

Archie read the newspaper carefully, or rather, he tried. The stoat wanted to focus on the articles at hand, but found himself having to reread the same column again and again, much to his annoyance. “West Coast Slips into Dreadful Recession,” the article’s title read, but at this rate it would take Archie all morning just to figure out how bad “dreadful” was. Hell, he could barely even retain the information of the first two paragraphs alone!

With a sigh, the mustelid set the paper aside, reaching for his glass of orange juice on the miniature table beside his lawn chair. What really irked Archie was just how perfect the day was for catching up on his reading. He had no duties or responsibilities today, a rare occurrence for the busy mustelid. A gentle breeze brushed the grassy hilltop, ruffling both his carefully-maintained backyard and his copper-brown fur. There was hardly a sound to disturb Archie, save for the rustling of leaves. That and the distant rumbling of a leaf blower revving up, no doubt one of his servants starting their early morning tasks.

So why couldn’t he focus? Was he thinking too much? Was something on his mind? He would know if something was bothering him, right? And yet, here he was, overthinking about overthinking. It was as if he simply couldn’t function without some sort of conflict, and when none presented itself, his own mind would fill the gap. Just worrying about, well, worrying made the stoat’s head ache. Perhaps he should retreat back into his impressive mansion, put on some soothing music and ask one of his numerous butlers for a massage, he thought. Lord knew how desperately his tense shoulders needed a good rubbing.

Archie was ready to slide out of his lawn chair when he noticed a tell-tale sign that one of his butlers was approaching: his glass of orange juice started rippling on its own. Seconds later, he heard the recognizable huffing of his head servant’s labored breathing. Soon, the stoat looked on as a mass of black fur obscured the left side of his vision as he turned to look at his head servant face-to-face, or rather face-to-navel.

“Your breakfast, sir.” The servant, a large black panther, announced formally.

Archie couldn’t help but smile. “Thank you, Edwin,” the stoat smirked. He didn’t even make eye contact with his butler, too busy staring into that illustrious black hole of a belly button and all the glorious belly fat surrounding it. He would have continued doing so until the end of time were it not for the panther very politely clearing his throat. “Oh, my apologies, Edwin. Was just admiring the view,” the stoat snickered, sitting upright to take the tray of food from atop the panther’s belly.

*Atop the panther’s belly.*

Archie was a man of simple interests, one of which was fat men. He loved the size, shape, and structure of any male fur weighing beyond what anyone would consider a healthy weight, and he was not afraid to show it. Those who knew the stoat personally had not been surprised to learn that, once Archie made his fortune, he'd quickly surrounded himself with the fattest staff possible. Of course, it wasn't enough for his butlers to just be fat, either. They had to *act* fat as well. Edwin, for example, had to balance the platter containing his master's breakfast atop his prodigious gut, showing off just how broad his shelf of a belly was.

Even among the corpulent workforce, Edwin was especially chunky. The plump panther wore the typical black suit and trousers of any butler, albeit clothes meant for a butler several hundred pounds lighter. The clothes were skin-tight on the obese servant, full of holes and tears along the widest parts of Edwin's thighs, hips, and shoulders. The collar of his shirt was obviously stretched, no doubt to accommodate the panther's thick cheeks and chins. The only part of the fat feline's outfit that wasn't skin-tight or torn was his torso. As was the custom with all of Archie's butlers, the front of Edwin's uniform had been cut away, allowing his bulbous belly and doughy moobs to flow freely from his frame.

While Edwin was a special case, that wasn't to say the rest of Archie's butlers weren't obscenely fat as well. From his peripheral vision, the stoat could make out another one of his servants, a spotted husky, mowing the backyard with their gut resting atop the push mower. Another servant, this one a cinnamon-hued boar, was smiling softly as he swept leaves out from the pool, the handle to the pool sweeper wedged between his doughy pecs. The sight of so many tubby furs working for him never failed to put a smile on Archie's face.

Or perhaps it did, and that was why Edwin's typically stoic expression briefly furrowed.

"Is something the matter, sir?" The obese panther asked, a hint of concern noticeable in his silky-smooth voice.

Archie chuckled. "Of course not! Why would it be?" He responded jovially.

Edwin, however, did not reply as cheerfully. "By now you should have groped my abdomen at least three times. You have yet to even reach for my middle once."

The stoat snickered. "Heh, so I've become predictable, have I? Perhaps I'm simply waiting for you to turn around so I can give that rump of yours a squeeze or four!" Archie grinned mischievously, wiggling his fingers.

Unfortunately, Edwin did not appear amused by the playful banter, as was typical for the serious butler. Nor did he show any signs of disgust at the vulgar response of his benefactor. Instead, he continued to look over the leering stoat, whose smirk gradually faded from his face.

Finally, Archie relented. “Is it...wrong for me to feel unsatisfied?”

Edwin blinked. “I’m not sure I understand, sir.”

“I have everything a man like me could ever want, Edwin. An enormous manor, a beautiful yard, enough hunks of meat like yourself for me to get lost in for ages,” the stoat said, playfully nudging the hanging black gut beside him. “But... lately I feel like that isn’t enough.” The stoat sighed and looked down at his food, frowning. Even the sight of his breakfast meal: two pieces of toast, a wedge of ham, a couple grapes, and half of a grapefruit, was enough to make the mustelid feel uneasy. How stereotypically rich could his breakfast get? Perhaps he should try his employees’ breakfast, which would have consisted of literal buckets of the same ham. “Is... there something wrong with me?”

Edwin carefully placed a paw on his gut in an attempt to ease its wobbling. “I’m afraid I’m not qualified to answer that, sir. As stated in the contract-”

“Oh, blast that contract! I told you a million times you didn’t have to sign that thing when you became my head servant!” Archie scowled, tossing aside his morning newspaper. “Forget you’re my butler for just five seconds and pretend I’m simply a friend, asking for advice.” The stoat gave the obese panther a pleading look, but he knew it was all in vain. Edwin took being a butler more seriously than most, having lived his entire life in indentured servitude. The feline was as thin as a rail when the two first met, and when Archie decreed that all of his servants should be obese, Edwin was quick to adapt a very strict diet to fulfil his master’s wishes.

Which meant, of course, that the panther was completely hopeless when it came to breaking his role as head servant, if even for a moment. “I’m... I’m sorry, sir. I truly do not know,” he muttered shyly, looking down at his ponderous middle in shame.

Archie sighed. “No, I’m sorry for snapping like that, Edwin. Do you think you could step forward a bit?”

The large cat nodded and did as he was told. The stoat sat forward, turned around, and leaned back against his butler’s exposed middle, letting himself sink into his servant’s expansive belly. A gentle sigh escaped the mustelid’s lips. Compared to his butlers, and especially compared to Edwin, Archie was practically two-dimensional. Such a thin build made it easy for

him to better appreciate the sheer size of his servants, namely in their belly regions. The wealthy stoat closed his eyes, listening to the soothing noises of his butler's body. That powerful beating heart, the gentle breathing, the occasional gurgle from his stomach as he digested his intense breakfast from earlier. Archie was suddenly finding it difficult to keep himself awake, despite the early morning sun. If he could, he probably would have laid like that all day...

"That's it!"

Archie suddenly sprang upright, leaping out from his lawn chair. He turned to his startled butler, grinning ear to ear. "I'm just missing another butler, is all!"

Edwin, unable to hide his confusion, tilted his pudgy head to the side. "A...another butler, you say?"

"Exactly! Another round face around the house is definitely what I need!" The weasel giggled to himself, shifting from one foot to another like a kid on Christmas eagerly awaiting permission to open his presents. "How does that sound, Eddy? I'm sure you'd love some extra help around the house."

The panther huffed. "With all due respect, sir, I am fully capable of fulfilling my duties as they are," Edwin responded; Archie swore the big cat sounded offended.

The stoat shook his head. "Don't worry, Ed, this one is gonna be different. He's, uh...let's just say he's gonna be an experimental butler," Archie said with a wink. Edwin didn't look comforted by that fact, but his boss didn't seem to care, the stoat quickly pulling out his phone while walking towards his manor. "A new hire... I can't wait to meet my next butler!"

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*"BWAAAAAAAAAAAAARP!"*

James would have loved to savor the sweet relief that belch brought him, were he not too occupied with the game before him. The hyena's spotted fingers held his controller in a sweaty grip as he stared unblinkingly at his television, bright flashes lighting up his green eyes. That TV was the only source of light in the dark room, yet James didn't seem to mind the extra strain on his eyes. Nor did he mind the blaring sounds of gunfire, shouts, and other noises filling the room.

Mainly because he contributed much to the cacophony himself.

“What the shit?! I shot the bastard in the head like five times! Fucking lag!” James snarled, slumping back against the couch. Resisting the urge to throw his controller across the room, the hyena chose to instead take his anger out on a nearby bag of Doritos, tearing open the party-size container with enough force to send several triangle-shaped chips flying onto his soft chest. Begrudgingly, the chubby gamer crammed a pawful of the dusty chips straight into his maw, ignoring the fact that he was staining his muzzle bright orange.

With his character defeated, James couldn't do much to help his teammates in game other than to watch the rest of the round play out. It was down to the wire: both teams were tied in points, with each side only having one player left. As the timer slowly counted down, the hyena slid further and further forward in his seat, the bottom of his belly lightly rubbing against his plump thighs. The voices in his headset were growing louder; the entire team was in near hysteria as everyone tried giving advice at the same time. James was scarfing down chips like they were popcorn, ignoring the crumbs that found their way into the crevice between his moobs. His team just *had* to win, his entire rank depended on it! One minute remaining. The hyena was suddenly very aware of how hard his heart was pounding in his chest when-

*\*flick\**

“Gah!” James yelped, shielding his eyes as he was temporarily blinded. The entire room lit up as someone turned the lights on, and the hyena had a sinking feeling in his stomach who the culprit was. As his eyes slowly adjusted, the gamer groaned as he saw who had done the deed, their hands on their hips.

His mother.

“Why are you still playing games?” She nagged, looming over the chubby hyena. “I thought I told you an hour ago you were done for today!”

“I-I know, ma. Just let me finish this one,” James muttered, trying to crane his head around the older hyena's torso. His eyes widened as his teammate had finally located the enemy, both adversaries quick to draw their firearms when....

The TV flickered off.

“What the hell, ma!?” James shrieked, both paws clasping his forehead in shock. He sat still in frozen terror as he stared at the unpowered television, now displaying the reflection of a pudgy hyena wearing little more than a crumb-covered tank top and boxers that clung to his wide hips. For a brief moment, the spotted canid felt an unbelievable rage wash over him as he slowly

turned to his mother, who held the plug to the tv and his game console in her hand. “The game was almost over! Now I’m gonna get penalized for leaving early!”

“I’ve told you *four times today* to finish up and do your chores, James, but you kept saying ‘just let me finish this game, ma. Just one more game, ma.’ Sorry, kiddo, but you’re out of excuses.” The older hyena scoffed.

“You didn’t have to unplug the damn TV, though,” James muttered beneath his breath, before sighing in defeat. There was no point in arguing with his mother; the woman was an impenetrable fortress of stubbornness. He was in for it now, his mother had that look on her face that told him she was ready to nag and nag until his round ears fell off his round face. James grabbed at a half-empty two-liter of Luca-Cola and uncapped it. He may as well get cozy, he decided, considering he would be here a while.

Unfortunately, he wasn’t even allowed that luxury as his mom suddenly swiped the bottle from her son’s paws, fuming. “And *where* did you get this? I thought I told you no soda after 5 PM. It wrecks your metabolism!”

James groaned. “It’s just one bottle, mom.”

“It’s *two liters!*”

James rolled his eyes. “C’mon, ma, I’m 23 years old. I paid for the damn thing anyways, I can drink it whenever I want.”

Almost immediately, James knew he had said too much, his round ears folding back. The female hyena’s eyes flashed as she stared at her son, her voice dropping to just above a whisper. “If you had stayed in college, gotten a proper job, and moved out like you were supposed to, then sure. You could drink all the soda you want. But if you’re living under my roof, in my basement, you eat what I tell you to eat. How do you think *I* feel, watching my only son turn into a fat and lazy slob? You look like an absolute mess; we bought that shirt for you just last week, and you’re already wearing it down. How are you supposed to find a stable job and a beautiful girlfriend if you keep eating and eating like a fat piece of *shit?!?*”

Her voice rose with that last sentence, and James looked down at himself, if only to hide the murderous rage in his eyes from his mother. It wasn’t like he was happy here, stuck in his mother’s basement, having to deal with *that* all day. He would have loved to be anywhere, literally anywhere else than this very spot. Even now, the hyena was picturing himself living it

up in a beautiful penthouse suite, thousands of miles from this horrible woman, just to help him cope with the shame and embarrassment washing over him.

Instead, he was trapped in the basement, a single room barely larger than his old dorm. A rusty couch and CRT TV sat in the middle of the small room, with a single mattress shoved to the corner beside a desk and bookshelf. According to his mom, this was meant to be “incentive” for the hyena to go out and find a career, yet apparently it wasn’t enough incentive: James had been living like this for almost two years.

After a moment of awkward silence, James heard his mom let loose a sigh. At first, he thought the other hyena was about to apologize, but he should have known better than to be so optimistic. “The TV stays off until you either clean up your room, run on the treadmill, or look for a job that will... accommodate you.” And with that, she turned around and left her son alone with his anger.

James was half-tempted to chuck his controller into the wall, but decided against it, not wanting to give his mom more reasons to yell at him. Suddenly, his recent loss in his game didn’t matter so much; he just wanted *out*. Out from this room, from his mother, from his life, out from everything!

But it wasn’t like opportunities like that were just given out.

The hyena groaned and slumped back, hearing the crinkle of a bag of Lays flattening beneath his broad rear. There was no way he was in the mood to run on the treadmill upstairs; the last thing he wanted was to be in the same room as his mom again. Besides, the old thing was covered in dust anyways.

James glanced around his room. Not surprisingly, it was absolutely filthy, covered with stacks of empty pizza boxes, chip bags, and soda bottles, along with dirty clothes and wadded up tissue paper. Cleaning up everything, at least to his mom’s expectations, would take all night, and James was desperate to jump back into his game and deal with his penalty sooner rather than later.

That meant there was only one option left.

With a grunt, James kicked up his legs and swung them onto the couch, laying his head against the armrest. Fully on his back, the hyena fished around for his phone somewhere beneath him, his ears folding slightly as the constant jostling sent his soft belly rippling. He had always been on the heavier side; he had endured being the fat kid long enough for it to stop bothering

him. However, his weight wasn't really that big of an issue until after he dropped out of college, when he found himself spending most of his day eating, sleeping, and gaming, not to mention the horrible eating habits he picked up. The hyena blamed depression and anxiety for his piling on so much weight, although a part of him wondered if he really was just a fat and lazy slob.

At 375 pounds, James could easily be called fat. On his back, his spotted belly rose into a slight hill, sloping down his sides to form a pair of thick love handles. Even through his stained white tank top, the hyena could see the indentation of his oval-shaped belly button, as well as the defined shape of his cleavage. His orange boxers dug not just into his hips, but into his upper thighs as well, a rather alarming development considering those same boxers had been loose on him just a couple months ago. As much as he hated to admit it, his mom had a point. He had gotten pretty porky.

Oh well, he'd do something about it later. Not like he had any reason to suddenly start up a diet anyways.

Finally, James fished out his smartphone and pulled it up. While waiting for the phone to power up, the hyena yet again caught a glimpse of his reflection in the screen, his headset squishing ever so slightly against his soft cheeks, noting how thick his second chin had grown beneath his stubby muzzle. James mentally rolled his eyes; fretting over small things like tighter clothes and double chins was just what his mother wanted. He was his own person, and he'd do whatever the hell he wanted!

...Right after doing what his mother wanted, of course.

James lazily scrolled through his phone in search of job offerings, occasionally munching on the bag of chips propped against his chest. LinkedIn, CareerBuilder, Handshake, any website he could find that helped to alert him of job openings. Unfortunately, for a college dropout, the variety in opportunities wasn't very big.

95% of his job offerings were either retail, call centers, or in the food industry. None of those jobs were appealing to James in the slightest; it wasn't worth it to trade being berated by his mother for being berated by complete strangers just for minimum wage. The other 5% were jobs that were clearly out of his league, or ones that he had called to apply for, but never made it to the interview stage.

Five minutes passed, then ten, then fifteen. James only became aware of how long he had been looking for jobs when he reached for more chips and came up empty. The hyena felt his heart rate accelerate; he did *not* want to even consider taking one of those crappy jobs, but



everywhere he looked, he was faced with more and more opportunities that were just, quite frankly, awful. The more he looked, the further away the jobs he searched for grew, to the point where he would actually *lose* more money than he earned just on gas! James was considering throwing in the towel and finally accepting his fate at a Burger King down the street when one ad suddenly caught his eye.

“Personal Butler: \$105k + Bonus & Benefits.”

James blinked, furrowing his brow as he read that job title out loud. Why was he being recommended a job for a butler, of all things? Better yet, why was he, a college dropout, being offered a job that paid six figures? Didn't people go to school to be butlers or something? Surely this was a programming mistake on the website's part, or something.

Out of curiosity, James tapped the ad and scrolled down to the job requirements, briefly scanning the segment, until his eyes widened.

There were none.

Well, technically there were a few, such as “Must be a self-starter,” and “Must have excellent interpersonal skills,” but when it came to school requirements and whatnot, this was practically an entry-level job! The more of the advert James read, the more his fluffy tail wagged beneath him. The \$105k was just the starting salary, not including paid time off and an additional performance-based bonus. On-the-job training meant he didn't need to be overly familiar with butler work to begin with to get the job.

Soon, the hyena was grinning ear to ear. This was absolutely amazing! Sure, James wasn't a big fan of chores to begin with, as evidenced by the sorry state of his room. Still, for \$105k a year, he'd totally be willing to clean some rich snob's house all day. Heck, according to the advert, he'd be working with a dozen other butlers as well, which meant he didn't even need to do all the work! The only detail that struck out as odd to the hyena was one of the listed requirements.

“Must be 500+ lbs. to apply.”

It was a strange detail, but one that had a potential list of meanings. The entire ad was written rather strangely, as if the writer was in a hurry, or didn't speak proper English. Perhaps they had made a typo, or were referring to operating heavy machinery. After all, no one could lift 500 pounds on their own. Aside from that strange detail, this job just kept getting better and better, almost too good to be true.

Unfortunately, it looked like that might be the case.

James finally made it to the bottom of the advert when his heart dropped into his stomach. There was no resume required; instead, the employer was hosting an open interview this weekend where anyone could come and be privately interviewed for the job. The hyena sighed, flicking off his phone. Everyone and their damn mother was gonna show up to this interview, and most of them would be way more qualified than his fat ass.

Oh well.

With a shrug, James hauled himself off the couch to plug the TV and game console back in. He had done what his mom had asked, at least. If she came in screaming again, he could just tell her he had received an offer for an interview this weekend, which wasn't stretching the truth *that* much. It'd be enough to get his mom off his case for the week at the very least. Of course, this meant he'd have to finally groom himself and look for better-fitting clothes, but for now, he just wanted to sit in his boxers and play a few more rounds.

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“Next!”

James gulped nervously, looking up from his phone to watch the door at the end of the hallway open. He watched as a tall grey wolf, dressed in an eloquent black coat, tie, and trousers, strode out, scowling. The lupine glared at the line of furs seated against the wall, his gaze lingering on James in particular, before marching outside. The hyena felt his palms getting sweaty, forcing himself to look back at his phone as the next fur in line walked into the meeting room.

He didn't know what concerned him more: how much better everyone looked in comparison to him, or the fact that none of them lasted more than five minutes in the interview before storming off.

A few days prior, James' mom had taken him clothes shopping to help get him groomed for this very occasion. Unsurprisingly, she was quite ecstatic with the news that her son had an interview for a job, and wanted to do her best to make sure he looked as best as he could. She even treated him to a nice Italian restaurant as a reward, although the older hyena did make a few offhanded comments about his weight when he ordered a 1500 calorie entrée. Still, it was the first time in quite a while that he had gotten along with his mother.

All the more reason to be stressed out further about landing this job.

The hyena sported a plain white button-up shirt and a pair of dark blue slacks to offset his brownish-orange fur. The clothes were actually somewhat loose, an attempt by his mother to hide his pudgy middle and thick hips and thighs. While the trick worked to some extent, there was no hiding his chubby cheeks or doughy chins.

Just as he had feared, James had to wait with quite a few other furs interested in the high-paying position. The hyena was looking his best, yet even he paled in comparison to the other candidates; all handsome, dapper young men, the largest of whom was well over a hundred pounds lighter than himself. They all carried an air of authority and professionalism around them, the way their muzzles were constantly uptilted, their voices soft and regal. James couldn't help but gulp to himself. He had no chance.

“Next!”

Crap, it was his turn now! James' head shot straight up as he watched a flustered jackal literally stomp his way outside, slamming the door behind him in a very unprofessional way. The hyena looked towards the door anxiously, where his supposed interviewer awaited. That jackal only lasted two minutes! Just how strict was this guy?

His heart racing, James slowly rolled off the squeaky chair and stepped toward the door, his tail tucked right between his thick thighs. He could feel the stares of the other applicants on his back, no doubt curious to see how the fat hyena would fare in comparison to the other, more respectable-looking candidates. Hopefully, he wasn't nervously sweating enough to leave any stains on his shirt; he'd probably drop dead from the embarrassment! With a shaky paw, James gripped the doorknob and turned, slowly leading himself into the small office room.

There, he found a well-dressed stoat sitting behind a desk, smiling calmly at him. “Good afternoon. Please, take a seat.” He spoke in a cool, collected voice, gesturing towards the chair on the other side of the desk.

James suddenly found himself feeling weak in the knees. This stoat was extremely handsome, far more handsome than anyone had any right to be, a dashing mustelid in his early to mid 30's. His eyes were like crystal pools of blue, easy to dive into and get lost in; his smile was friendly and inviting, as if he were greeting an old friend. He had dark brown brows, raised slightly in a seemingly amused expression. The mustelid was as thin as was typical for his species; his muzzle and jaw were strong and defined, yet his broad shoulders were a telltale sign

that he was in fantastic shape. His fur was groomed to illustrious perfection, soft and shiny, without a single hair out of place on his copper-brown face or snowy-white chin/neck. Even his coat was the embodiment of perfection, a bright and colorful yellow suit that lit up the otherwise dreary room, complete with a lavender tie that really brought out the stoat's blue eyes.

In short, James' interviewer was the living manifestation of class, and he felt all the worse for it.

"U-uh, thank you, s-sir," James mumbled, stumbling forward. Was this guy one of the butlers? If that was the case, the hyena couldn't even compare! His anxious thoughts were compounded as he heard the chair squeak beneath his heft, his sides spilling around the edges. His cheeks flushes a few shades redder. Not even 5 seconds into this interview and everything was already going to hell.

The stoat didn't appear to mind the sudden noise, despite his ears perking up at the sound. "You're starting to worry me with how tense you look. I promise I don't bite. I also recently trimmed my claws, so I don't scratch either." Chuckling softly at his own joke, the mustelid extended his arm over the table. "I'm also not a fan of unnecessary formalities. None of that 'sir' nonsense here, if you don't mind. Please, call me Archie."

James looked down at the paw extended before him, blinking in confusion. He was expecting a harsh and rigorous butler to shake him down to his very core, given the reaction the earlier participants had given. Instead, Archie was going out of his way to try and comfort James as much as possible. What a strange turn of events. The hyena soon found himself smiling. "O-oh, uh, thanks, Archie. My name's James. James Folt."

James reached out to grab the mustelid's paw, only to gasp in shock as Archie suddenly shook the hyena's arm in the firmest, most rigorous handshake he had ever received. James did his best to return the enthusiasm, but found himself blushing as he noticed how hard his arm fat was jiggling about. Archie's eyes drifted to the hyena's quivering arm, yet he made no comment on what he saw; if anything, James swore the stoat's grin widened ever so slightly.

Finally, Archie released his grasp, leaning back into his seat. "Caught you off guard, did I? My apologies, I've given out so many handshakes, it's become second nature. Rest assured, a firm handshake won't be required for this line of work." He chuckled, his eyes twinkling with amusement. "Well, now that introductions are out of the way, why don't we proceed with the interrogation?"

James nodded shyly, and the interview commenced. The hyena had expected the questions to be tough and difficult to answer honestly, but to his surprise they weren't any different from the typical job interview questions. He had spent all of last night researching the proper responses and reactions in a job interview, and was excited to see his efforts paying off. He answered boldly and confidently, making sure to cast himself in a good light and offer many reasons why he would be the perfect fit for this position without giving too much away. Archie didn't need to know the hyena liked staying up all night playing videogames in his underwear, after all.

In fact, part of what made the interviewing process so seamless for the hyena was Archie himself. Despite his immaculate appearance, the stoat was very friendly and easygoing, his smile never leaving his face. Oftentimes, he would raise his eyebrows, seemingly impressed with what the hyena was saying. And everytime he did, James felt his confidence soar. Occasionally, Archie would even chuckle and crack a joke or two, just to help lighten up the tension even more between the two. James had never met a man who was so formal, yet so casual at the same time. The interviewing process was going perfectly, and for a brief moment, James actually believed he had a shot at getting this job.

That is, until the final question was asked.

"Just one more question to go until we can wrap this interview up." Archie explained. Their entire interview, the mustelid was scribbling down notes with a pen and paper; however, he suddenly opted to place both instruments down and instead chose to rest his arms against the table. "How much do you weigh?"

Uh oh. James' smile dropped faster than a ton of bricks, suddenly feeling quite queasy. He should have known his figure would be a point of contention; he had caught the stoat passing several glances towards his round middle during the interview. Slowly, his gaze drifted downwards towards his soft chest, his sweaty hands rubbing against his thighs.

"...375 pounds."

"I see." James winced at the curt response. Just hearing the disappointment in Archie's voice made the hyena's tail curl. It wasn't fair! He wanted this job so bad, and Archie sounded like such a nice employer! If anything, he was angry with himself for letting down the playful mustelid.

The hyena's round ears flickered as he heard the stoat finally clear his throat. "I'm sorry, James, but I'm afraid I can't hire you."

James' heart plummeted.

"...You're much too skinny."

Silence. Gradually, James looked up, bewilderment etched on his fat face. He was expecting another joke from Archie, but the stoat sat there with his lips spread in an apologetic grimace. Was he actually being serious? The hyena blinked. "I...I don't understand."

"The advert stated you must be 500 pounds to apply." Archie stated matter of factly, frowning. "I must have written it poorly, considering I've held so many interviews with individuals who weren't even half that weight. I gave you a chance because you appeared at least close to the specified weight, but if you're over 100 pounds short, then I'm afraid this job won't be right for you."

James couldn't believe what he was hearing. He was being denied a job, not for being too fat, but for not being fat enough! He looked down at his plump potbelly, then back up at the stern mustelid, trying to wrap his head around the concept. Why would *anyone* want a butler who weighed 500 pounds? Better yet, why was it a *requirement* for them to weigh at least that much? It just didn't make any sense! James knew he was being dismissed, but he had to find out more, his curiosity burning. "B-but...why?"

Archie raised an eyebrow. "Why did I make such a requirement?" The stoat tapped a finger to his chin, seemingly in thought, before a slight smile spread across his face. "Very well. I've kept you here far longer than I intended to, the very least I could do is let you in on a secret. My full name is Archibald Borkington III, CEO of the Loca-Cola Company and all its subsidiaries, and, according to Forbes magazine, the 95th wealthiest fur in the world," Archie's grin widened. "And there is nothing I love more in this world than fat men."

James sat there in stunned silence. Archie continued. "My apologies if my advert was poorly written. It was something I typed up late into the night, during one of my usual bouts of insomnia. However, everything on that advert is 100% accurate. The job contains full benefits, including health, paid vacation times, and a myriad of other benefits. We offer free food, free amenities, even free housing at my manor, should transportation become an issue."

"But, as you've figured out by now, I won't let just anyone be my butler."

Archie rested his elbows on his desk, propping his head on his wrists, gazing intently at the startled hyena. "I only want the fattest, softest, heaviest men to work at my manor. I want to

see their bellies bounce and their hips sway as they waddle about my home. I want to *feel* the vibrations in the floor even before I see them. I want to see them work around their bulging bellies just to do the simplest chores like raking leaves or polishing furniture. I want them to have to heft their huge guts onto the dining room table just so they can reach their next fattening meal, or have to turn sideways just to squeeze through a narrow doorway. Most importantly of all, I want them to smile as I see how deep I can bury my paw in their thick, furry rolls!”

James couldn't even begin to think of a response to all of that. Why was Archie telling him all this? And without a hint of shame, no less! Even now, the stoat continued to lean forward, giving the chubby hyena a very dopey grin, his eyes glued to the nervous yeen's midsection. Suddenly, James felt as though he were being mentally undressed by the fat fanatic, his face a bright beat red. This guy was insane! Was this the same Archie from before?

“As you can see,” Archie continued, licking the side of his toothy maw. “I am very up front and honest with my potential employees. What you see is what you get: a very kinky stoat who wants to see some fat furs jiggle about his house as they help with chores. You would be working with eleven other furs just like the ones I described, all of whom are, presumably, more than content with their arrangements.” The stoat leaned back into a more upright position, although his carnivorous smile still lingered. “Tell me, James. Are you still interested in this position?”

Honestly, James wasn't so sure anymore. He was relieved to finally learn why this job sounded too perfect; it came with the hefty price of losing one's figure. The hyena was already so fat to begin with; to think he would need to gain 125 pounds just to meet the bare minimum of the stoat's requirements...

“I... am.”

James' ears folded. He couldn't believe what he'd just said. To destroy his figure further would really set back any plans he had of eventually losing weight, but Archie mentioned the job came with free housing. On top of free food and over \$105k a year, this was the hyena's only chance at finally escaping from his hellish life! His weight be damned, he was willing to take a shot in the dark!

“Good answer,” Archie nodded. “Tell you what, James. You said you were 375 pounds?”

James nodded.

“Try to push yourself to 400 pounds for me within the next couple months. When you do, give me a call and we’ll arrange something just for you.’

The stoat reached inside the pocket of his coat, pulling out a business card. Archie turned it over and quickly scribbled a set of digits on the back of it, most likely his personal phone number, before handing it the hyena.

“We’ll have you live with us as an intern of sorts, letting you learn the proper ins and outs of joining my Weight Staff, while helping you gain the weight needed for your role. You won’t receive a working salary during this period, but we’ll still throw in a couple benefits for your time, as well as plenty of free food, of course. By the time you’ve reached 500 pounds, you’ll have learned everything you need to know to become my personal stress toy of an employee.”

James looked down at the card, then back at Archie, his heart racing excitedly in his chest. “Does...Does this mean...?”

“Indeed.” Archie’s smile widened, extending his arm a second time. “Congratulations. You’ve got the job.”