

Donut Crown

By: Indigo Rho

Reggie thumped on the wooden door. Every hit made the fox mage's ample belly jiggle. Most everything made him jiggle, though, as his friends were quick to remind him. But for once, his mind didn't linger long on his considerable heft. He wondered why his friend Tycho had called for him on such short notice. The message hadn't included any details.

After a short wait, the door finally opened. A fat, brown lion stood before Reggie. He was packed into a purple vest and white shirt that clung tight. His belt dug into his soft middle. His flowing mane ringed a round face and a wide smile.

Reggie blinked, convinced he was seeing things for a moment. The lion before him dressed like Tycho and had the same fur color as Tycho, but he was twice as wide as Tycho.

"Excellent, you've finally arrived!" the lion spoke in Tycho's voice, shattering any illusion of being an imposter. "Come in, come in."

Reggie waddled forwards, his gaze never leaving Tycho. The lion's belly wobbled when he spoke and his rump bounced when he walked. He'd only ever seen him thin, and could hardly believe his eyes. "You're huge," he mumbled.

Tycho laughed at the blunt comment, his belly bouncing up and down. "I've been indulging a little here and there. I guess a few pounds snuck up on me."

"That's more than a few pounds. You can't be an ounce lighter than me now, big guy." Reggie's confusion gradually transformed into amusement. Tycho had never skipped an opportunity to tease him about his weight, and he relished the chance to turn the tables on the expanded lion. "And it's only been two weeks since we last saw each other. You've practically ballooned!" He poked Tycho's middle and was rewarded by the lion recoiling slightly. *Not so funny when you're the one being poked and prodded like livestock ready for market*, he thought.

Tycho's face twisted a little. "Well, these things happen." His smile returned. "Though I don't see myself needing enchanted robes to handle frequent gorging, unlike some bottomless pit foxes I know."

Memories flashed through Reggie's head, reminding him of his many misadventures with food. It wasn't his fault that so many mislabeled potions and magic-enhanced meals existed in the world. Perhaps he could accept part of the blame for having thirds or fourths at the local tavern, but the energy was vital for mages.

"I used to tell myself the same thing," Reggie said, turning the comment right back at Tycho.

Uncertainty flashed upon the lion's face, though he covered it swiftly. "Well, paladins tend to have a bit more self-control than mages."

"Sure, sure." As if Reggie hadn't seen his fair share of doughy paladins squeezed into their armor and tabards. "Anyway, why did you ask for me? Do you need dinner recommendations? I'm always willing and eager to help another hearty eater." He was beginning to understand why his friends poked fun at his weight so often.

"I agree you're the expert on eating, but I've far more important concerns than dinner. I actually wanted you to help me with a strange, cursed item." Tycho walked over to a shelf and picked up a golden crown.

Again, Reggie found himself confused. "Curses aren't exactly my specialty, Tycho."

"True, but I still feel like you're the best fox for the job. Please, have a seat." The lion gestured towards the widest chair in the room, naturally.

Reggie settled down, grateful that his plush sides only slightly brushed the arms of the chair. He smiled as he realized Tycho would now know first-hand all of his furniture woes. He'd make sure to point out every creak when he could.

As the fox fantasized about future snarky remarks, glowing energy ropes abruptly bound his arms and legs to the chair. He strained against them, but his meager strength was no match for the bindings. "What's happening?" he demanded.

"Just had to make sure you didn't waddle off on me. I'm not as nimble as I used to be, and I'd rather not exhaust myself trying to catch you." Tycho strolled around to the front of Reggie, rotating the crown in his paws. "So about that curse I was talking about."

Reggie squirmed more, but the bindings refused to budge. He tried to think of a spell to counter them, but came up short. "I, uh, can't exactly help

when I'm tied down like this."

"Oh, don't underestimate yourself. See, the curse on this crown is a strange one. More inconvenient than malicious, depending on your taste. When worn, it creates animated donuts that feed the wearer. Whether they like it or not, I might add," Tycho chuckled. "I thought I'd be able to handle the curse on my own, but the donuts proved to be as persistent as they are fattening." He slapped his large belly, causing it to ripple.

The mention of donuts caused Reggie's stomach to rumble and his heart to race. He'd never had great luck with cursed food of any sort. "That's a real shame. Sounds like you should just get rid of it, then!"

"A paladin can't give up that easily, Reggie. Through a bit of sleuthing, I've uncovered evidence the curse can burn itself out if overextended. Force it to create too many donuts, and it'll fade away, leaving behind a magnificent crown. But for that, I need a glutton with an unrivaled appetite who can pack away a mountain of donuts without a second thought. You came to mind immediately."

Reggie gulped. "I wouldn't say I have that much of a sweet tooth. But maybe I can recommend you a candidate or two? Just let me go, and I'll nab them."

Tycho laughed. "You're underestimating yourself again. I can't think of anyone else more apt at gobbling up every snack in sight than you. You didn't grow this ball of blubber by holding back, that's for sure!" He grabbed the sides of Reggie's belly and squeezed them, making the fox squirm. Mischievous paws danced over his doughy middle, massaging and prodding with glee.

"I just had breakfast. I won't have enough room for cursed donuts!" Reggie lied.

"I've never seen you full, jumbo. Even when you pass out after a huge meal, those chops of yours keep opening and closing in your sleep, eager for more. Don't worry, Reggie. All you have to do is eat. What could possibly be bad about that?" Tycho grinned as he placed the crown upon Reggie's head.

The crown shimmered, and a giant donut appeared directly above it. The donut floated away from the crown and halted in front of Reggie's face. Reggie's nose twitched as the smell of fresh-baked dough reached him. He licked his lips, and the donut inched closer. As delicious as the donut looked,

he knew he couldn't succumb to temptation.

The donut cared little for his resolve. It darted forward and forced its way past his lips and into his mouth, forcing him to chew. Incredible flavor danced on the fox's tongue and, for a moment, he forgot he was eating against his will. Two more donuts manifested by the time he finished the first, and the sight of them reminded him he wasn't merely enjoying a pleasant snack.

Donut after donut dove into Reggie's maw. They always found a way in no matter how much he turned his head or clenched his jaws. And every time they did, he briefly rejoiced as he gobbled up the incredible treats.

"Struggle all you want, it won't help," Tycho said. "I failed to fend them off when I had full use of my arms and legs. Even if you cut them in half, the halves will find a way into your mouth. If you try to outrun them, they'll fly circles around you. And if you try to appease them by giving up, they'll swarm you all the same."

Reggie's eyes darted around as he scarfed down donut after donut. His large belly rounded out, before ballooning from the endless stream of donuts. Bite after bite, gulp after gulp, the helpless fox's gut spread over his lap. His robes stretched dutifully for a while, but they hadn't been designed with such intense gluttony in mind. Soon, he felt them squeezing his bulging middle. It was a slight discomfort, and his wiggling increased.

Tycho watched on, grinning as his devious plot went into motion. "You're looking quite regal, sitting on your big throne with a crown on your head and a kingdom-sized gut on your lap. Then again, I've always believed you're at your best when you're stuffed beyond belief."

Reggie blushed. He couldn't respond to Tycho while he ate, and he had no idea when he'd be allowed to stop eating. The crown had blimped up Tycho considerably. How much magic remained? Which would give out first, the crown, or his stomach? Would he double in size as well? Triple? Every question made him struggle more, yet he couldn't get the magical bindings to budge an inch.

"I need to stop!" Reggie managed between bites. "I feel like I'm gonna pop!" He hoped the exaggeration would work.

"You'll be fine, buddy. Especially since those donuts should start digesting any second now." Tycho patted Reggie's taut gut, wobbling him.

A funny sensation spread through Reggie, and he sensed magic at work. His belly quaked and stopped swelling. The sleeves of his robes began to feel tighter, and he realized in dismay that he was gaining weight.

“See? Right on time,” Tycho nearly cackled.

Reggie’s robes were strained to their limits as they fought to contain the ballooning fox. They squeezed him until he wished they’d tear apart. Seams ripped, revealing doughy expanses of orange and white fur. He winced at every tear, then sighed at the relief in pressure that followed.

The arms of the chair groaned as Reggie’s massive gut pushed against them. Wood cracked. The chair creaked and swayed. With a crash, it collapsed beneath the growing mass of the fox. He landed on his immense butt, his gut bouncing up and down on impact.

Freed of the chair, Reggie once again attempted to escape. He flopped when he tried to stand. More weight had piled on than he’d realized. His arms and legs had puffed up like a marshmallow over a fire, and he wasn’t used to lugging around such weight. His pillowy gut got in the way of everything, pinning him down. He was on the verge of losing his mobility.

“Having trouble?” Tycho asked as his friend frantically wobbled on the ground. “You’d better hope the crown gives up soon. Otherwise, you *might* end up immobile. But hey, if it doesn’t stop, at least you’ll be round enough to roll.” He snuck in a few pokes, and Reggie felt the lion’s paw sink into his blubber here and there.

Reggie kept trying to stand long after it’d been proven impossible. He flailed and wobbled, swelling all over. He tried removing the crown himself far too late, and discovered his arms were too chunky to bend much at all anymore. His belly was like a small hill, as wide as he was tall. His moobs rested atop it like domes, and his neck became a series of thick rolls. His round cheeks pressed against his snout, yet he still ate.

The crown’s glow faded and the donuts slowed. Reggie found he had time to pant in between bites, then groan. A final, tiny donut sputtered out of the crown before vanishing into Reggie’s maw. The curse had run its course.

Tycho pumped his fist. “Yes! I knew the curse wouldn’t be able to match your appetite, blubber ball!” He drummed on Reggie’s massive middle in victory, jiggling the fox. “For a second, I was afraid you’d fill the

room.”

Reggie belched. He looked upon his immense form spreading in every direction and frowned. “I’m huge,” he muttered.

“Bit of an understatement there. What are you, three, maybe four times larger than when you entered? I should’ve measured you so we’d know for sure,” Tycho snickered.

“You...you have a way to turn me back to normal, right?” Reggie was desperate to hear a yes, even though his heart told him no. Weight loss had always eluded him before.

Tycho didn’t answer the question. He walked over to Reggie and leaned up to snatch the crown from the grounded fox’s head. Then he put it on and smiled. “This thing is even nicer when it’s not spitting out donuts. And suddenly I don’t feel so fat anymore when standing beside you. I feel positively slim!”

“There’s gotta be a spell that can make us lose the weight. Just roll me to the library and I’ll look for one.”

“Sounds like a wild goose chase to me, Reggie. Besides, I kind of like you enormous. All that blubber suits you.” Tycho ran a paw along the whole circumference of Reggie’s belly, squeezing every now and then. “This crown’s got me feeling very regal. All I’m missing is a throne.”

Tycho hauled himself atop Reggie’s gut, scaling it like a mountain. Reggie wiggled and groaned as he felt the full weight of his friend on him. At the belly’s peak, Tycho rolled onto his back and relaxed. “Oh, this is great. You’re way comfier than my bed, Reggie. I think I just found another reason you shouldn’t lose weight.”

“But...but I’m not a bed, Tycho,” Reggie said, nervously.

“We’ll see about that.” Tycho tapped his new blubbery bed and grinned.

Reggie made another futile attempt to move his vast body. He could jiggle at best. The shock of becoming a blob had yet to fade as Tycho fell asleep on his belly. His friend couldn’t keep him trapped as a living bed forever. He’d have his fun and then help him lose weight. He had to. But as the unfortunate fox struggled to convince himself of that, he couldn’t help but imagine that if their positions were switched, he’d only want to see Tycho grow fatter. He gulped.