smell to detect what animal it was from. It was unusual, strange, a cause for concern for Grief.

But one bite completely changed his mind.

Grief tore into the meatloaf just as he did the brownie, his slitted green eyes wide with shock. It was good! Too good! He couldn't stop himself from eating, only taking a break to gasp and pant due to the excess heat, puffing out steam before delving right back in. His filling stomach no longer concerned him, even as it rounded and tightened out with even more food!

As the dragon ate, Aaron sat nearby, that same adoring, fond smile glued to his muzzle, watching the drake's flanks bow outward with each ravenous bite. When it looked like Grief would finish off the first slice of meatloaf, another hovered over to settle on the dragon's plate,

the snolf purring softly as he leaned in and nuzzled at his pet's side. "I take it the meatloaf is to your liking?" the lykophis crooned affectionately, smiling as his muzzle brushed against the fur of the shrunken dragon's underside, "You have lovely fur, by the way~"

The dragon grunted, a stifled burp escaping his muzzle. "It's...interesting. The food, I mean, not my fur," Grief quickly stated, clearing his throat. So full of food, the drake settled himself in his spot, tucking his legs beneath his stretched furry stomach as he ate. Being reminded of his soft underbelly, the reptile let out another snort. "My fur is a necessity. My kind live on the peaks of the highest mountains, where it is essentially eternal winter. It's imperative our fur stays thick to survive the harsh conditions. We go through what you ferals would consider hibernation, with the exception that we don't enjoy the luxury that is \*hic\* spring time." Perhaps it was the hours of flying and his overstuffed stomach that made the dragon sleepily ramble on as he did, the dragon speaking more in that moment than he normally spoke at all to any other creature. He was getting quite sleepy, his eyelids starting to droop, even as he continued to nibble and pick at his meatloaf.

Aaron listened to the dragon with a look of interest, another smile crossing his muzzle as he reached up to gently brush his claws through the drake's belly fur. "I bet you cut quite the impressive figure against all that snow," the snolf hummed, before flashing a toothy smile, "If it's any consolation, I think you still bear your draconic majesty, even at this size!"

Playful as the snolf was, it seemed his words were earnest, at least in this instance, bearing a happy smile on his face as his other paw came up to caress the other side of Grief's middle, rubbing the dragon's stretched stomach soothingly. "Is this gonna be enough food for you?" Aaron purred, leaning in to get a look at the drake's face.

"Flattery will earn you no favors with me," the dragon snorted, letting out another stifled burp. He was getting tired; Grief closing his eyes to let out a big wide yawn. Unbeknownst to him, a little squeak escaped his lips as he did so, the dragon smacking his chops of any leftover meatloaf. "And this is...sufficient food," Grief hiccuped, yet again reaching for yet another bite, having to practically drag himself closer with that overstuffed middle weighing him down.

The snolf grinned wide, no longer able to resist the cuteness on display, and gently slipped his paws under the dragon's middle, getting a squeaky gasp of surprise as he lifted Grief up against his chest, cradling the dragon in an arm. In spite of the very verbal objections and high-pitched growls of protest, Aaron simply hummed softly as he took the meatloaf from the counter, holding it to the dragon's muzzle and giving a fond smile. "Shh, just relax~" the snolf purred, gently swaying Grief against his chest, "Part of being a pet is letting your caretaker spoil you, so just rest and let me take care of you~"

"I don't consent," Grief growled, but offered little in terms of resistance. He was simply too full and bloated and, much to his dismay, comfortable. He laid there, silently fuming, a little ball of fur, scales, and hatred. With more meatloaf being presented directly before his muzzle, however, the tiny dragon found himself too busy eating to give criticisms or insults. He was still, silently cramming even more delicious food into his very overstuffed belly, which let out a few

gurgled complaints, letting the snolf rock and pet him like a tiny pet. His growling and grumbling died down, replaced with tiny hiccups and burps; every time he opened his tiny maw, he found more meatloaf gently pressed into it. Soon, the overfed dragon couldn't keep up and finally admitted defeat, slumping back against the snolf's soft chest and falling asleep, a few tiny snores and snorts mixing with the gurgles of his stomach.

Aaron tittered softly as he saw the dragon nod off, popping the rest of the meatloaf into his muzzle and getting to his paws, walking three-pawed over to the bed at the other end of the den. With utmost care, the snolf climbed into the circular nest, taking a moment to get settled on his side, before hugging the sleeping dragon in against his chest like a scaly, bloated teddy bear. Cozy and pleased, it didn't take long for the snolf to join in the dragon's impromptu nap, sleepily nuzzling at the top of Grief's head even as he slept.

With all that food in his belly, Grief was completely knocked out. He didn't stir or react to any of Aaron's squeezing and cuddling, which was certainly a blessing for the snolf who simply wanted a cuddle buddy. He was out cold, snoring slightly as he slept for hours and hours on end.

When he did finally come to, the dragon was startled to find himself in the loving embrace of the fat hybrid. Growling in annoyance, Grief tried wiggling his way to freedom without alerting his caretaker, but to no avail. He simply couldn't squeeze his way out from amidst those claws, not without making a ruckus, that is. Unfortunately, he wasn't quite aware of what rules and boundaries came with being a pet; was he supposed to lie still and wait for Aaron to wake, or could he free himself and explore. Fidgeting with nervousness, the drake carefully rolled over until he was facing the snolf, his warm breath washing over the hybrid's snout.

That moist snout started to twitch, along with the whiskers on the snolf's muzzle, the lupine giggling softly in his sleep, before the dragon found himself being pulled in against Aaron's chest in a dozey, somewhat over-tight hug, letting out a soft "meep!" when Grief squirmed and growled in objection. Head lifting, the serpent blinked groggily as he looked down to investigate the wiggling form in his paws, the events of the previous day returning to mind as he found a rather grumpy-looking dragon glaring back up at him, the tiny form's evident unamusement making the serpent grin with endearment. "Well, good morning!" the lykophis greeted happily, giving Grief a few light pats on the head, "How's my new pet feeling after his little nap?"

The miniature dragon grunted with each pet, slinking away from the petting. It took all of Grief's will power to not snap at that paw, although he did find himself talking through clenched teeth. "Just fine...just fine," he muttered, before clearing his throat. Truth be told, it was a wonderful sleep; he couldn't remember the last time he had slept on such a full belly, let alone on such a soft bed. It could have been the best sleep he had received in any lifetimes were it not for the overweight snolf holding him so close, but it was an adequate enough compromise, he figured.

Free from the snolf's grasp, Grief leapt to the edge of the bed and sat, looking at the laying prone intently while curling his fluffy tail around his ankles. "What is today's objective, snolf?" He asked matter of factly.

Aaron's head tilted at the question. "Objective?" he repeated in a tone more akin to an oblivious puppy than a mighty spellcaster, before his features lit up in recognition, "Oh! You want to help out, I see! Well, what a good lil' derg you are~"

Grinning, the portly snolf hefted himself up onto his paws, performing a very cat-like stretch and yawning wide, his back arching before he leaned forward, belly and chest both smooshing against the bed below and long tail coiling, before straightening himself with a big grin. "I dunno," Aaron replied, looking around the den, "Things are pretty clean, no straightening up needs done... oh! How's your nose? Good at sniffing things out?"

"It is. Quite good, in fact," Grief, nodded. He did not break eye contact with his owner, although his gaze did glance downwards as he noticed the snolf's middle pressing against the soft bed. Being asked about his acute senses did make the dragon swell his chest in pride, feeling redeemed in knowing that he could still prove useful even at his diminutive size. "May I ask what you need for my sensory skills? Perhaps you wish for me to help locate prey?"

"Oh, not prey, no!" Aaron replied, shaking his head as he stepped out of bed, pudgy flank brushing against the dragon on the way by. Padding over to the back wall of the den, the snolf nosed at the sigil that appeared at his approach, the barrier melting away while he glanced over his shoulder. "C'mere, lil' buddy," the serpent purred, nodding toward the hidden shelves, "If you can track down some of the herbs in here, we could go for a walk and you can help me sniff out these plants!"

"Plants... of course," Grief muttered dejectedly. He shouldn't have been surprised; the small dragon couldn't even catch a squirrel at his size. With a sigh, he strode forward, rearing onto his hindlegs and leaning against the wall to get a better look and smell at the plants. "What herbs should I track?"

The hybrid smiled at the endearing sight, taking the basket he'd brought home the previous day in his maw and lowering it to the ground for Grief to see into more easily, though the shrunken dragon still had to pull himself up against the side of the container to get a look inside. "Nightshades, mints, mushrooms, whatever you think you'd be able to help me track down," Aaron said, nosing at the herbs within the basket, mixed in between crystals that seemed far too common and cloudy to be worth much to a jeweler, yet if the drake had to hazard a guess, the snolf likely had a good use for such things.

Standing on his hind legs and leaning into the basket, the dragon took a few whiffs. He was relieved to discover his impressive sense of smell wasn't hindered at his diminutive size; it only took a few sniffs to properly discern the three different scents he was supposed to be tracking. The smells were so strong, Grief was actually considering taking a nip out of the mint

leaf. A shame the crystals didn't have much a scent on them; otherwise he would have offered to search for those as well.

"I could help you locate these," the dragon stated matter of factly. "I have no prior experience gathering herbs, but this shouldn't be a problem to a dragon such as myself."

"Attaboy," Aaron purred, placing the basket back in its place, before pulling an empty one from the shelves, transferring the container to the coils of his tail and smiling down to the dragon, "First things first, though, we ought to get lil' old you some breakfast! How about some bacon and eggs, tough guy?" The question seemed rhetorical; at least, it definitely looked that way, since the snolf was already halfway to the kitchen before he'd even finished his inquiry.

"What's an 'Attaboy?'" Grief asked, before shaking his head. This snolf was weird; he wouldn't be surprised if half the words that spilled from the hybrid's mouth were just nonsense. Bacon, for example, sounded like another made up word to the dragon, but he was aware of what eggs were, and suddenly found himself feeling quite famished. With a flick of his tail, the little dragon followed his owner towards the kitchen, sitting in his previous spot so as to better observe Aaron once again.

"Oh, it's a shortening of 'that's a good boy'," Aaron explained while padding into the kitchen, setting the basket down at the end of the counter and freeing his tail to fetch ingredients from the cupboards. "And a helpful pet like you is definitely a good boy!" the hybrid crooned happily, setting out a frying pan for the meat and eggs that his tail pulled from the refrigerator, a wave of cool air washing briefly over the dragon from the tall, alabaster box. Setting a slab of pork on the counter, the snolf gave a gesture over it with his muzzle, thin strips of meat cutting away from the main mass as though carved off with unseen knives, while his tail cracked eggs against the side of the pan, followed by salt, pepper, and other spices that had an aromatic smell drifting down to the dragon below.

Yup. Nothing Aaron said made sense. He was a good boy, then a 'lil old you' the next. Grief gave up trying to make sense of the snolf, and instead tried making sense of his caretaker's method of preparing meals. The minute the frigid air washed over him from the strange black box, the dragon realized not even *that* made sense. However, being a mountain dragon and used to chilly climates, he wondered if he could perhaps find a way to sneak into the fridge and make off with a few snacks of his own sometime.

The minute the bacon and eggs released their scent, however, the dragon immediately forewent any thought of eating whatever cold and hard food was hidden within the fridge, only wanting a bite of whatever was cooking! His middle growled, the dragon leaping and flying onto the counter eagerly, eyes wide as he stared intently at what was soon to be breakfast.

A grin crossed Aaron's muzzle as he found the counter occupied by his shrunken companion, tail coming up and gently brushing Grief's back. "Aww, someone looks hungry!" the serpent tittered, leaning in and nuzzling the drake's side softly, "I'd better make sure I make enough for you, then~"

As soon as those words left the snolf's mouth, the dragon saw more slices of meat peeling up from the main slab, hovering into the pan alongside the rest, while another pair of eggs tapped themselves against the side of the dish, depositing their contents amongst the rest of the meal. "Hm... missing a little something... oh!" Aaron perked up, looking toward his fridge as his tail wrapped around the handle, tugging open the door and pulling out some grated cheese. Adding a sprinkle of the dairy to the eggs, the serpent gave another grin while he plated up a pair of servings onto plates, sliding one over to the dragon, Grief's own serving seeming just as big as the snolf's, "There you are, lil' buddy! Nums to nom for your tiny tum!"

Grief didn't even bother to dignify what Aaron had just said with a response. He didn't even know where to begin, but from the sound of it, he was finally ready to eat. Wrapping his tail around his ankles, the pint-sized drake settled himself down, taking a few hesitant bites of the bacon. Once again, Grief was caught off guard by the explosion of flavor in his mouth, letting out a pleased growl. Since when was meat *this* flavorful? He could do without the grease, perhaps, but everything else was...fantastic!

And the eggs! He took a large chomp out of those as well, not at all surprised to find a treasure trove of flavor behind that pillowy texture. The strange spices Aaron sprinkled on top of them seemed to only enhance that flavor! How was that possible? Shifting closer towards his meal, the dragon continued to eat with gusto, purring all the while.

Involved as he was with his breakfast, Grief took little notice of the snolf that watched him with an adoring smile. Sidling over, the serpent's paws came up and ever-so-gently brushed against the side of the dragon's fuzzy middle while Grief ate, getting a low chuff of annoyance from the drake, though he rather begrudgingly allowed the soft caressing. He'd accepted by now that he'd need to tolerate the ophidian wolf's overly-cuddly nature; besides, it wasn't as though the gentle stroking felt bad...

Before he knew it, Grief had managed to finish off nearly half of the meal that had been slid before him, and it was around that point that fullness began to hit the drake. With a few more nibbles, the dragon leaned back, huffing softly in satisfaction, a glance over his shoulder revealing the far-too-close muzzle of his caretaker, grinning toothily while gently nosing at the side of his midsection. "I'm gonna take a wild guess and say you enjoy my cooking~" Aaron purred, giving the wyrm's soft belly a gentle lick as he purred in affection.

The dragon shuddered slightly from the sudden lick, but did little else to protest the affection. He was quite comfortable, after all; a warm meal in his belly did wonders for his typical stone-cold expression. Grief wasn't smiling, by any means, but he wasn't scowling as well, which was quite an improvement. "It's...interesting, to say the least," Grief admitted, stifling a quiet burp. "I'm curious how you learned your craft. Your... 'cooking' technique looks like something an anthro would do."

As much as Grief despised anthros, he couldn't deny that their food was simply divine. Even now, with his belly round and taut with a warm meal, the dragon thought about when his

next course would be. Full and sluggish, the tiny wyrm carefully looked over the counter, suddenly not looking forward to hopping down and marching around the forest with his caretaker.

Seeming to catch the dragon's look of uncertainty, Aaron smiled as he nuzzled Grief once more, before his tail came up and gently wrapped around the dragon. Though protesting with a soft growl at first, the sound was ignored as the snolf lifted Grief to his back, letting the drake rest between his shoulders. "I do business with anthros frequently, and agreed to perform a service for a chef once in exchange for her teaching me how to cook," the snolf explained, looking back to the little form resting on his back with a warm smile, "As you probably guessed, I don't accept payment in the form of money for my services; I much prefer the exchange of favors over dirty old coins!"

Tail curling around his basket once more, the lykophis gave the dragon a grin. "And your own payment has been very pleasant so far~" he purred, rubbing his cheek against Grief's side, "Want to ride there while we head out, lil' buddy?"

Grief wasn't exactly at ease laying on the back of someone else, let alone the snolf he owed a favor to, but he didn't complain. He was still feeling slow and sluggish, so perhaps a little ride wouldn't be a bad thing. "For now, perhaps," the dragon muttered, his wings still raised un easily. At least the snolf's back was wide and plush.

It felt weird for Grief to be giving orders to someone he was indebted to, but he soon found it quite fun! "Slow down, turn right. Behind the Oak," the dragon commanded, watching as Aaron was rewarded with a few mushrooms growing out from the base of the tree. It was somewhat empowering, commanding a beast several times his size; perhaps not as empowering as actually *being* several times his size, but it was the next best thing, in the dragon's opinion.

Once his stomach had settled, Grief carefully flapped down beside his owner and lead the search himself. The pace went much slower, as the small dragon's legs couldn't match the lengthy stride of his chubby companion, but it was still better than being carried like a helpless whelp. Besides, he thought, this way Aaron wouldn't be constantly rubbing his tail against the small dragon, although he was soon proved wrong as the snolf would occasionally loom over him to preen his blond mane. There was just no escaping the snolf's constant affection, it would seem.

With the help of Grief's keen sense of smell, it was only a few short hours later when Aaron's basket was full to the brim with herbs, a bright grin on the snolf's muzzle as they made their way back toward the serpent's den. The hybrid allowed his pet to lead the way; it seemed to boost the drake's mood being able to take the initiative, and it meant he got to watch the adorable way the little wyrm waddled around his tubby middle. Though notably less distended, it seemed like some of those calories had decided to stick around, padding out Grief's waistline and flanks in plump pudge. It wasn't a dramatic difference, yet it was enough for the snolf to tell that his cooking was having exactly its desired effect.

“So,” Aaron started as the pair ducked into his home, smiling down to the dragon warmly, “Why don’t you take yourself a nice rest, you’ve definitely earned it! I’ll get you some lunch, and a little surprise, as well~”

Grief didn’t need to be told twice. It was quite the lengthy walk for the tiny dragon, even considering he spent part of it riding the snolf’s back. He quickly padded onto the carpet and over to the cushions, before settling himself beside one of them. Finally off his feet, the small dragon let out a big, silent yawn. He couldn’t help but feel quite proud of how productive his day was. If Aaron was true to his word, then Grief was one step closer to finally reclaiming his own size. He allowed himself a brief smug look, leaning further into the cushions. He was more than satisfied watching the snolf work from his position for now.

Smiling at the endearing sight from the kitchen for a moment, Aaron turned and got to work, the dragon hearing as dishes and ingredients were gathered. Soon, the scent of burgers wafted out to the little drake, and in his tired, somewhat dozey state, it seemed like no time at all before he found a plate being settled before him, a tall, broad hamburger with several toppings and dressings forming what looked like a veritable hill of food from the dragon’s perspective. “Such a good, helpful pet deserves a big, tasty treat,” Aaron purred as he settled down beside the wurm, a small, black collar held in his paw, “And a badge of honor for such dedicated service, as well!”

All those compliments made the dragon’s chest swell with pride. Only a day in, and he was already doing great work! He was still unnerved at how fond the other feral was of inhabiting his personal space, something he was certain he could never fully grow accustomed to, but he could at least tolerate it for the time being. Soon, he would be his normal size yet again, Grief could fly far, far away...although, maybe coming back for a snack or two once in a while wouldn’t be such a bad idea.

Speaking of snacks, Grief took an eager bite out of his burger, no longer trying to sample the meat before diving right in. As expected, his taste buds immediately died and went to heaven, the drake delighted to discover the burger tasted similar to the meatloaf he devoured last night, only with a different texture. Grief had scarfed down three big mouthfuls of meat before finally noticing the black collar, frowning. “What is that?” He asked, leaning away in apprehension.

Aaron’s head tilted at the question, before smiling as he brought the collar in closer for Grief to get a better look at. “It’s a collar; a way for a pet’s caretaker to show that they’re proud of their pet!” the snolf said with a bright grin, “Displaying their name in a show of approval and affection, and I’d say after that outing, you’ve more than earned it~”

The dragon was still apprehensive, sniffing the collar nervously. Judging by the size of it, the ring was supposed to go around his neck; a very vital spot that Grief was *very* hesitant of anyone touching. All instincts told the dragon to bolt out while he could and to never look back. In fact, he would have done just that if Aaron had presented him with the collar just the other day.

But after living with the snolf for a day, after experiencing the delicious food and gentle affection he was forcibly showered with by the hybrid, Grief figured the least he could do was to give his caretaker the benefit of the doubt.

“If it hastens my inevitable regrowth, then so be it,” the dragon growled, tensing up as his caretaker carefully slid the collar past his snout and onto his neck, tightening it slightly until it was snug around his neck. Once Aaron had the collar secured (which also came with plenty of head pets and nuzzles) the dragon continued his delve into his meaty meal, trying to put the collar out of his mind. Plenty of food, warmth, and shelter until Aaron finally decided to regrow him? Grief chuffed; he could get used to this.

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He certainly did grow used to this. Grief didn’t even flinch when he found himself waking up in the arms of his caretaker; every morning started off with him forcibly snuggled against the snolf in some way, feeling his side squeeze into the snolf’s squishy squishy flanks as if he were just another enormous cushion. The dragon was starting to tolerate the hybrid’s constant nuzzling much better; in fact, on any normal circumstance, he would have tried falling asleep yet again in his owner’s embrace. However, a growing sense of unease had been festering within his mind, one that spurred him to carefully shrug his way out of Aaron’s embrace and off the bed.

To put it simply; Grief had it too good. He was supposed to be indebted to Aaron, to be his personal servant in exchange for his previous size, and he was practically treated like royalty! Aside from helping the snolf sniff out some herbs or fetch an item or two, Grief never had to lift a claw! Aaron was there for every need he had - carrying him, grooming him, cleaning him, sheltering him, feeding him - oh man, was he fed!

Aaron had an obsession with keeping the drake well fed that rivaled his constant nuzzling and cuddling! The serpent was always the first to suggest a snack break or a meal, always serving extra large helping to the dragon who couldn’t possibly finish such an enormous serving on his own. But Aaron liked to see if he could, often times offering to hand feed the bloated dragon, showering him with enough praise and warm food that Grief couldn’t resist just one more bite.

With all the warm food and lazing around, it came to no surprise when Grief started putting on weight. Before he met Aaron, the dragon was already bordering on chubby; now, he had surpassed chubby and was teetering towards tubby! This was apparent as the dragon’s gait had turned into a bit of a waddle, his legs spreading out to make room for his gut. That dome of a belly was shaped just like his caretaker’s: round and jiggly, hanging by his knees on the rare times it wasn’t filled with fattening food. His broad back now had a bit of bounce to it when he waddled, his angular face looking more cherubic and soft, even his limbs and thighs were padded and soft to the touch. Even his collar, which was almost a little loose the day he first adorned it,

was now fitting quite snug against his neck, digging in slightly into the chub. He was a *very* well-fed drake.

Despite his sudden gain, Grief was hardly concerned with how heavy and broad he was growing. In a way, he figured this was part of Aaron's method of helping him reclaim his current size, although he did wish the growth was a bit more..uniform. Feeling his legs brush against his hanging gut only made the dragon feel more anxious; his master was doing so much for him, and Grief was offering little in return! What if it was a trap; a test to see if he would prove useful on his own or if he needed the guidance of others to show his worth?!

Heart racing with anxiety, the dragon soon lumbered his way towards the entrance of the cave. Once off the carpet, he got to work dragging his fluffy tail along the ground, sweeping the floor like he had seen the serpent do before. It was time he started proving his worth, although with his small size and large cave, it may be some time before he finished properly sweeping. Nonetheless, the dragon persisted, his big rump bouncing as he wiggled and swept his tail along in broad strokes, the sound of sweeping filling the air, along with all the dust the drake was kicking up.

Those low sounds didn't seem to disturb the dreams of the snolf that rested in his bed, though his ears did twitch periodically when the little dragon was sweeping near his bed. The dust, however, was another story, Aaron's snout starting to wiggle slightly as particles settled on his nose, the bridge of his snout wrinkling for a moment as his eyes fluttered open briefly, head lifting and muzzle parting, before a loud sneeze woke the serpent up. Shaking his head, the ophidian pawed at his snout, glancing around in groggy bemusement until his gaze landed on the plump little wyrm that busied himself with removing as much of the dust from the den as he could, quiet huffs coming to the snolf's ears from the effort Grief put into cleaning.

"Aww! Look at you go," Aaron cooed in delight, grinning down at the dragon from his bed, "You really don't have to go out of your way like this, lil' buddy. But it's sweet seeing you do nice things for me~"

The little dragon sat down next to the bed after a few moments, huffing quietly. All that sweeping was exhausting, especially for someone of his size...and shape. Grief quickly shook his head, dust sprinkling out of his mane. "My aim is to finally convince you to help me regain my previous size. I believe this would help speed up the process of ah...aaah....CHOO!" The pudgy drake let loose a comically-squeaky sneeze, sniffing and rubbing his poor snoot against the edge of the bed to wipe off any dust.

Aaron couldn't help giggling at the adorable sound, puffing slightly as he pulled himself out of bed, taking a seat beside the wyrm and leaning down to gently nuzzle at the dragon's side. "You don't have to go through all the trouble, you know," the snolf said in a gentle tone, giving Grief a kind smile, "We already agreed on your payment, you don't need to convince me more. Besides, you're getting your lovely fur all dusty." The serpent reached a paw forward and gently brushed some of the dust out of Grief's tail fur, tutting softly and shaking his head, "Goodness, lil' buddy, you've gotten yourself all messy. I think it's time I gave you a bath~"

"A bath?" Grief repeated, flicking his dust-coated tail. He shouldn't have been surprised; he was practically covered in dust, his blackened scales almost as grey as the rest of him. The little dragon huffed and looked away, trying to hide his wounded pride. "V-very well. I shall clean myself in the nearby river," he prepared, turning towards the entrance of the cave.

That momentum was suddenly diverted when Grief felt lupine fangs gently gripping ahold of his scruff. The dragon gasped as his paws reflexively tucked up against himself, before letting out a stream of vitriolic objections as he was carried toward the kitchen. Aaron seemed completely oblivious to the high-pitched growls and squeaks of dismay from his pet as he happily trotted over to the sink, gently setting Grief into the bottom of the metal depression and licking his face affectionately. "I think you'll enjoy a bath here much better than the river," the snolf insisted, nosing at the knobs on either side of the faucet and starting up a stream of warm, steamy water, before smiling to the drake fondly, "Is this a nice temperature for you?"

Grief didn't respond right away, rather he sat there glaring daggers at the large lupine. "No one is to know of this. Understood?" He grumbled, his threatening demeanour undermined by his squeaky voice and roundish body.

With a sigh, the dragon sat and watched as the warm water lapped onto his paws, slowly filling the basin. A part of him had a moment's panic, but seeing as how he could easily climb out from the sink at any time, he figured he was safe from drowning. Oddly enough, the warm water was extremely pleasing to the touch, the dragon slowly settling himself lower into the water. "Yes, this is nice...I suppose." He added that last comment offhandedly, as if afraid to show positive emotion towards anything, yet it was hard to hide the happy rumbles as he leaned forward to try and lick from the faucet.

Aaron smiled again at the little dragon as he watched Grief relax, letting the sink fill up just enough for the water to lap over the drake's back, before bringing the water to a stop. Sitting on his haunches, the serpent reached over the sink and procured a few bottles of shampoos and ointments, starting to add them to the water. "You might want to avoid drinking the bathwater, the soap makes it taste bad," the snolf informed his pet, giving the dragon's chubby cheek another gentle nuzzle, before dabbing a few drops of shampoo onto his paws and setting his digits on Grief's shoulders. With gentle, tender movements, Aaron started to massage the soap across the dragon's scales, his digits working gently into the supple pudge of Grief's body, rubbing in circles down the wyrm's flanks, before kneading back up along either side of the drake's spine, repeating the pattern a few times while humming happily to the little dragon.

Grief tried to maintain his stern and rough complexion, but his icy glare gradually melted in the warm soapy waters around him. Overtime, the dragon's eyelids grew heavier, and save for a few watery flicks from his wings and tail, the drake ended up completely still. Even more, he started purring! A week of staying with the overly-affectionate snolf had finally weakened his cautious and sensitive side. The constant groomings, nuzzlings, holdings; all of it made the dragon stop flinching every time the hybrid grew close to him. Having finally abandoned his typical fears and anxieties, Grief found himself actually enjoying the gentle scratching along his

supple frame. He did his best not to show it on his face, but he loved the attention his dirty, heavy body got, even rubbing his chubby cheek against the snolf's paw once on reflex!

Aaron paused as the dragon's soft face nuzzle against his pawpad, a wide grin spreading over his muzzle as he gently brushed the soap from the drake's cheek. "Such a good boy you are," the snolf purred, reaching into the sink and pulling the plug to let some of the water drain, "Now, time to get all that tum fluff clean. Roll over, boy~" The gentle command was accompanied by another toothy smile, the snolf plugging the sink again once the water level was halfway down the drake's limbs.

"I've told you before, my name isn't boy," Grief growled softly, flicking water at the snolf's snoot with his wings. He wondered if it was customary for pets to be referred to their genders, rather than their names; if that's the case, then how could one owner keep track of multiple pets? It was all too confusing for the dragon. Rather than think on it too hard, the miniature drake sighed and slowly rolled his barrel body to the side, revealing his very well-fed middle. Grief still stared at the snolf with wide eyes; his belly *was* quite sensitive, and that was something that would take more than a week of rubs and hugs to fix.

The serpent seemed to notice the dragon's apprehension, giving a gentle smile to the little wyrm, before resting his paw over the drake's middle, ever-so-gently combing his claws through the moistened fur. "I know, I know, but you're just such a little cutie, I can't help talking to you like you're actually a little pet I can keep and spoil forever," Aaron purred, carefully working the shampoo into Grief's ventral fur, a grin coming over the snolf's snout as he felt the supple pudge squishing under his digits, "And you seem to have taken very well to my pampering, after all~"

Grief frowned at those words, looking up at the snolf apprehensively. "That wasn't the deal. I am to remain being your pet only as long as you deem necessary, until which you will allow me to regrow to my previous size. I will gratefully do whatever else is necessary to achieve that goal, but I will be none too pleased if I should discover you've been deceiving me this whole time." The dragon couldn't speak seriously enough to back of his words; after all, he was on his side in soapy water while his caretaker squeezed and kneaded his soft belly. He continued staring at the snolf unwavering, waiting for a response.

Aaron gave a soft giggle as he shook his head. "Oh, of course! I wouldn't go back on my word like that; I simply mean I've been sincerely enjoying your company," the snolf clarified, smiling back to the little dragon while he massaged the suds through Grief's abdominal fur, perhaps kneading around more than was strictly necessary as he enjoyed how soft and doughy the drake's middle felt. "You have my word, once your two month period is up, you'll be back to your old size," he said, before his smile turned a big impish, "Or perhaps, a little bigger, depending on how things go~"

"Bigger?" Grief repeated again, his eyes widening. He never once considered the possibility of growing beyond his previous size! Being the antisocial drake he was, Grief completely missed what the impish grin may have entailed as he leaned his head back to better

regard the snolf, bunching up his neck rolls slightly. “You said depending on how things go, correct? What can I do to help you grow myself bigger than before?”

The serpent blinked for a moment, before another twinkle of mischief lit up in his eyes, though he quickly subdued the expression to give another of his gentle smiles. “Oh, well that’s quite easy,” Aaron replied, taking up a pawful of water and trickling it over the drake’s underside, rinsing the soap from Grief’s fur, “You just need to make sure you’re eating plenty. If you do your best to preserve the appetite you had before your shrinking, then when I reverse the curse, you’ll be even bigger than you ever were. Of course, I imagine it would be quite a challenge, with your stomach shrunken so much; I wouldn’t want to see you give yourself a bellyache just to get a bit of extra growth when all’s said and done~”

“I see...” Grief thought out loud to himself, watching as the trickles of water washed over his rounded middle, not once making the connection that he was growing outwards instead of up. “Then, perhaps all those meals you’ve been insisting I eat were to help me achieve this new size. I was...wrong to have misjudged you, Aaron.” The dragon bowed his head. “From now on, I shall eagerly consume whatever is placed before me. And once I’ve surpassed my previous size, you will have earned my unyielding loyalty.”

Right into the palm of the snolf’s paw. Aaron repressed the urge to grin victoriously, instead simply nodding in return and smiling to the dragon. “I truly have been doing whatever I can that’s best for you, lil’ buddy,” the snolf replied, reaching a hand into the sink and pulling the plug again, before turning on the warm water once more, “Alright, rinsing time~”

At that, Grief found himself lifted in the serpent’s paw and rolled unceremoniously onto his back, so the water could flow over the drake’s middle. Though the dragon squirmed and grumbled, he allowed himself to be handled in such an undignified manner, if only to keep in the good graces of the serpent. Eccentric and absent-minded as the snolf could be at times, by now Grief had seen how competent the hybrid was in terms of magic; there was no doubt in his mind that the serpent was capable of undoing the curse on him. He just had to bear through the fawning and cooing.

Once all the soap was out of Grief’s pelt, Aaron lifted him out and gently wrapped a towel around the dragon, creating something of a draconic burrito that he happily tucked in against his chest, grinning down to the wyrm. “Now, after all that work, I just bet you’re good and ready for breakfast, ain’tcha?”

The tiny wyrm wiggled just a bit in his new towel wrapping, surprised at how soft and comforting, yet firm and tight it was. While he would have preferred to dry himself on his own, this was also far from the worst bout of forced snuggling he had to endure, and so was quite content to keep the wrapping around him. At the sound of breakfast, Grief’s green eyes widened, looking like a chubby bird as he poked his head out. “Indeed, I’m quite famished!” He exclaimed with more emotion than usual.

“D’aww, well, let’s fix that, shall we~?” Aaron replied, shuffling over to the refrigerator, before pausing for a moment. Looking down to the wrapped-up little form in his foreleg, the serpent considered the softened features of Grief’s face, before another smile spread over his muzzle as he looked from the fridge up to the freezer. “I don’t think I’ve introduced you to ice cream yet, have I?” the ophidian wolf mused, his tail coming up to open the door to the freezer, revealing several cartons and varieties of frozen sweets, “After being so super helpful today, I think you’ve earned yourself an extra-tasty breakfast. So, perhaps some rocky road for my sweet lil’ helper buddy~”

As usual, the snolf seemed to be talking more to himself than to Grief when it came to meal time. Rather than fetching a bowl, however, Aaron simply coiled the end of his tail around the gallon of ice cream, lifting it out of the freezer before taking up a spoon in his paw. Tucking the utensil into his forelimb beside the bundled drake, the serpent awkwardly waddled out of the kitchen on three paws, plopping into bed with a soft huff, before setting the carton of cream at his chest and lifting the lid. Taking up the spoon, Aaron scooped out a somewhat oversized portion, before holding it to Grief’s muzzle, giving a fond grin down to the drake, “How’s that smell for ya?”

The dragon sniffed the new cold treat before him, tilting his head. “I don’t understand, why is it frozen?” It was hard to imagine anyone wanting to eat something chilly and cold; even mountain dragons only ate cold food due to their climate. But there was no denying the interesting chocolatey and nutty scent emanating from the chilled treat, his muzzle twitching. Soon, he took a little lick, then a bite, before slowly engulfing his little maw around the spoon, hoovering it into himself. After a big gulp, the greedy drake wiggled his way slightly out of his towel burrito just to give the spoon a few licks.

Aaron laughed softly, grinning as he turned the spoon for Grief a few times, before pulling it away to take another scoop out of the carton. “Goodness, I think he likes it!” the snolf tittered to himself, holding the sweet cream to the dragon’s muzzle and smiling adoringly as the drake practically inhaled the chilly treat, “Good thing you’re a mountain dragon; I bet you’re pretty much immune to ice cream headaches, huh?”

If Grief heard the question, he didn’t give any indication of it; he simply continued to devour the delicious sweet he’d been provided. And Aaron was all too happy to oblige the greedy little wyrm, holding spoonful after spoonful of ice cream out to the drake, before eventually just bringing the whole carton up, tilting the container so that the corner was up to Grief’s muzzle, allowing the dragon to guzzle through the frozen confection as much as he wanted.

And boy did he want to guzzle! Grief happily took big greedy bites of the ice cream before him, occasionally stopping to lick his muzzle before continuing. With his towel slowly becoming undone, the chubby drake was free to step closer, sticking his head into the carton. There was still so much ice cream left; so much of that delicious, filling treat. Partway through, the drake felt himself start to fill up noticeably, but he didn’t dare stop. Not if it meant surpassing his original size.

Further and further he ate his way into the carton, spurred on by occasional back rubs and praise from the snolf. Grief disregarded his rising middle, ignoring how round and taut it was growing with each greedy bite. He was going to eat every last bite! His head soon vanished into the carton, the sound of ravenous chomping echoing in his container. It was all so good; Grief wasn't even aware of just how much he was eating until he finally finished his last bite. Sighing with relief, the dragon made to step out, only to stumble on his padded rump, the carton wedged slightly against his bloated sides. "Erh...I require assistance," the pudgy drake muttered, the sounds of licking still being heard from within.

Aaron cooed and giggled adoringly at the request, slipping his paws under the drake and gently pulling him free of the container. "Wow, you ate it all!" the serpent said in obvious approval, before chuckling when he saw the dragon's face still had a layer of sticky cream coating it. Leaning in, the snolf licked his little pet clean, getting a few huffish grumbles of protest, before tucking Grief into the crook of his foreleg, resting his paw on the dragon's swollen middle and rubbing in tender motions, "Never should have doubted that, I suppose; you've got a mountain dragon's appetite, after all~"

Grief snorted at the praise, followed by a very squeaky hiccup. The drake was beyond stuffed, and was only coming to that realization after seeing the empty container before him, knowing all that ice cream was now in his very round belly. With another hiccup, the fat dragon carefully rolled himself onto his side, leaning his back against his snolf caretaker while his paws weakly rubbed at his swollen middle. "Hmmf...I'm still a mighty dragon, no matter the \*hic\* size."

"Clearly!" Aaron replied with a soft chuckle, ever-so-gently resting his paw over the dragon's own and rubbing the taut curve alongside Grief's little claws, "If you keep eating like this, you'll be a truly huge, impressive sight, for sure~" The snolf only realized his companion was asleep when no answer came, looking down and smiling at the wyrm he held against him, his muzzle coming down to gently brush against the sleeping drake's head.

From that moment on, Aaron was delighted to find Grief much more accepting of his care, particularly when food was involved. The little drake did everything he could to be the best pet he could be, and the snolf took full advantage of it! Dusted the floor? An extra serving! Guarded the entrance? Two extra brownies for dessert! Sat still during groomings? An extra helping of fried chicken! Grief hardly had to expend much effort at all to be a good pet, and by proxy receive bountiful amounts of servings; he ended nearly every meal stuck on his back with a belly achingly full of delicious treats! Little did the drake realize that he was practically wound against the snolf's pinky finger! Food meant he was doing good, it meant he was closer to his goal, and it meant being able to taste wonderful treats all at once! The little dragon pushed to surpass his appetite at every chance, and not without some very obvious results.

For starters, one little mouse happened to notice there was an abundance of food crumbs on the floor of the kitchen counter one evening, and made the bold choice to dart from its hidden spot to nibble on them. The crumbs were quite delicious, more than anything the feral rodent had

ever experienced before, and so it decided to root itself at the spot to nibble away. Little did it know that a predator had spotted it and was making his approach.

At his own, lumbering pace.

Grief huffed and panted as he made his way towards the rodent, his broad scaly back swinging left to right to match his very wide gait. A mere month under the snolf's care, and the dragon had blimped out to over twice his size, his belly grazing along the floor no matter how high he arched his back. Those tubby limbs were like cylinders, squishing heavily into his enormous doughy middle as it glided across the ground, his wings looking puffier all around. His collar, even after being loosened, still dug deep into his squishy neck folds, his black scaly chub spilling around it. All in all, he was one very, *very* fat dragon, having surpassed barrel shaped and moving towards a sphere.

And he hardly seemed to care.

The rotund dragon huffed as he stood before the mouse, who was too intoxicated with the seemingly-magical food crumbs to even notice. Grief raised his claw, but the sudden shift in weight was enough to topple the very tubby dragon onto his squishy gut, his arms resting against the pancaked belly. He huffed and panted, his big round cheeks flushed with exertion, his second and third chin wobbling beneath his stubby muzzle. But as he looked down, the drake couldn't help but grin, for his pancaked belly had molded over half the mouse, keeping him in place. "Heheh...you're gonna be worth...a few extra snacks~"

The flurry of activity, such as it was, seemed enough to draw Aaron's attention from the book he was reading, smiling as he caught sight of his plump pet. "Whatcha got there?" the snolf said as he gave a gesture with his muzzle, the book between his paws closing itself before hovering back to its shelf, allowing the snolf to get to his paws and investigate the mouse that grief was pinning proudly under his poundage. "Oh, good job! Very, very good!" Aaron crooned in delight as Grief shuffled himself back just enough to reveal the head of the mouse that was struggling to worm its way free from under his gut.

Giggling at the sight, the snolf leaned down as he breathed in, before letting out a gentle breath over the rodent's head, and the little creature went completely still all at once. Gingerly, the serpent took the little scruff of the pinned critter between his jaws, slipping it out from under the drake, before trotting out through the entryway. Returning after a few moments, Aaron flashed a toothy smile to his little companion, padding over and nuzzling at the dragon's side softly. "Who's the bestest lil' rat catcher everrr~?" the snolf purred in affection, eyes twinkling in joy as his snout was enveloped in soft dragon blubber.

"That would be myself, yes," Grief responded matter-of-factly, still breathing heavy, enough to make his wide sides expand and contract rapidly. He allowed himself a dimpled smile, proud yet again of his very hard work in keeping the snolf's residence as clean as possible...granted, he could have also cleaned up the food crumbs he himself made the other night, but it wasn't his fault he fell asleep as suddenly as he did! Still settled on his enormous

middle, the dragon turned his chubby head towards Aaron, his eyes wide and hopeful. “Perhaps that was worth a few more cookies?” He asked in as innocent a voice as the gruff dragon could provide.

Aaron grinned as he gave a nod. “Oh, I should say so!” he affirmed, slipping his paws under the dragon and lifting Grief up, tucking the drake into the crook of his forelimb and heading toward the kitchen. The dragon didn’t even squirm around, having become used to being picked up and carried at any moment by his fawning caretaker, simply making himself comfortable in the embrace until he found himself gently deposited on the counter.

“Let’s see... chocolate chip, oreo, peanut butter, which one, which one...” the snolf hummed to himself as he reared up to nose through one of the upper shelves, before giving a soft giggle and grinning down to the drake, “Oh heck, why not all? You can have as much as you want, my sweet lil’ helper~” The serpent’s words were accompanied by bags and tins of cookies hovering down from the shelves, opening up to reveal their hidden treasures to the dragon as Aaron settled back down onto his haunches, getting comfortable to watch his pet enjoy another session of gorging.

Aaron wasn’t the only one enjoying the gorging. Grief nearly chirped in glee as he was being presented with a sudden away of cookies, excited to be rewarded with such a bounty! The fat dragon wasted no time in chomping down on the nearest cookie, growling in joy as sweet chocolate filled his muzzle. From there, he moved onto a white chocolate macadamia nut, and then a sugar cookie, chowing through them at an alarming rate. As his waistline grew, so did his appetite it seemed.

As he tried reaching forward for another cookie, however, the drake noticed he felt incredibly heavy. Grief was used to feeling heavy and out of breath at this point, but lately it felt like that feeling was being taken to the very extreme. A look of concern marked his chubby face as his thick legs struggled to haul his bulky frame off the ground. But, rather than make any remark, the doughy drake decided to slide himself forward on his enormous middle like a penguin, back to easy access of all those delicious treats.

The change in the dragon's method of movement elicited a soft chuckle from his caretaker, and Grief found the different containers of cookies slid in closer to him to ease the efforts of shifting his bulk. "Gracious, my little pet's looking more and more like a little ball every day~" Aaron purred playfully, his paw gently stroking the dragon's pudgy flank as he smiled in adoration, clearly approving of the change in the drake's rotund figure.

The dragon blinked at that comment, shifting his slitted eyes towards the taller feral. Gulping his current mouthful, he turned to glare at his owner. “It’s merely the results of my previous meal earlier. I’m in perfect shape,” he said with as much confidence as one could with cookie crumbs all over his puffy cheeks and wobbling chins. “I could stop eating whenever I feel like it.”

But he didn't. Not after his current cookie, or the next one. In fact, the gluttonous drake continuously ate until every single baked tweet was stored away within his enormous tum, his crumb-coated muzzle being the only signs that such a feast existed. Stifling a burp, Grief slowly leaned onto his side, his bloated belly facing the snolf, knowing what his overly affectionate caretaker was about to do next.

Indeed, it took only a moment for the gentle nuzzling to begin, followed by the familiar, tender grooming that Aaron seemed so fond of giving. No matter how clean the dragon's belly fur was, the snolf seemed convinced it could always use another delicate licking and nibbling session; still, the short bristles on the ophidian wolf's tongue did feel quite pleasant, scritchng against the drake's sensitive underbelly with each tender slurp, those soft nibbles combing out any snags or tangles the snolf came across. The dragon's coat had never been so well-cared-for, and it certainly did feel nice seeing the luster all that grooming gave his pelt.

"I'm sure you could~" Aaron cooed between his grooming, rubbing his plump cheek against the dragon's even-more-plump tummy, "And of course, 'round' is a perfectly lovely shape, hehe!" As he spoke, the snolf's tail came up to the counter, sliding another container of sweets in easy reach of the wyrm's muzzle.

The drake snorted at that remark, although he couldn't stop his tail from flicking in delight at the gentle licks and groomings he had grown so accustomed to. He had a response in mind, but that was quickly forgotten as his sensitive snout sniffed out another batch of cookies, just for him. Grief wasn't exactly hungry, having just consumed an impressive amount of sweets already for someone of his size, but a primal urge drove him to lean forward to snatch the nearest one up. Those cookies *had* to be eaten! By him!

First cookie gone, the drake realized he'd have to sit more upright to reach the rest of them. With a grunt, he flapped his wings and urged himself onto all fours, only to flop back on his side. Panting and huffing, the rotund dragon tried again and again, jostling and jiggling his squishy and tubby body. It only took a few moments until Grief finally gave up, lying on his side and panting hard. "I...require assistance..." he breathlessly muttered, his belly heaving up and down.

The snolf watched the whole process, his smile growing more and more adoring with each failed attempt by the dragon to right himself, eventually tittering softly as he gently slid his muzzle against Grief's back, nosing the drake upright and giving the side of his tummy a gentle lick. "I think I know where all those cookies have gone~" Aaron teased affectionately, lightly nibbling at a handle of pudge on the dragon's flank, before sitting upright and bringing his paws up to the counter to lift the drake into his foreleg. Tail coiling around one of the packages of cookies, the snolf turned and trotted out of the kitchen, his three-legged gait more sure and steady from practice.

Grief found himself being settled belly-down into a pillow that had acquired a deep depression in its center from his weight repeatedly sinking into the cushion, forming a comfortable, cradling support around him while his owner climbed up into the bed beside him.

"Such a good boy," Aaron purred, giving his companion's cheek a fond nuzzle as his tail brought the cookies up, settling the package in front of the resting dragon.

Throughout that experience, Grief was oddly silent - no grunts or grumbles of protest, and certainly no purring. He regarded the cookies before him for a moment; a rather unusual change given his tendency to dive headfirst into any sort of food the minute it was placed before him. After a long sigh, the dragon leaned his chubby head forward to take a few bites, before gradually looking up at the snolf. "I could barely catch a mouse," he muttered silently, his usual harsh tone much more mellow and soft. "I cannot walk the length of your home without collapsing. I cannot climb on anything aside from my own cushion. I cannot even roll myself upright anymore without assistance... I have grown soft and yielding, and worst of all depending on another creature."

It was the first time Grief had ever voiced his thoughts and feelings to someone else as well. All logic told the dragon he should despise Aaron for treating him like this, for eliminating every challenge in his life while leaving him too pampered to even maneuver around his own bulk anymore. Yet every time the dragon even looked in Aaron's direction, he always found his heartrate relaxing, his mind at ease. He was a pet...and he genuinely loved every second of having his every need cared for him. "Will I still prove useful, once my mobility finally reaches its limit, Aaron?" Grief asked, his green eyes shimmering, his tail wrapped around as much of his pudgy body as it can reach; a sign of fear and anxiety the dragon hadn't displayed in weeks!

The snolf's fawning and playful teasing melted away into concern the moment he recognized the trepidation that had fallen over the dragon, taking a moment to set the cookies aside and gently lift Grief back up into his foreleg, hugging the dragon against his chest. "You will," Aaron said, his tone completely different from what the drake had become used to. It was earnest, gentle, and encouraging, a little, reassuring smile on the lupine's features as he cradled the drake against himself, "Grief, you don't *need* to do anything to be useful to me. Just being here to give me a bit of company helps; I really don't do well when I'm on my own. If you think the service I'm asking of you isn't equal to the service I'm doing for you, then you're sorely mistaken; you're keeping a smile on this snolf's face, and that's more valuable than I can really say."

The dragon sighed softly and leaned into the embrace. Again, he found himself loving the feeling of the snolf's limbs wrapped around his own pudgy frame, or the gentle scratches of those claws on his plump and fluffy belly. Those were traits he believed he was supposed to loathe, yet he found himself longing for them every chance he could. "I'm...I don't like being alone, either," Grief muttered after a moment. "And I certainly don't like being worthless. Don't leave me... please."

Aaron gave another gentle smile, holding the dragon a bit closer and brushing Grief's back tenderly. "You're always welcome here," the snolf assured the little wyrm, leaning in and nosing the top of the drake's head, his tone shifting back to his usual playfulness as he gave a toothy grin, "You're my sweet little pet, after all; you don't have to go anywhere, and I promise I'll keep you close and safe."

“I...will hold you to that,” Grief smiled back, rubbing his tiny chubby muzzle against the snolf’s in return. For that moment, the two plump ferals stayed silent, enjoying the warm embrace of their companion. The dragon’s purring rumbled against the snolf. Aaron may technically be his owner, but Grief was finally starting to view him as something closer to that of a friend. And for that one brief instance, the dragon had completely forgotten about their promise to regrow him. “Aaron...perhaps I could still help you track any herbs you may require. My body is slow and heavy, but I assure you my senses haven’t dulled in the slightest.”

Smiling, the snolf nodded as he caressed the dragon's wing. "I'd like that. After all, it's good to take a pet out on walks now and then!" Aaron said, chuckling as he rolled himself over onto his back, placing the dragon on his chest and rubbing Grief's flanks tenderly, his deep purr joining in the higher-pitched rumbling of his shrunken companion, "Just so you know, though, you don't *have* to make yourself useful like that. I'm just as happy seeing you relax and enjoy the sweets that you seem to have grown oh so fond of~"

Grief wiggled himself to get cozy on top of his new perch, feeling his pudge spread out across the snolf’s broad chest. “I understand, but I’ve been under the impression that, as you say, good boys deserve lots of treats?” The drake smirked at his attempt of a joke, even sticking his forked tongue out playfully. “And a good pet is one who consumes copious amounts of treats, correct?”

Aaron laughed, his mirth making the excess pudge coating Grief's form bounce and wobble around. "Ah, I see! Of course, you can help out whenever you'd like, lil' buddy," the snolf chuckled, gently caressing the drake's cheek with a digit, "In fact, just wanting to be so helpful makes you a very good boy, now that I think about it~" Winking, the serpent's tail wrapped around the cookies he'd brought to bed again, bringing them up and holding the to the dragon, "And such a good, sweet, cute pet certainly deserves as many treats as he can handle. And perhaps, even more~"

The dragon licked his lips, rumbling even louder. “If that’s the case, then you deserve as much cute pet as you can handle. And perhaps, even more~” And with a happy rumble, he ate through the rest of the cookies, and the brownies, and the cupcakes. When their feast had finished, Grief was a veritable sphere of a dragon who could barely even reach the floor, let alone walk.

And neither of them would have had it any other way.

The rest of Grief’s sentence went by in a blurr of sugary sweets and greasy meats. The dragon never moved on his own again, more than content to have the snolf lug him around, and even those few instances of movement became brief as his weight slowly escalated past what his caretaker was capable of carrying. The immobile drake was actually proud hearing Aaron pant and heave just from heaving him around, eager to see his new size surpass the snolf as well as himself!

Every occasion called for food, enough of which to stuff the portly dragon into a coma again and again, both of them eager to test the limits of Grief's appetite again and again. On the rare instances he wasn't being stuffed like a turkey, the dragon got to enjoy a thorough cleaning session from the snolf, who had to lick the drake clean after he grew too fat for the sink. The cycles of food, cleaning, food, massages, food, sleep, and food never grew stale for either of them.

Which was why, on the final day of Grief's captivity, the dragon didn't mention anything. Instead, as he sloooowly roused himself from yet another amazing sleep, he called out for something completely different. "Is it \*bwarp\* breakfast time?" The drake hiccuped, the single action sending ripples across his entire pudding-shaped body.

He was massive. The dragon couldn't reach the ground no matter how hard he tried; in fact, there was no position he could lay where his belly wouldn't spread across the ground! The same pillow he used to sleep in he now smothered completely beneath his tonnage, his flabby grey middle spreading out far before him. His pudgy head was nestled safely in a swaddling of his own neck blubber, his cheeks extending past his fat muzzle even. His legs were thick and bloated, almost as wide as he was when he first entered the cave, too thick to even wiggle on their own! His sensitive wings looked more like a series of water-filled balloons, making them look like an accessory rather than a tool that once helped Grief fly around the air. In size alone, Grief had grown from a house cat to nearly half the size of his ward!

And he couldn't be prouder!

"Your pet is hungry!" The drake cried out, more as a joke than out of seriousness. Still, his enormous gut let out a hollowed rumble before him, the dragon purring as he awaited his daily spoiling.

If the dragon's waking belch hadn't been enough to rouse Aaron from dreams, that familiar demand certainly was. Lifting his head from his pillows, the snolf let out a long yawn, licking his muzzle a few times as he reached out reflexively toward his pet, pulling the whole pile of blubber in against his chest and giving the supple blob a gentle squeeze, working out another high-pitched burp from the drake. Giggling in delight, Aaron smiled down to his pet with an amused, loving smile, licking the wyrm's doughy cheek lightly as he purred, "That belly of yours certainly makes a good alarm clock~"

The pair chuckled together, and Aaron gave the dragon another gentle hug before transferring the ball of fluff and scales to the sinuous grip of his tail. Getting to his paws, Aaron made to head into the kitchen, only to pause as he happened to glance toward the calendar near his entryway, ears flickering and head tilting. "Goodness, that day already?" the serpent mused, before resuming his gait into the kitchen. Another well-broken-in pillow had been laid on the counter, and Grief was gently settled into the plush cushion, his girth spilling out over every side of the dented pillow, situated up on his plump rump so he could watch his caretaker cook.

"Looks like it's our last breakfast," Aaron hummed softly, giving Grief a gentle smile as he gathered a frankly excessive amount of ingredients together from the cupboards, starting to put together an amount of pancakes that would have been enough to feed a whole family, "I just wish I could keep you here, but I did make a promise, and I'm a wizard of my word!"

The dragon watched silently, thinking about what the end of the contract would mean for them. It wasn't like Grief was going to move much; he was fat enough to actually be stuck sitting on his cushion, encompassing rear, his belly billowing out farther than he was long while his plump limbs remained firmly at his side. Soon enough, the dragon started smiling. "If this is our last meal, then let us make it a meal to remember."

Aaron grinned wide at the dragon's words. "Just what I was thinking!" he affirmed, and Grief found a package of cookies brought down to be settled beside him, starting to lift sweets up to the dragon's muzzle even as he worked on the oversized breakfast. With a flourish of the serpent's long tail, all of the cupboards opened at once, and a swarm of food emerged, flying through the air and settling into pots and pans, readying for a grand feast. Alongside those levitating ingredients and utensils, ready-made snacks hovered to the drake's muzzle, forming a line that proceeded into Grief's eager maw.

Muffins, brownies, mini cakes, cookies, danishes, and countless other fattening sweets poured into Grief's stomach like a steady stream, his belly starting to round out just from his oversized appetizer. And still, Aaron cooked, preparing course after course for his darling little pet, each big enough to sate a grown man, yet the snolf just kept making more. He knew there was likely no way the drake could eat it all by now; yet he was eager to see just how much the dragon could stomach.

"Alright, tough guy," Aaron purred after finishing what must have been the twentieth course, grinning to his already-bloated companion with eagerness sparkling in his eyes, "Ready for the first course~?"

"Absolutely!" Was what Grief meant to say, but given his mouth was a bit full, all that came out was a muffled "Mmfinfbly!" In the past, the dragon hardly ever showed much as shown a flicker of a smile, yet now grinning was practically second nature! He loved food, he loved to eat - but what's more is the attention and love that was behind all those glorious meals!

And to show his appreciation, the blob of a dragon ate. He relaxed his throat to make swallowing that much easier. Grief ate, even as he gradually blimped outward, his stomach blowing up noticeable like a balloon, even beneath his exorbitant pudge. He ate as if he hadn't eaten in week - a hilarious simile, given he his neck alone was fat enough to rise above his head. It was only when his belly started to dip over the edge of the counter did the dragon start to slow down, breathing heavily through his snout between gulps.

Sensing the dragon was getting full, Aaron slowed his feeding as well, yet he didn't stop yet, gently slipping additional spoonfuls of stew and forkfuls of bacon into the waiting jaws of his companion. Even after all this time and all the meals they'd shared, the snolf regarded the

dragon's growing girth with pure affection and adoration his paws working deep into Grief's supple paunch as his magic fed the little wyrm, able to feel the tautness of the dragon's stomach even through all those endless layers of blubber.

"I can only imagine what sort of appetite you might have when you're full-sized," Aaron said teasingly, his paw brushing up Grief's pliable chest to cup his big cheek, giving the doughy ball a few light scratches, "Even little, the hunger of a mighty dragon is just legendary to behold~"

"I'm quite curious myself. This will be an interesting experience for the both of us," the dragon growled happily in between bites, able to speak now that the rate of food had been lowered. He was incredibly full, yet ate anyways - he didn't get to his size by quitting while stuffed, after all. Grief purred as he felt his softball-sized cheeks and bountiful belly get squeezed, now yearning for the delicate touch of a friend rather than avoiding all forms of contact all together. "Perhaps you'll have to feed me during all hours of the day, with no break? I may eat you out of your house and home yet."

That comment made Aaron pause for a moment, his head tilting as he regarded the dragon before him. "Wait, are you saying... you'd want to stay, after I return you to full size?" the hybrid asked, his teasing and playfulness replaced by a genuine sort of joy at the idea, "I thought you'd want to leave as soon as you were back to your old self."

The dragon blinked and looked up at his owner, curious at the new shift in tone. He paused his eating for a moment, even as a few flecks of ham bounced against his pudgy muzzle. "I thought that was quite apparent, Aaron. I'm in no condition to move myself without the assistance of others. You may do with me as you will." As he said those words, Grief's smile widened, his green eyes twinkling. "I used to believe being resigned to a state of immobility, left to the hands of another creature was the worst fate imaginable. Little did I realize it could also bring about the greatest joy of my life. While our pact stated that I was to be your pet until two months have transpired, I still wish to remain with you and be your friend instead...should you allow it, that is. I'll admit I've become a bit of a, how you say, handful." The drake chuckled, sending vibrations across his gelatinous form, opening up for that slice of ham now.

Aaron's smile grew with every word Grief said, until the dragon found himself suddenly surrounded by the snolf's forelimbs, embraced with perhaps just a but more enthusiasm than the hybrid had meant, squeezing a belch out of the feasting dragon. "I'd like that very, very much," the serpent said, resting his head on the drake's back and keeping himself angled so the stream of food could keep going over his shoulder and into the wyrm's muzzle. "Though I do need to point out, you should be able to walk again when I reverse your curse," he informed the shrunken dragon, looking down to his companion as he lifted his head, stroking Grief's cheek lightly, "The process is going to burn a lot of energy, so I think you'll be able to reach the ground again when it's done." There was a pause, Aaron shuffling in place as he gave a little, hopeful smile, "Would you... still want to stay?"

The dragon was silent, perhaps for longer than he meant to. It was there: his change to leave and return to his original life, should Aaron be telling the truth. "I would like to stretch my limbs, yes...but I shall stay by your side," he said after his lengthy pause, gulping down anything else in front of his muzzle. "Now that I am quite fit to bursting, I think now would be a great time in restoring my previous size. What say you?"

The serpent chuckled as he felt around Grief's middle; it certainly felt like the dragon had reached capacity, judging by how tight and round he'd become. With a nod, the snolf brought the floating food to a stop, the remaining dishes drifting onto the stove and counter as he nuzzled over the drake's head and neck. "Just gonna enjoy the lil' ball of squish for another moment, here~" he said playfully, his muzzle tenderly brushing along the dragon's flanks and middle, warm breath softly rustling Grief's fur and scales when he let out a soft sigh of delight.

"I'll certainly miss having you teddy-bear sized!" Aaron said, lifting his head and grinning down to the dragon, "But yes, it's time now!"

With several grunts of effort, the ophidian wolf managed to gather the sprawling blob of draconic pudge up into his forelegs, before carefully setting the drake into his coiled tail and heading out of the den. Outside, Grief was gently settled on the ground on his back, the snolf giving his snout another soft nuzzle, before looking to the trees around them. With an oddly-birdlike whistle from the serpent, the plants creaked and groaned as they shifted, roots churning the earth as the snolf made room for the drake to grow, until a large clearing was formed around the den's entrance.

"Ready, Grief?" Aaron checked, looking down to the little dragon with a fond grin.

The dragon nodded, at least to the best of his abilities. On his back, his round middle did spread out over him, restricting both his vision and head movement quite a bit. "I'm ready," he responded, his fluffy chubby tail swishing slightly.

As those words were spoken, Aaron closed his eyes, and Grief could feel a strange tingling feeling in his bulbous middle. The dragon's eyes widened; at first, he thought he was growing even fatter! But, as he noticed later, the drake slowly recovered the ability to turn his head and noticed the snolf looking not quite as looming as before - the dragon was growing!

With a loud snap, his collar flew off his tubby neck, the first of a series of growth-related changes. The dragon watched as the surrounding area looked shorter even while on his back. He discovered he was soon able to wiggle his paws, then move them, followed shortly by his lengthy limbs. The chub beneath his muzzle finally started to clear away, just enough for him to finally be able to look down at himself, watching his view rising further and further.

He couldn't take it anymore! Heart racing with anticipation, Grief started the arduous process of rocking himself onto his feet. His stomach gurgled - his growth seemingly accelerated his digestion as well as burning some of his chub, leaving his belly incredibly soft and malleable, but still quite heavy. Back and forth he sloshed audibly, making sure to avoid rolling over the

snolf, before finally managing to heave himself towards his middle. Panting from the effort, the dragon shakily drew himself to full height, his eyes widening.

In the past, he could reach beyond the top of the trees while standing on his hind legs. Now, he could see over the tree tops just from craning his neck up!

“I’m...enormous!” Grief muttered to himself. This was far larger than even he had been expecting! He looked down at his old owner, startled to see the horse-sized snolf didn’t even make it up to his knees, but Aaron just smiled calmly as if hardly a thing had changed. In fact, the chubby snolf gestured outwards with his head in an encouraging manner.

Carefully, Grief took a hesitant step forward, feeling the ground tremble beneath his feet, as well as his gut. Unsurprisingly, he was still exceedingly fat, his belly still firmly wedged between the ground, his arms, and his thighs. His awkward waddle, combined with his unfamiliarity with walking, led him to clumsily waddle about the new clearing, jiggling and wobbling immensely. Gradually, the obese drake learned to correct himself, and was soon back to waddling as if nothing had changed.

The dragon peered over the trees. At his size, he could effortlessly trudge a path through the forest, shaking off trees and other animals from his girth like they were toothpicks. He had regained his size and then some; without a doubt, he was the most fiercest, dangerous creature in his forest, perhaps even the world. And what did the most dangerous creature do now that his shackles had been lifted?

He waddled back to the snolf and plopped himself onto his gut, letting it pancake outwards. “Hurf...I had forgotten walking was such an arduous chore. I shall leave it for the smaller creatures,” he said with a smirk, leaning his enormous tubby head closer to nuzzle the snolf, grinning at the sheer size difference between them now. “Just because you’re the small one now doesn’t change anything, I hope you know. I’m far too lazy and selfish to gather food for someone else,” he purred, giving the snolf a playful sluuuuurp that left his front soaked.

Aaron gave a soft yip of surprise, before laughing heartily and embracing around Grief’s muzzle gently. “I have the feeling this moment of mobility isn’t going to last long for you~” the snolf said with one of his playful winks, licking the drake’s nose affectionately, “Though you’re a bit big for my den, now; I’ll just have to get you a new bed. And a nice gazebo-style cover for it. Oh! And of course, something new for your neck, now that your collar’s gone to pieces; I’m thinking a scarf, perhaps~”

The teasing grin on the snolf’s muzzle showed he was just being playful, though the gentle nuzzle against Grief’s cheek was as sincere as could be. “You really are quite an impressive sight at your full size, I have to say,” Aaron said, releasing the dragon’s snout and stepping back to take in the full scope of the giant dragon, a bright grin on his fluffy muzzle, “But no less adorable, if you don’t mind me saying!”

The dragon chuffed at the remark, playfully blowing air at his new friend. "Since I've deemed moving to not be worth my time any longer, I would suggest you simply build a new den around myself. My fur is far softer and superior in quality to your carpet, in my not-so-humble opinion, wouldn't you say?" With a grin, the drake laaaaazily reached out with a chubby claw, gently clasping the snolf before bringing him closer. It was oddly cathartic, moving around someone who had been carrying you for the past month - Grief couldn't help but chuckle at the twist of fate.

Carefully, he rolled his barrel-body onto his back and gently placed the snolf atop his supple chest, watching him sink into the supple pudge. "What say you? Could you imagine yourself living atop the world's greatest predator? I couldn't think of a greater honor myself," Grief smirked proudly, resting his fat head on his doughy arms.

The answer was written all over Aaron's grinning features, his head resting on the dragon's chest as he gently caressed over the soft fur, blunt claws coming the dragon's pelt happily. "I would gladly accept such an honor," the snolf said in an overly posh tone, before grinning even wider as his tail gently patted Grief's stomach, "Though perhaps, after expanding the floor plan a bit! Good thing I made plenty of breakfast~"