

The afternoon sun shone through the slats of window blinds and created a striped pattern on the pastel colored walls. It played on the surfaces of tastefully arranged diplomas and certificates, broke against a bookshelf filled with impressive looking bricks of literature, and disappeared in the foliage of a strategically placed ficus. The office was carefully laid out to evoke a feeling of professionalism without appearing too clinical--approachable, was the word Marie had used with the interior designer. Her nutritionist's clinic was located in the fashionable part of town, above a yoga school and across an indie coffee roastery, and offered bleeding edge solutions to biohackers and other curiosity seekers.

She checked herself on a mirror: a brownish gray mouse female in her thirties, smartly dressed in a blazer and knee high skirt, sensible shoes, and a doctor's coat she liked to wear on cold autumn days like these. She kept her black hair in a boyish bowl cut, one that combined with her large ears often made men describe her as "adorable". It did not bother her.

On her polished wooden desk an old analogue clock kept ticking seconds away. It was completely unnecessary, of course, but Marie liked the sound and it seemed to help the clients to be at ease. She breathed in, focused herself, and enjoyed the muffled sound of traffic, the electric whine of taxis and ringing of bike messengers. It was by far her favorite way of enjoying human contact--distant yet ever present in the background. She opened her eyes and tapped the intercoms app on her tablet, and asked her secretary to send in her morning appointment.

Sebastian did not fit the usual profile of her clients, but that did not bother Marie--she was trained to be a people person first, and could work with everyone. The large horse that entered her office was piebald gray, and tall enough that he had to duck to avoid hitting his head on the door frame.

"This is the place, right?", he said and walked in as if he had already received a confirmatory answer. His voice had a mellow baritone ring to it, a bit too clean to be called smoky and bit too lazy to be called sonorous, but perfectly enjoyable in her ears anyway.

Marie welcomed him and offered a seat on the opposite side of her desk. Sebastian set his bicycle helmet on a coat rack and walked across the office to sit down. His hooves made slight thudding noises against the carpeting. The modernist chair made out of bent steel tubes and leather creaked dangerously under the horse's weight, but he seemed to be used to that happening and did not pay any attention to it. Sebastian had an athletic build, not quite toned but a classic strongman body, and carried himself in a relaxed manner. He had settled easily into a comfortable slouch on the chair, legs extended and hands crossed on his belly, as if he was meeting a friend at their home instead of a professional at work. He was wearing ragged denim hotpants, and a pink, ratty tank top with a logo of a gym that had gone out of business a decade ago.

"So", Sebastian clapped his hands, "they say you can help me with gains, brah? I mean ma'am."

Marie nodded. "You have been exercising for a while now, and have hit a plateau." She looked down at her pad and continued. "From the preliminary information you've sent me it looks like your training regime is a solid one--that is, if you've been honest with yourself about sticking to it--so the problem might be with getting the proper supplements." She smiled like a teacher. "So yes, I can indeed help you with those sweet gains brah."

Sebastian snorted good-naturedly and reached over the desk for a fist bump, making the chair groan again. As he leaned closer Marie could smell his scent, lavender with a whiff of fresh sweat, which was a pleasant surprise. She bopped Sebastian's knuckles with a calculated precision.

"Our products are custom tailored for each client's needs, and our area of expertise is micro-nutrients--something that our competitors are woefully behind. We order them directly from the manufacturer, and have them delivered to your doorstep monthly."

Sebastian tried to look thoughtful. "Okay that sounds fancy, but does it, like, really work?"

"Of course, you can read the customer testimonials on our site. They are by and large glowing."

"Yeah, but do *you* know what you're talking about. You don't look like gym going type, is all." He somehow managed to make looking apologetic vaguely smug.

Marie pursed her lips and leaned back in her chair, and looked at Sebastian for a while, letting the afternoon tick away between them unhurriedly.

"Let me ask you something", she said, "why do you want to become big?"

"Huh, what?" Sebastian looked like she had asked him why sky is blue. "To... become big, I guess?"

"Yes, but to what end? You are already good-looking and strong."

"Heh, thanks ma'am", Sebastian grinned and seemed like he had expected the compliment.

Marie lifted her hands up but did not seem otherwise bothered by his reaction. "Just an objective assessment of my client, I assure you. Still, you're avoiding the question."

"Oh, right you are! Well, I like myself and I think it would be even better if there was more of... me?" Sebastian pointed up and down towards his body. "You know what I mean, this!"

The speed he had replied with made Marie raise her eyebrows. Even if Sebastian had been searching for words, he had not hesitated to reveal his inner workings in front of her. In her experience people were usually more concerned with looking good than the truth when explaining their motives. It was quite refreshing.

“You know”, she started, “although I work as a nutritionist, I also have a degree in psychology.” Her eyes flitted towards the topmost diplomas. “And I understand that the biggest factor in training is not your workout routine or the nutrition, but *want*. You have to want to be bigger, better, more than you are, and without that desire driving you nothing we can offer you makes the difference.”

She dug out a framed photo out of her desk drawer, and laid it between them. It was younger Marie in windbreaker, looking exhausted but happy with a medal held up in her hands.

“Back in the college I was in their track and field team, and I competed up to the nationals level--and I did well. *Very well*.”

“Why did you stop?”

“Life finds a way”, she shrugged and toyed with a ring on her finger without thinking about it. “My point is that our products are designed to help people who want to test their limits, and I understand them because I have lived that life.”

She sighed and continued with a more formal tone of voice. “However, I am required to inform you of the risk of potential side effects. There have been cases where people push themselves too far, beyond what their body can handle, and end up causing irreversible damage to themselves. That is something we want to avoid, hence this interview.”

Sebastian looked worried and raised his hand.

“No, not you, you’re entirely fine”, Marie shook her head and continued, “we just need you to promise to stay within the recommended dosages, and consult your physician if you notice anything unusual. Also please sign this liability waiver.”

She slid her pad across the table, and Sebastian pressed his thumb on it without reading it. “That sounds great, I’m game brah! Ma’am!”

The pad booped and flashed green, having accepted his biometric information.

“Excellent.” Marie got up and gestured Sebastian to do the same. “Let’s start with a standard physical check-up, as a reference point. Please take off your shirt.”

Sebastian pulled his shirt over his head and tossed it aside, then flexed without prompting. He curled his arms to show off the impressive bulge his biceps and triceps made, like an orange hiding under his soft, velvety skin. The muscles connected to well-rounded deltoids, and melded into the broad twin plains of his pecs. Under the slight overhang of Sebastian's chest muscles his torso was quite bulky, brimming with core strength, its features smoothed by a little bit of chub on his abs and obliques. He shifted his weight to one leg to draw attention to the curvature of his perky glutes and the long, flowing tail bobbing atop them. His legs were as thick as tree trunks, the quads faintly defined yet ever present, anchored like steel cables to his strong frame. His ankles had short, white feathering that covered his solid black hooves. Most of his body had the fine smoky gray color of autumnal mist, but his back, upper arms, and upper legs had a darker tone to them. His black mane started as a cute tuft of hair atop his forehead, and was then scrunched up into a softly shining ponytail, like a tendril of night that bobbed behind his head. His face had sharp, elegant features, and his easy boyish smile made him look quite charming.

Marie felt no shame in admitting that the horse impressed her--he had clearly spent a lot of effort to sculpt his beautiful body, and acknowledging that was just a natural reaction. She carried on to record Sebastian's measurements. He weighed a bit over 250 lbs, had a healthy blood pressure, and a slow, even resting pulse. Marie asked him to sit down so she could listen to his heart sounds--it was not necessary, but she felt like satisfying her curiosity. Soon she stood next to the sitting giant, eyes closed, her stethoscope carrying the steady drumbeat of his heart into her ears. It thud thudded in his chest, muffled and distant behind the layers of muscle and bone, yet strong enough to reverberate through her entire head. She could feel herself sinking into that warm, safe sound, her own pulse matching it... until she was snapped out of her reverie by Sebastian coughing like a rude concertgoer.

"I'm sorry ma'am, but I kinda have places to be, horse business you know..?" Sebastian tapped an imaginary watch on his wrist and smiled.

"Ah, sorry!" She had let herself become distracted in her carelessness, but she recovered quickly. "Just fill in this questionnaire about food allergies, and I can start formulating your supplement..."

--

Two days later a package arrived at Sebastian's apartment. He lived in a small but comfortable flat, fitted with second hand furniture scavenged from friends and student housing. The walls were adorned with posters of bands that he did not really listen to, but just looked really cool. He had a mattress for a bed, a gaming console so old that it was cool again for entertainment, and a couch for any friend that needed a place to crash. Gym gear on their way to the hamper was happily strewn about, occupying chair backs and crawling across the floor, giving the place a faint background funk.

The package was a hug-sized cardboard box plastered with air cargo stickers and lots of foreign text, scuffed and bent from its long journey from who knew where. On its address line read only SEBESTEIN and series of street names, each one struck over until the last one had been deemed close enough to be Sebastian's current place of residence. He shrugged and used a pizza cutter to open the box, revealing a creche of foam peanuts nestling several unmarked plastic containers. When Sebastian turned them around in his hands he noticed that each one had the text "FOR RESEARCH USE ONLY" printed on their lids, which seemed like an odd name for a bodybuilding supplement. However, the stuff inside looked like regular protein powder and tasted mild, almost vanilla-like, so it was probably the product that he had been waiting for. He saw no point in thinking of any other reason why the package could have arrived at his place--the first thing that came to his mind was usually either right or wrong answer, after all, and his boyfriend would correct him sooner or later anyway.

Sebastian mixed the powder into a strawberry-flavored shake, his favorite, and packed the bottle in his gym bag.

--

The bar's knurled surface clasped his hands like an old friend. Sebastian could feel the metal between his clenched traps and shoulders, smell the iron mingling with sweat, see the heavy weights yearning to touch the ground. He drew breath and held it inside, tensing his body into a taut balloon, and squatted. The steel bar jiggled as he shrugged it off the rack, then rushed downwards as 450 lbs of iron obeyed gravity, his body storing kinetic energy as it was compressed under the weight, followed by an explosive release of muscle power forcing it back up.

It felt right.

His body was a machine for pumping iron, the resistance a perfect fit for his thighs and ass, stomach and back, his muscles singing as they worked in unison. Just two days ago he had failed to complete the set, but now he felt as if he could go on forever, and fell into the steady rhythm of long distance runner with his weight lifting exercise. He finished his reps and racked the bar. It made a satisfying clunk in the otherwise empty all-night gym. It was so early that it was other people's late, those small hours between dawn and night, but Sebastian felt energetic enough to repeat the workout three times in a day. Thanks to the new supplement his recovery time had shortened dramatically, and he had felt hardly any muscle soreness in these last few days despite putting on some serious increase to his weight loads.

He was surprised to find himself missing the sensation. In a way pain was memory of his hard work, and there was satisfaction to be had in feeling its bite. Nevertheless, the gains looked to be excellent so he was happy with his decision. Sebastian patted his neck with a towel and took a swig of his frothy protein drink. It slid into his belly and left him with a heavy feeling as it sloshed around. It always seemed to take hours to digest even one dose of the

supplement, and as a side effect it made him gassy as his body worked overtime to absorb all the energy contained in the thick broth. He burped and patted his stomach. He knew that protein needed to be consumed in large doses to induce muscle formation, and his gut told him that the amounts he was ingesting were massive....

--

The rain had passed by but the sky still held on to its leaden gray color. Wind scattered stray leaves in its chilly grasp, moaning impatiently for the first snows to arrive, and it would not have to wait for long. Marie turned away from the window and straightened her clothes, checked from the mirror that she looked tidy, and called Sebastian in. She browsed through her notes while waiting for him--there had been some kind of confusion about his billing and delivery address, but she was certain that her secretary was already handling it.

Sebastian's arms brushed against door frame as he entered, and Marie stopped to stare before she caught herself, taken completely by surprise by his new shape. Without exaggeration the horse's body mass must have been doubled since she last saw him, and most of that seemed to be pure muscle. Despite the weather he was wearing just a sleeveless hoodie and bike shorts, and even then he had sweat beading on his forehead.

"Brah", he greeted her and looked very proud of himself.

Marie dashed to stop him before he could sit down on a chair. The vintage 80s design was not insured, and it would not survive the encounter with the big guy.

"My goodness, just let me take a look at you", she said and suppressed her desire to whistle.

Sebastian had already been built when she first saw him, but now he was positively bursting with thick, bulging coils of muscle fiber. His thighs were as thick as her waist, two solid pillars that supported his entire weight gracefully. She could imagine him pile driving his feet into the ground like beams of steel, and refusing to be budged by anything. The quads flashed under his taut skin like creatures of deep surfacing from oily sea, flexing and pulsing with raw strength, and his calves protruded like two ripe grapefruits smooshed together. His spandex shorts were woefully inadequate to cover his massive thighs and hips, and were stretched over them thin like a rubber band.

His arms looked ready to crush reinforced concrete, every muscle group on them exaggerated, the opposing pairs writhing like mooring cables when he moved and flexed. His chest and shoulders were noticeably broader now, a dense bedrock of flesh ready to take on any weight, and the reason why he had his torn off his sleeves--they simply not would fit through any normal clothing. Marie could notice a bit of gut peeking under his hoodie, the little beginning of a paunch jiggling over his pelvis being the only soft spot on his body. Otherwise his entire

frame looked strained, as if he was under pressure like a living bridge pillar, all the tightly wound tension originating within himself as his muscles were ready to tear themselves apart and free from his bones. However, he seemed to be in high spirits and enjoying his new shape.

“You know what”, she said and picked up her jacket, “let’s make this appointment a late lunch instead. I know a lovely little bistro nearby, we can chat while we’re there.”

She was partially worried for her office furniture, but also curious to see Sebastian interacting with everyday world. Sebastian shrugged and nodded, and even the small motion sent ripples across his slightly shimmering skin. He held open the door for Marie as she led the way.

They stepped out and braced the wind together. It drove people on the street along, quickened their steps and made them hug their upturned lapels. It brought along the fresh scent of snow, and promised to freeze over the clear puddles of water laying on the drenched pavement. Marie fell behind Sebastian willingly and enjoyed being shielded by his broad back. The horse strode upright and whooped when an angry gust rustled his mane and hoodie--it was “a bit nippy, brah” in his opinion.

His buttocks were at Marie’s eye level and she watched their hypnotizing undulation. His glutes were round and perky like basketballs, clearly defined between the slim curvature of his hips and legs, and as firm as well. His shorts disappeared in their embrace, sunk in the groove made by the luscious flesh and between his legs, stretched out tight enough to chafe as he walked. The muscles moved with glistening, unhurried rhythm with every step, flexing and relaxing in an intricate pattern. Marie hurried her steps to be closer to his cover, and got some of the coarse hair of his tail tossed on her face. It did not bother her.

--

The restaurant was small and cozy, dimly lit and decorated in a faux-Mediterranean fashion. The tables and chairs were rustic--and sturdy--and covered with white linens. Garlic wreaths and sunflower paintings adorned the walls, and accordion music lingered in the background. The waiters wore immaculate black uniforms with long aprons, spoke in vaguely French accent, and were in no hurry to serve. The lunch hour rush had passed so they had no difficulty in finding seats, and eventually a waiter approached to set a lit candle in a bottle on their table and leave them to their own devices.

Marie noticed other customers stealing glances towards them, but that did not bother her. They must have looked like a mismatched pair, a small mousy woman like her next to a hulking bodybuilder like him. She picked up the menu and looked at Sebastian over its edge. His features glowed softly in the candlelight, and she noticed that his face looked firmer and more heavyset than earlier.

“Do you take steroids?”, she asked casually as she vacillated between a soup and a salad.

“What, no!” He seemed uncharacteristically upset by the question and looked over his shoulder just in case someone had been eavesdropping on them.

“You do not need to tell me the truth. However, it is generally inadvisable to use them at the same time as our supplements. There have been... incidents, and as your nutritionist I recommend that you do not mix them.”

“Sheesh, as if I needed those...” He took a bite out of a stale breadstick and then pretended that it was a cigar.

“Also as your nutritionist I recommend that you take the pasta carbonara, the one they make here is to die for.” She set the menu aside and pointed at her glass, until Sebastian caught on and poured water for both of them.

“How you’ve been?”

“Great, I feel great! I can work out harder and longer than ever before, and I’ve put on over hundred pounds of weight!”

He was sweaty again so he unzipped his hoodie halfway down. He did not wear anything underneath, giving Marie a full view of his pecs. They had filled out and ballooned into full male tiddies, fleshy and jutting proudly above a row of pectoral muscles. The skin over them was thin and taut as a drum, and she could see stretch marks creeping across their surface. In fact, his entire upper body was marred by the little marks where his skin had given up as his body had been growing with reckless abandon, fresh and tender cracks on the colossus’s hide. She wondered how it would feel to touch them.

“Any side effects or discomfort?”

“Nah. No. Well, maybe a little. My joints have started aching recently, even on rest days, but dunno if that means anything.”

“Most likely your skeletal structure is struggling to keep up with the increased muscle mass. The weight, and the pull on your tendons affects joints the most. I’ll add some more calcium citrate to your formulation.”

“I get winded too really easily. Just that walk outside was enough to make my heart pumping!” He planted his hand on his chest as if to touch the thumping muscle inside.

“Your cardiovascular system has not kept up with your increased mass—that is, your lungs and heart have to do almost twice as much work than previously. You could add some light cardio to your routine, and get your blood pressure checked.”

Sebastian laughed. “Naw brah, my thighs chafe when I jog. Pass!”

At that point the waiter had decided that suitably snooty amount of time had passed, and came to take their orders. Sebastian wanted his dish extra large. Marie wanted hers with a glass of dry white wine.

“How’s your sex life?”, she asked matter-of-factly and swirled her drink. It had a delicate bouquet and sharp tartness to it, and it suited her well.

“Can’t complain”, he replied without being flustered in the least. “My boyfriend and I have been together for three months now, and he’s been very supportive.”

“That must feel nice.”

Sebastian was not sure what she meant, so he just grinned. “Yeah!”

“Do you enjoy the attention?”

“From my bf?” He pronounced the letters separately.

She skipped his question. “People don’t notice me, and I prefer it that way. But you, you’re impossible not to see. You make strangers turn their heads on street.” She took a sip of her wine. “You make people think thoughts about you.”

“It’s nice, of course!” Sebastian had settled into a comfortable slouch when they had started talking about him, and his legs took now most of the space under the table. “I like everyone, so it’s really nice to be noticed, by everyone. All my friends started as strangers you know? If they hadn’t first seen me then we wouldn’t be bros now.”

“On a less charming man that attitude would come across as narcissism.”

“Does that mean a good or a bad thing?”

“One cannot love others before they love themselves. You have a lot of love for others.” Her laughter was a short tick on the corner of her mouth and a slight snort.

They ate without further small talk. Sebastian shoveled food into his maw with gusto, slurping big, steaming gulps of spaghetti down his gullet. Soon the starchy noodles swimming in rich, creamy sauce sloshed at the bottom of his belly and he started to feel slightly full, but he

still asked for more. His hunger for fuel seemed bottomless, and he ended up emptying a second, then third serving of the dish before he was finally satisfied. When they had to get up he groaned, and felt a jolt of pain from his distended stomach, but waved away Marie's helping hand. He fell silent as they waited for taxi, and only huffed and burped and answered with noncommittal grunts to maintain the illusion of conversation, then clambered inside the car and crashed on the back seat for the drive home.

A bit later he laid sprawled on his couch and held his midriff making little moaning noises. His insides ached as the massive load of food pressed against them, stretching out his stomach and piling a heavy weight on his chest. He wiggled out of his pants to make his breathing easier, but he was still reduced to shallow mouthfuls of air. Despite his discomfort he was slipping into the drowsy caress of food coma, nodding pleasantly between wakefulness and sleep as he digested. He could feel his body absorbing the nutrients, building itself up only to crave more, to hunger more.

Sometimes he could feel his heart lurching, skipping a beat from the effort of keeping his massive body oxygenated, his muscles constantly requiring more of food, attention, everything--but he was not worried. He patted his chest and slid his hand over his taut, bulging belly. He loved being big, and would give his body the attention it wanted, feed and nurture it as he grew stronger. He fell asleep, snoring slightly as his body bustled with activity, cells dividing, patching the wear and tear even everyday tasks now caused him, and growing bigger as they did so...

--

Falling snow brushed against the windows of Sebastian's apartment, pooled on the exterior sills and was whisked away by lightest touch of wind. It danced in the yellow glow of sodium lamps and covered the world in a fluffy, frozen shroud.

Sebastian watched it with languid eyes and burped, bringing up a taste of vanilla into his mouth. He turned his head and listened to the slow, gurgling sounds his guts made and patted himself contentedly. By now he was taking all of the sofa by himself, having grown to massive proportions into a nearly half ton giant of firm muscle. His chest was a solid wall of flesh and his pecs bulged out like ripe melons, ready to burst out of his skin at a moment's notice. His biceps and triceps were so wide and well-formed that he had trouble pulling his arms close to his torso, the cushions of meat bumping against his sides whenever he tried to do so. His armpits were deep grooves, delineated by surrounding muscle, as was his spine which ran as a trench between his protruding trapezius and lats. His quads and calves were solid cannonballs, each clearly defined and grinding against each other when he tried to walk. His hide was stretched out thin like an overfilled balloon, primed to pop at any moment now, and it was covered in a network of stretch marks. They crawled over his skin, revealing faultlines where his body had failed to keep up with his growth, hugging to his muscles like a jealous lover.

He shifted his position making the couch groan in protest, sounding dangerously close to collapsing. He felt constantly short of breath, nestling a clenching sensation underneath his ribcage, but he had gotten used to it a hundred pounds ago. His bones ached with a dull background throb of soreness and he felt a creaking sensation from his joints when they had to support his weight, so he stayed mostly immobile and slept through the majority of the day. Despite that his body mass had stayed constant, and he had even lost some of the pudge on his belly. His fat had spread evenly across his abdomen and sides, but even that extra cushioning could not hide the hills and bumps of muscles underneath. It seemed as if his musculature sustained itself without effort, turning all he could eat efficiently into more mass. His body radiated heat, a furnace fueled by constant protein synthesis, enough to make wearing clothes uncomfortable and what little he wore was just for modesty's sake. He needed his boyfriend's help in everyday tasks, like washing himself, because his thick body prevented him from reaching around himself, and picking things off the floor or even eating by himself were rapidly becoming impossible. It did not bother him.

He was roused from his drowsiness by the smart speaker announcing a guest waiting outside. He told it to unlock the door and turn on the lights, but it was Marie, not his boyfriend who entered the apartment. She set her umbrella aside and shook her winter coat, leaving little piles of snow in the entryway.

"Hello, I decided to make a house visit."

She closed the door and walked in, without taking off her overcoat or the wool scarf she had tossed over her shoulder. She cleared a footstool of socks and sat down facing Sebastian. She had a slim attache case with her which she balanced on her lap, and wore a pearl necklace in addition to her usual blouse and skirt. She smelled of perfume, a faint but intriguing floral scent.

"There has been a mix-up." She tapped her fingers on the case and continued. "You were sent an entirely different compound by accident, one that was not meant for you."

"Seems to work just fine", Sebastian made a tired grin.

"Don't you think it worked *too* well?"

He tried to shrug, but the motion was muffled by his mass.

She opened the case and laid a stack of papers on a coffee table next to them, just out of Sebastian's reach. "Now, you did sign a waiver, but my lawyer tells me that you could still sue since the error was so blatant--to cover the medical costs of reversing the effects..."

Sebastian snorted.

“...but the process would be long and costly, so we’d like to avoid that. And that’s why I’m here.”

Her hand had risen to touch her necklace while she spoke, and she looped it around her fingers while she waited silently for his answer. Sebastian lifted his arm and clenched his fist, admiring lovingly how the monstrous high tension cabling of his muscles flexed and slid against each other. He let it relax and moved his fingers, watching how his forearm undulated along the motion.

He looked at Marie and smiled placidly. “Can’t we just continue?”

“It’s not advisable.”

“I feel great. Just trust me.”

She shook her head. “I feel partially responsible for your condition, for being too... distracted to pay proper attention to your health.”

“Brah, condition means a sickness, I don’t have one.”

Marie pursed her lips, and seemed to come to a decision. She sighed and spoke with a resigned voice.

“I admit wanting to see how big you could grow. My interest in you has not been purely professional. I am sorry.”

“Aw come on, I don’t see why you should be sad, I’m not.”

Marie sat in silence again, disarmed by Sebastian’s modesty, but then perked up. “Ah, I almost forgot.” She opened her case, and took out a small tube. “I brought skin cream for the stretch marks. Do you need help applying it?”

Sebastian nodded, not really paying attention to her. She got up and let her coat fall onto the floor, kicked off her shoes, and climbed to sit perched on the couch’s armrest. She rolled up her sleeves, and he did not resist when she took hold of his arm. She felt how dense and taut his muscles were even when relaxed, immensely swollen and probably weighing almost as much as her. His skin had zebra-like patterns, from having been torn and healed again and again, until there seemed to be as much scar tissue as original left. She dabbed some cream on his biceps, white and cool on his body simmering with heat, and spread it across with her fingertips. The new skin was paper thin and must have felt very tender, so she was careful not to apply too much pressure, just a light touch on the giant’s ragged hide.

She worked in silence, nursing him with practiced, methodical motions. She thought of massaging Sebastian to relieve his aches, but realized that even if she put her entire weight behind it, she could not sink her knuckles into the solid bedrock that he was made out of. He was like a statue brought to life, exaggerated and impossible, his sinews and fibers firm as concrete that shifted under his thin hide. The lotion left a soft shimmer on his skin, making it glisten like lake on a misty morning. Every little motion made it ripple as his muscles bulged out, almost breaking the surface but then disappearing under like sluggish waves.

Tension left her body, and after a while she spoke softly. "Is this how you're with your boyfriend?"

Sebastian chuckled, the sound rumbling through him like a small earthquake. "He likes it when I catch his head between my thighs. He says it's a nice way to warm his ears."

"Huh." To her surprise she felt vaguely dispossessed, jealous even, and that bothered her.

She moved on to Sebastian's pecs, and he had to crane his neck to see her, his view blocked by the steep rise of his own chest.

"If you're curious, and willing, I think we can go further. I've secured a large supply of the formula." She propped her hands on her knees, and leaned in close to whisper into his ear. "I think you could weigh a ton. That means doubling your current size. Think about it."

Sebastian whistled and let his head fall back as he imagined the possibilities.

"There would be complications though... we'd need to reinforce your heart, for starters, but I know a clinic. I can pay for the surgery out of my own pocket."

Sebastian raised his eyebrows. "You've done this before?"

"Not to this extent, no." She leaned back again. "As I said, there have been incidents, close calls. It's not safe by any means of the word."

A thought occurred to him. "What's in it for you?"

"Me? *You*."

"I don't get it." He yawned, tired of staying awake. He had just finished drinking a batch of the supplement, and digesting it made his belly feel heavy and limbs leaden. He burped and started to drift into sleep, eyes already half closed.

Marie worked on him until she started to hear him snore lightly. The lights timed out, leaving the two of them bathed in the orange chiaroscuro of street lamps. She sat in the dim glow and watched the giant sleep peacefully, happy to be confined under the weight of his own mass.

She licked her lips nervously in the darkness, and then climbed on top of Sebastian, to curl up on his chest, still fully clothed, resting her head between his pecs like on a living bed. He was warm like an electric blanket, and she closed her eyes, letting herself be lulled by his steady breathing and thudding heartbeat. He smelled fresh, like lavender, and his fur was short and fuzzy against her cheek. Sebastian did not notice anything. The little thing resting on him weighed almost nothing compared to him.

Neither of them seemed to be much bothered by it.