

Caleb's thoughts on his condition had never been more mixed than the first time he had to go out shopping without assistance. It had been hard enough to be one of the first people diagnosed with what the scientific community had been calling a "dangerously pervasive new genetic drift", whatever that was supposed to mean, but to have it manifest as... well, he didn't quite fit in mirrors anymore, or doors, or most hallways, at least without a hefty dose of squishing and heaving himself forward, to say nothing of the issues he now had with excess leakage, but above and below. Really, it would've already been a disaster if the condition had only affected what was between his legs, but for it to spread to his chest as well had left the otter on the brink of a nervous breakdown, an edge he'd been dangling off of for the past year or so. To his credit, he'd adapted fairly well considering the sheer scale of the growth spurt he'd undergone in the span of a couple of weeks; most people would've been left unable to do anything at all, but he was up and performing physical therapy within a couple of short days after being admitted to the local hospital for long-term observation. It hadn't exactly been *easy*, especially with all the attention he received both from the medical staff and the several research teams who had learned of him and his condition, with the past year having effectively upturned Caleb's life so completely that him having to move to a custom-built apartment was the *least* of his concerns. He was sure that he was supposed to feel worried about the fact that others around the world had also randomly grown like he had, sure that he should be concerned over it potentially being some sort of new infectious disease, but frankly, he had better things to do; after all, as much as it thoroughly stumped his physicians, suddenly adding about three feet to his height and several times his previous body weight in tit, ass and thighs didn't actually do anything all that negative to his physical well-being. It completely ruined his fitness, to the point where he couldn't walk without waddling for at least a month, but as soon as he got into a rhythm and began working out, things progressed disturbingly normally for someone who had just bloated as much as he had. By all indications, such an amount of stress on his body *should* have left Caleb unable to *move* properly, not to mention his metabolism's needs being so high that the otter should need to eat several times more than the average person just to keep himself from dying of dehydration; instead, however, what the medical teams found was someone who worked exactly like everyone else, despite the fact that they were significantly larger, wider, fatter, and, to put it mildly, *far* more well endowed and productive. It took a long while before the otter was allowed to leave observation, and even then he had to go through a few more months of living with a team of nurses and assorted attendants on-call at practically every hour of the day; he knew it was for his own good, but he still couldn't avoid thinking back to when he *used* to have some privacy, rather than being woken up in the middle of the night to have his blood gas levels measured, or his tits moved onto a scale in order to compare production rates while sleeping to those while he was awake. He felt like a lab rat of sorts, even more so considering he wasn't actually allowed to leave the house without someone there to help him; not that he would, given that he was still far too clumsy to get anything done without at least a couple of attendants by his side, but he would've liked to have had that option, rather than having his freedom forcefully stripped from him thanks to something that was entirely out of his control. People's reactions to his body,

however, eventually made him grateful that he at least had someone to hide behind and explain the details, lest everyone he met on the street think he was wearing prosthetics for some unknown, presumably kink-related reason. It *also* didn't help that, despite his and his minders' best efforts, stopping his body from leaking milk or pre was a fool's errand at the best of times, with the only real solution being to carry around multiple sets of high-absorbency pads and replace them every twenty or so minutes that the otter wasn't plugged into a milking pump. It made for some truly awkward moments during extended trips out of the house, but in the end, all of it became... not *normal*, per se, but at least predictable, which was far more than could reasonably be expected given the suddenness of the transformation. In the end, by the first year "anniversary" of the official diagnosis, Caleb's observation period was finally however; with more cases cropping up around the world, and the scientific community grasping at straws to try and understand the phenomenon, the otter's case was booted far down the priority ladder: he could walk, he could take care of himself, and seeing as his employers allowed him to work from home, there were no real concerns about his financial independence anymore, something that couldn't be said for a large number of the newest cases of Acute Hyper Syndrome, as it had been dubbed. Thus, with a tearful goodbye, the last nurse eventually left Caleb's home, with the otter remaining behind, truly alone for the first time in a year. He stood there, staring at the door, wondering when the next person would come in, just like they used to before; he kept standing until it truly sunk in that he was finally on his lonesome, then kept on standing some more until the weight of his tits became too much for him to handle, prompting Caleb to hook himself up to the milking pump in the bathroom before he was left crawling around the ground. With his pantry full, however, the otter had deliberately pushed his first unattended shopping day out as far as it could go, struggling with the idea of going out of the house for any amount of time without anyone there to help him; it was only made worse by it being close to Halloween, and with him being a sweet tooth, it wasn't altogether unlikely that he'd lose control of his impulses and gorge himself on far too much candy than could possibly be good for him. It was one of the more unfortunate aspects of his transformation, that while he didn't *need* more food than usual (which was itself a puzzling conundrum for anyone with a basic understanding of biology), he certainly *wanted* far more sustenance than before, with his hunger being such that, if he sat down at a table and people kept placing plates on top of it, he *would* just keep eating until the meals stopped coming, which had left him with quite the extra big of pudge on a belly that was already big enough for a fully-grown adult to comfortably snuggle up inside. All of him was quite soft, in fact, and reactive enough to anything he ate that he became softer still whenever he lost control of his self-restraint, resulting in some truly staggering amount of rapid weight gain if he didn't pay attention to how much he was eating. Still, food didn't last forever, and he was going to have to leave the house eventually, so after plenty of time fighting against his own anxiety, Caleb set about preparing for his first solo outing: plenty of absorbent pads, a list of groceries that needed purchasing, even a route planned on his phone so he spent the least amount of time possible on the way to and from the grocery store. Every step had to be planned in advance to minimize the risk of him getting stuck at any point, with the otter thanking his lucky stars that he

had a place to buy food within walking distance; who knew what might've had to be done if he needed to drive anywhere, or worse, take *public transit*. The idea of hopping on a bus, so utterly mundane prior to his growth spurt, was now so unbelievably terror-inducing that Caleb had to avoid thinking about it, lest he fall down an anxiety spiral that ended with him hyperventilating in a corner. He'd do it *eventually*... just not any time soon, of course. Just getting out of the house was already a challenge and a half, especially given the unfortunate luck the otter had of running into one of neighbors waiting outside, a poor tiny cat whose immediate reaction to seeing the behemoth that was Caleb leaving their home was to turn around and run right back up the stairs, their face suspiciously bright red. The otter couldn't blame them; most people didn't really know what to make of him, given the sort of thoughts and urges that a form like his awakened in anyone who looked in his general direction. He knew this, he accepted it, and he could only wish that others would understand that it was perfectly fine if they suddenly found themselves to be excessively horny about it; hell, he barely managed to control *himself* whenever he caught sight of his form in a mirror, so that was hardly anyone's fault. Natural instincts existed, and to deny them would do far more harm than good... though, the excess amount of stray comments thrown his way when he walked down the street was something he could do without. The otter's own face was left as red as a tomato by the time he reached the grocery store, having had to withstand a great number of people who had the exact opposite reaction as the cat, and felt that, since there was no connection between themselves at that "big beautiful" something or other, they were perfectly fine to throw whatever lewd "compliment" they thought of, leaving everyone around feeling incredibly awkward about it, none so more than Caleb himself. He did his best to ignore it, though it was hardly easy to do so, focusing instead on getting through the shopping outing as quickly as he possibly could; thankfully, the service staff inside the establishment proper were far more helpful and courteous than anyone outside, with none of them even commenting on their newest customer's immense size and unfortunate leaking tendencies. To be fair, that was the least that could be expected of them, but Caleb had come to learn that expecting anything from anyone with a body like his was a fool's errand; thus, he nodded along and let them guide him through the aisles, occasionally asking whether there were any special sales or where he could find a particular item, despite the fact that he'd already been to that shop enough times to know where everything was. The whole "helping hand" aspect of it was little more than a polite narrative created to help lead people through what was, by all means, an unthinkable bizarre experience; better that Caleb act like he *needed* the help, thus giving the service staff a reason to focus on something *other* than his proportions, than tell them he was fine on his own, which would only ever lead to yet more eyes firmly stuck on his person. Unfortunately, even the best-laid plans scarcely survived first contact with reality, and in that particular case, there had been one element that Caleb didn't truly account for: *free candy*. Yes, it was close to Halloween, but the otter had assumed that, so long as the tasty seasonal treats were kept locked behind an actual purchase, he could look at the price tags and convince himself it wasn't worth spending the money; what he hadn't thought to consider, or perhaps what his mind conveniently forgot to think about, was the possibility that there might just be free samples

offered on account of it being so close to the thirty-first, which oh-so-wonderfully bypassed the need to worry about whether or not eating those things would dig too deep a hole in his wallet. It was the best he could hope for, honestly, which was precisely why Caleb's first instinct was to physically cover his eyes with both hands in a childish attempt at not seeing the forbidden fruit, prompting the helpful young man helping him along to ask if everything was alright. It wasn't alright; in fact, it was anything *but* alright, given that the otter's sweet tooth had just barged its way through to the forefront of his mind and was demanding to be fed in as direct and overly excessive a manner as it could possibly be. The inner beast, desperate for sustenance, had been given a way out that had absolutely no consequences other than it fattening itself, and while intellectually speaking Caleb knew that such a thing was, technically, *not that good*, he couldn't really force himself to think that way. He knew that the moment he began gorging himself, he wouldn't stop until his already pudgy belly was far closer to the ground than it should be, and *yet*, it was precisely this knowledge that left his knees shaking and his whole body sweating in anticipation. It was stronger than him by an immense degree, and try as he might, the otter just couldn't avoid it anymore; without giving the poor guy beside him even the smallest of warnings, Caleb turned around and practically lunged on the table set up with the free treats, almost smashing them all beneath his bust when he leaned forward to grab as many as he could. There were no thoughts given to how insanely uncivilized he was making himself out to be, nor how savage his consumption had become; only the sweet taste of sugar on his tongue, the delicious filling goodness of free candy, handed out like it was nothing for him to delight himself upon. The otter could feel his belly gurgling and rumbling already, could sense it growing tighter in preparation for the bloating; he knew, on some level, that if he just *stopped*, then he could avoid a growth spurt. He knew that if he exercised even the barest, minimum amount of self-control, it would instantly become easier to do so once the sugar high came crashing down... but that would require exercising self-restraint, which just really wasn't fun as far he was concerned. Why *should* he deny himself when the candy was so *good*? Why should he spend any amount of time telling himself not to gorge on unhealthy snacks when it already made clear a year prior that his body no longer abided by the same rules as everyone else's? Why not, he thought to himself as he stuffed his mouth with as much of the free treats as he could fit in his hands, simply *eat*? Well, the answer to that was quite simple, actually: free samples weren't exactly *plentiful*. It was such an obvious statement to make after the fact, but as Caleb stared ahead at the ruined chunks of plastic that used to be a table, staring at an empty patch of floor courtesy of being propped up by his tits after he fell down, it struck him that he obviously couldn't have just gone on eating forever. As much as the idea of an eternal feast where he immediately lost control of his gluttony and ate until he was an all-consuming, city-obscuring blob was something that, for some reason, *really* spoke to him, all he'd done was attack a table with a handful of Halloween-themed samples of candy, presumably the only one in the store as well. It was anticlimactic, especially given that his belly hadn't even bloated *that* much; if anything, it looked as if he'd only eaten a couple of hefty sandwiches, what with it only being a couple of inches wider than it had been before. Though honestly, what was Caleb expecting? For

the free samples to never end? For the service staff to throw away their livelihoods as they threw more food at him? For him to open his mouth and *eat* until he could eat no more, regardless of how much of a strain that would be on a medium-sized grocery store? All perfectly fine fantasies to have, but as he looked up and saw multiple people staring at him, some looking dreadfully worried, others downright *giddy* at the sight that blessed their eyes, the otter could do little but blush violently and stutter madly as he tried to ask for help. A couple of good heaves later and he was back on his feet, the helpful service staff preferring *not* to ask what in blazes had come over them that they had outright attacked a perfectly innocent table; it was best if some questions remained unanswered, doubly so given that Caleb himself was more than happy to keep on shopping as if nothing had actually happened.

With... one exception. As he walked past the snack aisle, the same one that he had told himself he wouldn't be dipping into, he asked the employee following him along to wait for a few moments while he "got something" for himself. Caleb needed the young man to not be near him, as that would give him the best possible odds of overpowering his own sense of decency and do something he really shouldn't. He stood there for a couple of seconds, staring at the chocolate bars on offer: a wide, delicious variety, with a few of them on sale as well! It wasn't anything *too* much, he kept telling himself, it was just a little treat for himself; he'd certainly earned it with his first proper outing, so why not take a couple of chocolate bars back home? Or two?

Or ten?