

## The Boss' Appetite

By: Indi

The thundering of heavy hooves and the barely-restrained blaring of trumpeting made it clear for everyone in the lobby of Gaines Global that Adrian Bailey was to be avoided at all costs. Massive even for an elephant, Adrian's round belly was jiggling violently with every step. It was expertly contained by his suit and a hidden pair of suspenders.

His short temper was notorious even amongst those outside of the department he ran. Employees were dodging him left and right, doing their best to stay out of arm's reach. Failure could very well end with them sliding down his gullet for good.

The line for the elevators dispersed the second Adrian arrived, with only a lone, oblivious mouse at the front scurrying in before the elephant. They realized far too late who they were stuck with, and by then the doors were closing. The mouse backed themselves into a corner, tiny in comparison to the furious Adrian. He avoided eye contact, hoping the trip would be fast and end in his favor.

Unfortunately Adrian wasn't in the mood to be merciful.

Without warning Adrian wrapped his trunk around the mouse whose name he didn't know and didn't care to know. There was a squeak and a wiggle from his prey, but at that point they weren't anything more than a snack. Head, shoulders, and chest were taken in by a single, large swallow. Adrian tilted up his head, the mouse falling in as if he were going down a slide. Two gulps later he was just a bulge heading towards Adrian's stomach.

The elephant's belly wobble and swelled slightly as the mouse practically fell into it. There was a hint of strain on the buttons of his suit jacket, but nothing more. His thick layers of fat hid most of the mouse's futile struggles. Despite the meal, Adrian's mood hadn't improved at all. He didn't gloat or tease, didn't savor the taste. Didn't even give his belly a rub or a shake. Once the mouse was in his stomach he was forgotten about right away.

The stomping continued once the elevator doors opened and Adrian headed towards his department. A panic rose amongst his employees as they spotted him. They more than anyone else in the company knew what the elephant was capable of when angry. Most cowered in cubicles or stuck to walls as far from their boss as possible. A beaver left the bathroom only to immediately hide back in it.

A relatively new intern got caught up in the chaos. Stumbling about with a box of files, the lean otter managed to wander directly into Adrian's path...and then right into his belly.

The otter fell, files flying all over. Adrian himself didn't budge an inch. It was as if a tiny minnow had bumped into a whale. Down below the intern began to grab the closest files, but as soon as he looked up and realized who he'd run into he froze up in terror. He jumped up, his whole body quaking as the rest of the office looked on.

"I'm so sorry, I really am! I should've been looking where I was going, it's all my fault, it is! Please forgive me Mr. Belly!"

Paws, hooves, talons, and claws shot up to mouths to silence potential snickers. The intern seemed to shrink a solid foot as he realized his slip up. Everyone called Adrian Mr. Belly behind his incredibly wide back, though always in hushed whispers even the elephant's large ears couldn't pick up. Or so they thought. Adrian was well aware of the name—and even took joy in it as he considered it proof they feared his massive gut.

Still, the boss was not above using the nickname as an excuse to vent.

"Well if that's where your mind keeps wandering, then let's have the rest of you wander there too!"

The otter was barely able to take a single step back before Adrian's trunk pressed on top of and then right over his head. Blinded, he flailed wildly as he felt himself getting sucked right up his boss' trunk. To Adrian it was like drinking through a straw. Just like the mouse before, the otter was taken in

with frightening speed, his struggles doing nothing to help.

From trunk to throat the poor intern went, reduced to a bulge as everyone else watched. The buttons of his suit were straining even more thanks to the gradual addition of a second course, yet still they held firm. Actual lumps could be seen on Adrian's bulging middle. Both mouse and otter were pushing in opposite directions, unwilling to accept their likely fate as permanent elephant pudge.

The "itch" in Adrian's stomach only warranted a casual squeeze.

With his large gut swaying from side-to-side Adrian waddled towards his office, the path now clear. Right outside his door the rotund cardinal who worked as his secretary couldn't even pretend to be working as they stared at Adrian's middle. Normally Adrian would've teased him, but on that day all he did was let out a sloppy *buh-urrrrrp* as he huffed past, slamming the door behind him.

The walls and shelves of Adrian's office were covered in awards. Most were job-related, but there were plenty of ones from his old college wrestling days as well. Normally admiring them put a smile on his face. They didn't even receive a glance.

Adrian sat down in his reinforced chair, which groaned in protest under his bulk. His gut pressed against his desk, shaking and jostling. Faint, incomprehensible protests echoed from the pit of his stomach, muffled by fat and suit. As one hoof squeezed a stress ball the other skimmed emails. Nothing bad, but nothing good either.

The venting would continue.

He picked up the phone and rang his secretary. "Get me that plump idiot JD!" Adrian demanded, hanging up before he got a confirmation.

A couple minutes later a panting tiger was poking his head through the door. The buttons of his dress shirt creaked as he took deep breaths, his belly fighting to be free of it.

"Y-Yes sir?"

"IN!"

JD practically scurried over to his boss' desk. His gaze was constantly drifting towards Adrian's gut, which hadn't calmed at all. Adrian half-expected him to simply bolt. It'd have been a pointless act, as a single call to the lobby would ensure security was waiting for him, ready to gulp him down themselves.

"Your numbers are pathetic! You're dragging down the whole department, and not showing any signs of improvement! You're. Making. Me. Look. Bad!"

JD cowered a little more with every accusation.

Adrian grabbed the tiger's tie with his trunk and pulled him in close, until JD was leaning over the desk, his belly pressing down on it. "And worst of all, you didn't even have the decency to fatten up enough to be a full meal!"

A maw opened, a tiger gasped. No amount of desperation could save JD from getting swallowed whole. He whimpered and kicked and thrashed, but his gut was dragged first across Adrian's desk and then his tongue. Saliva soaked the tiger as he was sealed away for good, eaten not out of hunger but out of spite. And to think he'd almost called out that day.

Adrian's belly ballooned outward as it claimed a third prey. It fought against the desk for space, and won. With a mighty crash Adrian's desk was knocked over, its contents crashing to the floor. The buttons of his jacket and dress shirt all burst off, bouncing off walls and awards. His suspenders held on by a thread, a deep breath away from snapping right off.

The engorged elephant gripped his immense middle with both hooves, angrily pushing down on any bulge that formed. Glutting to such an extent at work was rare, even for someone as voracious as him. He should've felt elated, maybe even ready for an executive nap. Frustration continued to hound him, though. More! He needed more!

The chair groaned in relief as Adrian rose from it. Slowly he stomped towards his door, every step shaking the room. He had no doubts his employees could hear him coming, their eyes likely already aimed at the door in worry. Any relief there'd been after JD had been called into the office

would be gone.

Almost right away Adrian's gargantuan gut got jammed in the door. The frame creaked and Adrian grunted. As he forced his way through he saw people hiding in their cubicles, keyboards and chatter quieting. Useless!

Adrian was just about to start yelling at his secretary when he caught a flash of movement in the corner of his eye. A blubbery lion had gotten stranded close to the office and was trying to flee for safety, but he was too late. His tail was caught by Adrian's trunk, and the hefty feline was drawn in like a fish on a hook.

Far larger than any of Adrian's previous meals that morning, the lion actually took some time to consume. Inch-by-inch he was wrangled into Adrian's maw, disappearing from view slowly but still disappearing. Half-way down the elephant's throat he caused suspenders to snap off. The combined weight of four prey brought Adrian to his knees. As he finished swallowing a pair of kicking paws he rolled atop his mountain of a belly, which looked just like a boulder.

A thunderous *braaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaap* shook the walls of the cubicles and the hearts of the employees. With the boss immobilized and stuffed, they thought the worst was over.

"Get over here!" Adrian yelled to his secretary. The cardinal raced over, their emotions rapidly shifting between fear and attraction. He'd never been so close to a belly so big before, and the urge to reach out and rub it was strong. "Bring me someone!"

"O-Of course sir!" the secretary turned to leave, but then stopped himself. "Um, who exactly should I get, sir?"

"Anyone, I don't care!"

Suddenly burdened with considerable responsibility, the cardinal started making calls. A phone rang in a distant cubicle, but no one picked up. Then another, and another. Eventually one was answered, much to its owner's regret. A fat skunk waddled up to the secretary, who then escorted him over to Adrian.

Adrian didn't have to make a single threat, his secretary already knew what he wanted. A well-timed trip sent the skunk toppling over, and the only thing that could break their fall was the belly of their boss. The wind was knocked out of him as he landed atop the leathery, shifting mound with enough force to make Adrian belch. As he tried bracing himself to push away he felt his wrists grabbed. He looked up to see a face that was simultaneously filled with fury and hunger.

"Wait, boss, my numbers have been great! I can find you someone tastier I swear! I can get you lunch for a whole week—no a whole month!"

Had Adrian been thinking rationally he might've taken the skunk up on his offer. In the moment, however, all he cared about was filling his belly until his irritations went away. *If* that was even possible.

The secretary rushed in to aid his boss, if only so they didn't have to hear their coworker turn on them for the betrayal. With him pushing and Adrian pulling, the skunk was slurped up at a steady pace. Adrian's gut was rocking and wobbling the entire time, and the secretary was uncomfortably aware of all the shouts and curses from previous prey. He did his best to distract himself by imagining how much fatter Adrian would be once his meals had been digested.

When the big, fluffy tail of the skunk was finally swallowed down, Adrian still bore a scowl. The secretary gulped.

"More!"

Again the cardinal returned to his phone. Each success would only bring momentary relief as Adrian proved to be insatiable, and luring in meals grew harder and harder. The hefty buffalo whose shirt never fit well. The slim cheetah who came to work with a bulging belly once a week yet never seemed to gain a pound. The platypus from maintenance who once had to be rolled out of the office after a disagreement with a contractor. The second delivery guy, who was unfortunately thinner than the first who'd fled the second he spotted Adrian atop his gurgling gut.

And last of all, an exhausted secretary who had run out of numbers to call.

“*Uooorp!!!*” Red feathers, a soaked tie, and a pair of glasses flew from Adrian’s mouth and onto the floor, adding to the scattered pile of etcetera he’d belched up before. It’d taken all morning, but finally the elephant had mellowed out. He looked upon the sheer mass of his middle, how far it spread out in every direction beneath him. The squirms had ceased a short while ago, replaced by loud, messy gurgles.

“Ah, nothing is as relaxing as a good, filling meal,” Adrian moaned, embracing and rubbing his gut. “I don’t even remember what I was so—*bwooooooooooooorp*—miffed about before!” He chuckled, a cracked cell phone spinning on the floor after his latest burp.

Keyboards clacked in the background as the rest of the office attempted to get work done and ignore the cubicles emptied by their boss’ appetite. They’d have to deal with a lot of new hires soon.

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Much later, at night, a lobby elevator opened, revealing the immense mass of elephant that was Adrian. His stomach was back to being empty, every last prey churned into wonderful, blubbery pudge. He’d switched into a spare suit he kept in the office just for such gluttonous occasions. The buttons were comically strained, the suit clinging tightly to every curve of his doughy body. Tiny tears had formed on some of the seams. Adrian was expecting to simply burst out of it once he got home. A trip to his tailor was in order, clearly.

The elephant smiled as he waddled through the lobby, delighted in how much more he jiggled now. Losing some of the heft might be necessary—he’d barely fit through his own office door even on empty—but most of it would stay. It’d hide his smaller meals better during executive meetings at least.

The only other person in the lobby that late was the security guard, a fat zebra who also barely fit his own uniform. As Adrian stopped to nod goodnight he felt his stomach rumble. He hadn’t eaten since brunch, so it made sense for him to be hungry. Adrian grinned and gave his belly a pat. “Guess I’ll be bursting out of this suit a bit earlier than expected.”

He snickered, and the unlucky security guard gulped.