

## Chapter 2

James couldn't sleep.

The hyena continued to stare at the ceiling with his arms to his chest, replaying the day's events over and over again in his mind. He was still having troubles properly processing everything; all week, he thought he had no chance in hell of getting a 6-figure job so easily, yet here he was being offered that opportunity by a literal CEO.

And all he had to do was put on 25 pounds of fat.

James looked down at his round belly, gripping a pawful of the soft blubber. What would his mother say to all this? When she picked him up and asked him how it went, the hyena just said that the interview went fine and he was told to expect a call later, which was a lie. How else could he explain that his employer was literally demanding her fat son get even fatter? Even if the salary was doubled, his mom would never allow him to work for a pervert like Archie.

And Archie... man, was he really something. James felt a slight blush return to his cheeks just thinking about the way those intense blue eyes bore deep into his own, or the sneer he gave when he gazed upon the fat hyena, like he was already his property. There was no doubt about it, Archie wasn't just passionate about fat furs; he was *obsessed* with them! "I have big plans for you, James. Very big plans," were the stoat's last words before James left that day; something told him Archie was being quite literal.

Still looking down at himself, James scooped the sides of his drooping belly up into a spotted brown hill, caressing his soft flab before letting it spill out on top of him again. He tried imagining himself with over a hundred pounds of extra flab piled onto him, picturing his moobs looking more bloated and womanly, his gut rising higher before him, his chins bunching up further when he looked down. God, to think he was signing up to be someone's doughy eye candy.

With a huff, James slowly rolled onto his side and tossed his thin blanket over himself, ignoring the creaking mattress beneath him. Better get to sleep now, he thought to himself. He had a big month ahead of him.

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James had gotten as fat as he had by lazing around and eating junk food all day, so it wasn't unreasonable to think that continuing that lifestyle would also continue his growth. In the coming days, the hyena maintained his lazy, slothful habits, only this time, they were accentuated with new gluttonous tendencies. He tore through entire bags of chips, candies, and cookies in the middle of his games, guzzling down large bottles of soda to help wash down the salty sweets. The mounds of trash surrounding his couch and bed practically doubled in size as the hyena made sure he was constantly nibbling on something. In particular, he snacked heavily late into the night, remembering his mother's words about ruining his metabolism. He also made sure to leave the couch as little as possible, only expending energy to use the bathroom or fulfill one of his mother's numerous requests.

The hyena did everything he could to get on his mother's good side, if only so she wouldn't bring up his weight. He satisfied every chore the older hyena offered him, unless he was in the middle of a game, of course, and did so with a smile on his face. The smile was only skin deep; he hated the idea of expending precious calories needed to put on weight on menial tasks. Then again, this would probably help prepare him for the real deal of cleaning an entire mansion, rather than a small house. Besides, it also allowed him to stuff his face silly at the dinner table, even if he had to lie and say he ran on the treadmill earlier.

It wasn't long before James started to see results. By the end of the first week, the hyena was weighing in at 379 pounds. By the second, 384. The hyena never thought he'd be this excited watching the number on his scale slowly tick up. He was practically relishing the feeling of his clothes growing ever tighter, as they were signs he was quickly approaching his goal. At this rate, he'd make it to 400 in no time!

Unfortunately, disaster struck once his weight climbed into the 390 range.

"I just thought you'd like some help losing weight before you start your job. Well, *if* you get the job, that is," his mother tried explaining to her horrified son as he looked at the abomination sitting on the dining room table. What was supposed to be a rich and filling pan of lasagna was instead a bowl of quinoa: the most bland and boring food the hyena had even seen.

James gulped nervously, cautiously easing himself into the squeaky chair. "I-is there anything else to go with it? I mean, I'm still really hungry after running on the treadmill earlier."

The older hyena tut-tutted. "I don't think I've seen you use that thing all week, kiddo. Heck, if I didn't know any better, I'd say you've gotten fatter! I've been spoiling you with snack foods for too long now; I think I'm gonna start monitoring what food comes in this house from now on. I can't have you turning into a blimp before your big day," she muttered, dishing out

helpings of the grainy dish to herself and her son. “Eat up. Quinoa is low in calories and high in protein, one of which you need more than the other.”

“Yeah, but not the one you think,” James thought to himself, grumbling. Leave it to his mom to throw a huge wrench into his plans for happiness, yet again. How was he supposed to gain weight if his mother was going to start frisking his son for snack foods every time he left the house? He had already planned on going grocery shopping the next day for more fattening junk food too! The fat hyena fretted internally, yet made sure to eat every last grain of the bland meal. Low calories were still calories, after all.

Sure enough, his mom was true to her word. Not only did she clean out practically any food that wasn't under 100 calories a serving, the older hyena demanded her son start following a consistent workout regime if he ever wanted to taste anything other than quinoa for dinner again. For a moment, James was genuinely horrified that he would never be able to gain the last 10 pounds needed to start his job, and he wasn't sure Archie would be understanding enough to believe that his mom was practically holding his weight hostage. It was as if James' career was over before it even began. It looked as if he really would have to work at McDonalds.

But that single thought gave him an idea.

The hyena pleaded with his mom to let him jog outside instead of using the treadmill, and to his shock, his mother allowed it. James left the house two times a day to do his “jog,” once in the morning, the other after dinner. However, instead of actually lifting his knees and waddling faster than his typical sluggish pace, the hyena casually strolled down the block, where his Hail Mary awaited him, or rather his Hail McDonalds. Once inside, the gainer gamer ordered as many McNuggets as he could eat, considering the little fried lumps of chicken were the quickest and easiest meal to eat. James would stuff himself silly as quickly as possible in order to return home before his mom grew suspicious, washing down pawfuls of nuggets and fries with refill after refill of Loca-Cola.

Once he was stuffed to the brim with salt and fats, the tubby hyena refilled his drink with water, only to splash himself in the face with it outside. He'd stumble into the house, huffing and panting, dripping with fake sweat. Everytime, his mom would congratulate him on the hard work, and the overfed hyena would crash onto his mattress for a midday nap, or pass out for the night in a deep food coma.

This daily cycle continued for days, then weeks. James started switching out nuggets for burgers once he was sick of the taste, even if it meant he was consuming slightly fewer calories per dollar spent. He was monitoring his gains by the day at this point, staring helplessly at the

number on his scale every morning, willing it to go up faster. He was eating far more at McDonalds than he had ever done before, to the point where some of the staff were starting to recognize him, but that was partially offset by the distance he had to walk there and back.

Occasionally, James took time to examine himself in the bathroom mirror after showering off the fake sweat. His paws would roam around his spotted hide, watching intently at the tubby hyena in the mirror doing the same. He marveled as, bit by bit, he was growing softer all around. His chest, his hips, his face, everywhere looking just the slightest bit chubbier than before. It was conflicting, watching his soft out-of-shape body gradually grow even more so, the hyena wondering if he'd ever be able to drop the weight in his life time. The extra weight was definitely starting to make itself known to him; the problem was keeping it all a secret from his mother.

James had only felt this kind of stress back in college. His savings were drying up quickly to pay for his hefty meals at McDonalds. Not only that, but his mom was starting to question why her son wasn't looking skinnier, but rather the opposite. Her suspicions rose when she started bringing up why James smelled like salt and grease, berating him with questions that made the hyena's heart stop. He was so desperate, he started chugging the coffee creamer his mom used when she wasn't around, frantic for the additional sustenance. Tensions mounted higher and higher with every passing day and pound. James wasn't sure he could take the stress much longer, and was tempted to finally come clean with his mother.

Until the fateful day when the scale finally rolled over the 400 mark.

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“So...this is the place, huh?”

James looked up from his phone when he heard his mother's words. He had been staring at his phone the entire car ride in order to distract himself from his nerves, but looking up at the mansion made his stomach tie itself into innumerable knots. The manor's brown rooftop rose over the dozens of trees dotting the winding road up towards the driveway, and as they drew closer, James could make out the enormous building beyond.

The hyena had only seen mansions this large in movies and videogames; at first glance, he thought he was looking at a fancy apartment complex, or a ski resort! The wooden structure made James think of an enormous log cabin, with dozens of extra rooms growing out the sides of it in a sort of hodge-podge way. Past the impressive iron gates was a cobblestone path nearly as long as a football field leading up to the mighty mansion. While the cobblestone path was long, it

was little more than a hop and a skip compared to the half-mile private path the two hyenas drove on.

Pulling up to the gate only made James feel more anxious, his claws anxiously rubbing against his thick thighs. The front yard was simply stunning, without a single pine cone out of place; an impressive feat, given how many evergreen trees dotted the landscape. The grass was the brightest green he had ever seen without a single unkempt blade, looking like an oil painting come to life! Bushes and hedges lined the cobblestone road before it split around a large ornate fountain, looping back around towards the front door. Everything looked so splendid and regal, and that was just the outside! Was he seriously expected to maintain *all* of this? James forced down a gulp, suddenly aware of how dry his throat was.

He was so enthralled with the sight before him that he didn't notice the car sliding to a stop, or that his mother had been trying to talk to him, until the older hyena shook his flabby shoulder. "Hello? Earth to James?"

James blinked, shaking his head slightly before turning to his mom. "Sorry. What?"

"I asked you to remind me what we're doing here," his mom asked, tilting her head slightly. "Is this really where you're working?"

James nodded softly, scratching behind his round ears. "Uh, yeah, it is. I'm, uh, helping around the house, I guess."

"So, like a butler?"

The fat hyena shrugged as casually as he could. "I guess that's one way to put it."

His mother continued giving him an incredulous stare, her hazel eyes flickering towards the mansion, before sighing and shaking her head. "Alright, then. Not sure why you'd want to clean up after some rich snob when you're too lazy to pick up after yourself, but it's not my business."

"That's because I wasn't being paid before," James muttered under his breath. Things were still somewhat tense with his mother, but at least he wouldn't have to deal with her for an extended length of time. With a snort, the hyena unbuckled himself, sighing in relief when the seatbelt that had been digging into his plump middle finally sprang off him.

He didn't think 25 extra pounds would have such an impact on him! The fat hyena felt even more cramped in his mom's sedan, practically stumbling out from the passenger's seat, making the car bounce once it was relieved of the heavy weight. His clothes, the same button-up white shirt and navy blue slacks from the interview, now clung tighter to his fatter self, particularly around his hips, thighs, and waist. He remembered the argument he had with his mom when she noticed the buttons on his shirt were straining, the fat hyena desperately claiming his clothes had shrunk in the wash.

In any case, he was finally here. James waddled towards the back of the sedan, lifting the trunk and pulling out a large suitcase and a backpack. It was only a week's worth of clothes, on top of some of his gaming equipment, but something told him he wouldn't be needing those clothes after a month or two of staying here. He waved goodbye to his mom, expecting her to simply drive off, but instead of leaving, the older hyena looked at her only son closely.

“You're gonna be ok, being on your own like this?”

James was actually struck speechless by that comment, taking a moment to respond. “I, uh, should be, yeah.”

Soon, the tubby hyena found himself wrapped up in a warm embrace from his smaller mother. James actually found himself relaxing in the hug, bringing his own meaty arms around to hug the thin hyena, noting the size difference between them.

He wasn't the only one who noticed, for when his mom stepped back, she grabbed the lower fold of his soft tum. “Heh, hopefully this rich guy will whip you into shape. I probably won't even recognize you when I see you again!”

James couldn't help but chuckle. If only she knew!

The walk to the mansion's front doors was slow, if only because James waddled at a meandering pace. It was difficult for the tubby hyena to take in everything. The entire manor itself exuding a noble aura. James felt like he was defiling the place just by being here. Heck, the 400-pound yeen had never felt smaller in his entire life. Doubts began to sink into his brain as he looked at the looming front door, anxiety settling in. Just stepping onto the front steps felt like taking the largest leap of his life.

With one fat paw raised, he stared longingly at the doorbell, his forehead feeling clammy. There it was: the button that led to his future. James' tongue suddenly felt very dry.

"I could just not ring it," he muttered to himself, breathing heavily through his mouth. "I could just run back and call my mom, go get a job at a fast food joint instead. That's where a loser like me belongs anyways. Everyone at the McDonalds knows me on a first name basis anyways."

He couldn't.

He shouldn't.

He wouldn't.

He-

*\*DING DONG!\**

James just stopped thinking altogether and plunged his fat finger into the doorbell, hoping that would finally stop his inner demons from assaulting him. Rather than quiet the voices in his head, the hyena was surprised to suddenly hear a voice outside his head speak out, that voice coming straight from the doorbell itself. "Just one moment."

"U-uh, ok."

For a moment, James had Beauty and the Beast vibes, imagining the entire cabin as alive, before noticing a little speaker right below the doorbell. He recognized the voice as the same voice he talked with on the phone a few days ago, once the hyena finally passed the 400 pound mark. No doubt one of the many butlers that served Archie. James had secretly wished that it would be Archie himself that would greet him at the door; he really would have liked seeing a familiar smiling face.

That hope vanished as he heard unbelievably heavy footsteps approaching.

The doorknob creaked, and the large oak doors slowly opened inwards, revealing the largest panther James had ever seen. And not just because the panther was a head taller than him! The immense feline was well over 6 feet tall, and probably just as girthy! At first glance, the hyena thought the obese panther was naked, thanks to that incredible shelf of a gut that bounced past his knees. Upon closer inspection, James made out the black suit and trousers he'd expect a

butler to wear, albeit stretched tightly along the feline's plump body. His fur color matched his outfit almost perfectly, James almost didn't notice the various rips and tears along the panther's hips and shoulders. Was the panther's belly really too big to fit in a proper suit? Did the holes in his suit mean he was still growing? More importantly, was James expected to look like *that*?!

The hyena was so lost taking in the sight before him that he didn't even notice the panther had been speaking to him until the big cat cleared his throat, rippling his doughy frame. "Are *you* the new recruit?" He asked, annoyance clearly present in his voice.

"O-oh, yeah, I am. Sorry." James flushed pink, tearing his eyes off that incredible gut before him to look up (God, those moobs were bigger than his head!) at the feline's face. Unsurprisingly, that too was incredibly fat, the panther's neck completely engulfed in jowls and chub. Those cheeks looked so large and heavy, the size of a fist, sticking out further than even the panther's muzzle. Speaking of which, that muzzle sported two additional chins beneath it, large hanging sacks of flab that rippled when he spoke.

And then he saw those eyes, those piercing blue eyes, and James felt the hair on the back of his neck rise. A ton of chub was supposed to make you look more endearing, but on the panther, it just made him more imposing and ominous, like an enormous shadow ready to engulf him.

The massive butler continued staring down the hyena in silence, as if silently judging him. James, feeling more and more intimidated by the walking wall of fat before him, anxiously cleared his throat. "E-erh, yeah. It's, uh, me. James Folt. Sir." He smiled awkwardly, holding out his paw. He made sure to extend his arm quite far for a handshake, considering it looked like the panther would have some trouble reaching past that gut.

However, the feline didn't even attempt to grab the hyena's paw. "It's normally not customary for a new hire to live on the property," he muttered disdainfully, glancing over the hyena's shoulder at the suitcases, before returning his gaze to James. "Especially for someone as...underfed as yourself."

James' heart rate accelerated. He had already told his mom he wouldn't come home for a while! He couldn't leave, not like this! "I-is there any way you can make an exception, sir?"

James tried looking as calm and collected as possible, despite the whirlwind of emotions building up from within. He must have been doing a poor job, for the panther raised an eyebrow. "If you have no other accommodations, then I shall speak with Master Borkington about letting



you stay. I didn't expect the master to hire someone off the streets." The panther muttered under his breath.

"Hey, I'm not-" the hyena retorted, before biting his lip. He wasn't going to argue and risk his job over something stupid like this. He didn't need this butler's approval anyways, just Archies'.

The panther blinked, staring down the smaller hyena. "If you have no further objections, or outbursts, then allow me to show you where you'll be staying."

James nodded and stepped forth, but immediately retreated when he saw the enormous feline waddling towards *him*. The tubby hyena actually had to stumble backwards, fearing that such a massive panther wouldn't have stopped even after bowling him over. He made room for the butler to pass him, watching the feline waddle along the side of the mansion, before quickly following after him.

It was an awkward walk, to say the least. The feline hardly gave James more than a passing glance as they waddled in silence. The hyena wanted to glance around at his new workspace, but was afraid of accidentally waddling headfirst into the enormous black wall before him. It would have been a cushioned collision, but he didn't want to upset his superior.

Speaking of which, he didn't even know the panther's name.

James cleared his throat. "U-um, excuse me, mister..."

"Edwin," the feline called out, not even looking over his broad shoulder.

"Right, Mister Edwin...erh, where are we going, if I may ask?"

Edwin huffed, and James thought the panther was winded from their short walk, but upon closer inspection, the older butler was simply letting out a sigh. "I'm taking you to the butler's quarters, where you will presumably be staying over your career here."

"I see," James nodded, the portly hyena waddling towards Edwin's side so he could better see ahead.

The backyard was, as expected, beautiful. The pool looked like it was ripped clean from a 5-star resort, filled with clean, glistening water without a leaf in sight, a surprising feat given the surrounding trees. Further out was the actual yard, which included multiple trimmed hedges, a

small flower garden, and even a gazebo, all with cobblestone walkways leading to each landmark. The very air of the backyard felt crisp and clean, a literal breath of fresh air compared to the stuffy city air James was used to.

However, it wasn't the yard itself that caught the hyena's breath.

For to the side of the yard, seemingly tucked away in a little corner, stood a massive building that James nearly mistook for a second mansion. The structure was much smaller than the main mansion, of course, but the hyena still couldn't get over how easily Archie's yard could fit a building larger than most suburban houses. Like the mansion, this building kept the log cabin aesthetic. Even on the outside, it looked warm and cozy, the hyena imagining himself sitting on the front porch drinking hot cocoa with a fire nearby.

James was so engrossed with the new building, he hardly noticed the large boar leaning against the outside wall until Edwin suddenly yelled, making the hyena flinch. "There you are, Cinnabar! You were supposed to be waiting outside for James!"

The hyena blinked, looking towards the sandpaper-hued swine. Unsurprisingly, Cinnabar was ridiculously fat, as was to be expected of anyone living in the manor. While not quite as large as Edwin, the boar still looked more than capable of clearing out a buffet, his exposed gut hanging far over the waistband of his slacks and completely covering his crotch. He was more pear-shaped than the panther, sporting a bouncing rear that nearly engulfed his curly tail, as well as two enormous thighs that made James' look modest in comparison. The pig definitely didn't skip any meals; James was secretly impressed he didn't dent the wall by leaning against it! If Cinnabar and Edwin were considered ideal butler sized, then James had a long way to go.

However, the similarities between Cinnabar and Edwin ended there. While the panther's face looked permanently etched into a scowl or a sneer, the boar appeared much more relaxed, a casual smirk spreading across his dimpled cheeks. "Heya, Eddy! Is that the newbie right there?" He asked, pointing a pudgy hoof at the shy hyena.

Edwin furrowed his brows. "Have you been slacking off this entire time?"

"Of course not!" Cinnabar exclaimed, holding up those pudgy hoofs defensively. "I did exactly what yah said. 'Wait outside for a hyena and show him around when he gets here,' that's what you said. 'Course, yah didn't specify *where* outside I was supposed to be waiting, so I figured here would work fine...and it did!"

The massive panther let out another disgruntled sigh. “Perhaps waiting by the front gate, where *everyone* comes and goes, would have yielded better results than standing around the backyard?”

Cinnabar didn’t respond immediately, glancing up at his forehead as if looking for his brain’s input on the matter, before cracking a goofy grin. “Oh yeah, that woulda been more logical, huh?”

“Unbelievable,” Edwin rubbed his face, jostling those humongous cheeks. Through his fingers, he glared down at James. “Whatever. You’re his responsibility now. I don’t have time for this.” And with that, the obese panther turned and slowly waddled off, leaving the confused James alone in the boar’s care.

Cinnabar certainly didn’t seem to mind having a new recruit dumped onto him, the boar playfully wrapping an arm around the startled hyena, pulling him close into a one-armed hug. “Eh, don’t worry about Edwin, bud. He’s always been a bit of a grump. You’d think with all that chub he’d be a bit softer, huh?”

“U-uh, sure,” James muttered, blushing at the impromptu hug. He had never hugged someone so large and soft before, especially someone who was practically shirtless, given how exposed that gut was! The hyena, as fat as he was, nearly sunk into Cinnabar’s warm embrace as if the boar was made out of bacon-scented Jello, even unintentionally squeezing the big pig’s squishy love handles.

The boar playfully pat the smaller hyena’s head before pulling back, giving James a tusky grin. “No need t’ worry about all that formality stuff with me, though. I’m cool as a cucumber! Th’ name’s Cinnabar, but you can call me Cin for short!”

James blinked. “Cin? Like, The Seven Deadly Sins?”

Cinn waved a hoof. “Pshaw, I ain’t deadly! Well, ‘nless yer a turkey sandwich! Haharr!”

It took James a moment to realize he was supposed to be laughing with the boar, the hyena letting out an awkward chuckle. He was struggling to get used to the wild shift in demeanour, from Edwin’s serious and stoic nature to Cinn’s lighthearted and cuddly persona. He wasn’t sure how to act at all anymore, and mentally decided to keep his mouth shut so he could better observe and learn the rules.

Cinn suddenly blinked, looming over the new recruit. “Oh, hey! Ya brought a suitcase! Yer pretty committed to living here then, right?”

James’ ears folded back. “E-erh, kinda. Edwin said he’d have to talk to Ar- Master Borkington about it, first.”

The boar’s grin widened. “Then yer set! Archie’s a great boss, he’ll absolutely let you live here! C’mon, let’s get you unpacked so I can show ya ‘round. Oh, yer in for a real treat! This job’s the best in the world!”

James didn’t really have a say in the matter, for the enthusiastic butler had already wrapped his arm around the reclusive hyena, pushing him towards the double wide doors leading inside. Looking from the doorknob to Cin’s ecstatic face, James gulped and grabbed the door, slowly opening it.

“Welcome to the Weight Staff, James!”