

[Aaron]“Alright, easy does it,” a muffled voice carried through the metal crate’s thin openings, just wide enough to let air in through them to support the large creature within. The sound of several straining anthros could be heard just outside the container, the animal within the crate feeling the carrier jostling slightly as it was moved. The smell of new, clean water filtered in through the slits, along with grass and pond flora, that algae scent comfortingly familiar in an all-too-unfamiliar situation for the critter in the metal box.

“Okay, set him down, nice and easy,” the same voice ordered, an authoritative, yet gentle tone that held familiarity for the animal in the crate. It was the same voice he heard when he was being fed or his last enclosure was being cleaned, his handler directing the transition process. Finally, the critter felt the soft impact of his crate against the grass, and the front of the long box was slid open, giving him a glimpse of several anthros hustling away from the crate, their hasty retreat leaving just the silhouette of his handler in his vision.

Kneeling down, the green-furred lupine glanced down into the crate, holding himself with confidence just outside of the box. “Alright, you can come on out, now,” the anthropomorphic, ophidian wolf said in a gentle, comforting tone, “Sorry for the rough ride, big guy, we just needed to get you into a more controlled environment.”

[Denya]A deep, bassy growl echoed from within the dark enclosure, a sound that would make anyone who heard it require a new change of pants. Anyone, save for the green wolf standing right outside the container, who hardly blinked at the noise. The growl soon turned into an indignant snort, followed by a quiet rumbling. “You’re not as fun as you used to be.”

After a moment of rustling, a large triangular snout emerged from the confines of the crate, leading to a very unenthused alligator. With another grumbled snort, the enormous reptile continued to crawl out...and out...and out some more. Nearly 11 feet long and weighing half a ton, the gator named Bruce was a rather large example of his species, if he was a little on the heavy side. Of course, no one dared mentioned the gator’s soft underbelly or jiggling flanks too loudly; he was still an apex predator, and a few extra pounds wouldn’t hinder his limb-tearing bite force.

Once finally out of his container, Bruce raised his broad head to look around his new enclosure, his slitted eyes darting around. Like any animal, he wasn’t fond of sudden change, especially when he had no input on it, but he had to admit he enjoyed his new surroundings. The area was much larger than his old exhibit, with a larger pond with actual algae on it. Whoever designed this area must have taken the time to research the appropriate plants a gator like himself lived by. Even the walls were painted with the illusion that there were miles and miles of swamp in all direction, with a few tiny birds on the horizon. It was like he was home back in the everglades, where he belonged.

But it wasn’t home.

“Alright, I’ve seen enough, take me back,” Bruce grunted as he turned around, only to see the metal container closed and floating away. With a dejected sigh, he glanced towards the

green canine, his lower jaw rumbling. "You have five seconds to explain what I'm doing here, Aaron, before I snap off your limbs and make you into a real snake!"

[Aaron] The snolf seemed unsatisfyingly unfazed by the threat, smirking slightly as he gestured at the new enclosure. "We're here to test out some new food for you, that's all," Aaron replied, his long, sinuous tail waving through the air slowly, the serpentine limb three times as long as the anthro was tall and tapering to a fluffy, white tuft at the end, "We've received some extra funding for a new program, so we've got you a bigger pool and better turf. I thought you'd like it, Bruce."

The anthro spoke in that same friendly manner as he always did with the massive reptile, one of the few researchers Bruce knew that wasn't utterly terrified of him. Sure, Aaron treated him with a healthy level of respect, as any sane scientist would with a predator of the alligator's size, yet the odd hybrid still addressed the gator with the amiability one would use with a close friend. "Trust me, you'll love it here," Aaron continued, stepping toward the water and kneeling down to dip one of his hands into it, flashing a friendly grin over to the crocodilian, "The water's heated to just the right temperature for ya, you'll be getting plenty of light, and we made sure the balance of flora is perfect for you. Heck, you'll even be getting extra feeding times while you're here!"

[Denya] Bruce tried to hide his interest, yet not even he could resist perking up when Aaron mentioned food. It was one of his driving motivators to do practically anything, after all. Still, he attempted to shrug off the serpent's words as he slowly drew closer to the water, but it was clear his tone was much lighter than before. "Very well, if you're so insistent I stay here then so be it. I trust the food you prepare will match my standards, or else you'll be going back on the menu."

[Aaron] Aaron simply put his arms up in faux surrender as he backed a few steps away from the water, chuckling softly under his breath. "I assure you, we're making sure to make the food as tasty as possible, don't you worry," the snolf promised, before giving another friendly smile, "Perhaps you'd like to sample some? As I said, we'll be feeding you more often during this testing, so if you're hungry, we can begin at once."

[Denya] The gator halted, halfway submerged in the water. Glancing towards his caretaker, Bruce grumbled something underwater before sighing. "You know me too damn well," he muttered crawling back onto land. "The ride over here was stressful, I could eat an entire gazelle before I feel right again."

[Aaron] The anthro laughed again, giving an affirmative nod as he stepped over towards a control panel near the locked door to the enclosure, flashing a keycard near the panel before typing in a few commands. With a soft hiss, a chute opened up in the wall, and a whole large, fried chicken rolled down the chute and into a recessed trough in the ground, followed by several cuts of beef and a ham hock. "I've taken the liberty of modifying the approved foods on your diet for this test," Aaron explained as he pointed toward the prepared meats, leaning back against the door and grinning to the alligator, "No more raw foods for you, my friend! Only the best in

fried, baked, roasted, and stewed meats, all prepared under very special instructions from yours truly; go ahead, give it a taste~”

[Denya]The chubby reptile frowned as he looked at the strange meat, gnashing his claws against the softened dirt. “The color is off, very very off...no animal meat should look so crispy! And that repugnant odor! Please, get it out of here before it stinks up my home! This texture is so bland too, and this taste is polluted with unusual flavors, and-” the gator rambled on, even as he ravenously devoured the greasy meat. If he wasn’t so insistent on maintaining his menacing look, Bruce would have cried with joy at the sheer explosion of flavor that went off in his mouth like a bomb! He almost gagged trying to eat the entire hock of ham at one go, his throat and cheeks bulging out until he somehow managed!

Gasping for air, Bruce looked at the remains of his meal, a few specs of crumbs and grumbled. “You’re lucky I’m as forgiving as I am menacing. I want the same exact meal from now on, but with larger servings. And another th-bwuraarp!” The gator blushed, stunned into silence at the belch he somehow managed to produce.

[Aaron}Aaron at least had the tact not to laugh at the loud burp, simply smiling and pretending he hadn’t heard the explosive eructation. “I’m glad you approve, though I do have some other options I’d like you to sample later on before you make any final decisions on a consistent meal,” the hybrid replied, adding with a broad grin, “I promise they will be just as tasty, or even moreso!”

Though usually this would have been the point that Aaron would open the enclosure door and leave, the anthro instead slid his back down the door as he took a seat on the grass, his legs crossing over one another and long tail coiling up in his lap to provide a surface for the snolf’s elbows to rest against, propping up in head in his hands. “So, how do you like your new enclosure?” the hybrid asked in an almost ridiculously casual tone for someone sitting in striking distance of a fully-grown alligator, the white end of the anthro’s tail wagging as it dangled out of his lap, “I know you’re not especially fond of changes in your environment, but I do hope you’ll make an exception. In fact, I’m quite certain you’ll grow to love it here!”

[Denya]“We’ll see about that,” Bruce grunted, eyeing the serpent curiously. Aaron was behaving particularly friendly today, a trait that annoyed the solitary reptile. Growling wouldn’t work against the canine, and Bruce knew better than to bite the hand that fed him, even if that hand looked particularly tasty. He sometimes wondered if the green paw tasted like broccoli. “The enclosure is fine. I had no problems with my old home, but I can tell by the way you speak that nothing I say will convince you to take me back, so I suppose I’ll have to make due, as long as you and the other two-legged meatsacks leave me be.”

With an indignant snort, the gator slowly crawled back to the lake; his scales were starting to feel itchy and dry beneath the sun. Sliding into the water, Bruce was shocked to feel the lake was, as Aaron explained earlier, heated perfectly to his preferred temperature, a massive improvement to his old lukewarm pond. The further inwards he floated, the warmer the water felt, until-

Bruce let out an involuntary moan, shuddering from snout to tail tip. Directly in the middle of the lake, he could feel pressurized water press against his soft middle, massaging the supple surface perfectly. He figured he was above the mechanism that pumped warm water into the lake, but right now it served to help digest his snack from earlier. “I-I take it back, this place isn’t so bad after all.”

[Aaron]Aaron watched with that same fond expression held on his muzzle, his tail wagging more as he heard the begrudging comment from the alligator. The anthro spent several moments just observing the reptile in the water from his position near the door, once again breaking the routine that the pair had held before by remaining in the enclosure without any indications that he’d be leaving.

“I see you’ve discovered the jets,” the hybrid observed, “I thought you’d enjoy those, my friend. Just another of the luxuries I made sure that you’d be treated to during these trials. Though, I feel like I should mention one little detail of these tests that might bug you.”

Lifting a hand, the anthro pointed to himself with a slightly cheeky grin. “This particular meatsack isn’t going to be leaving you be any time soon,” Aaron announced, relaxing back against the metal door, “Part of these tests require that I stay in here with you for the duration, so I hope you don’t mind a new roommate all too much~”

[Denya]Bruce popped open an eye when he heard the bad news, before promptly rolling it. “Great, the one person in the world who isn’t afraid of me,” he grumbled, creating little bubbles on the water’s surface. That certainly did put a damper on his mood, although a sudden thought made him realize that there was a bright side to all this. “Wait a moment. You’re in charge of my meals, aren’t you?” He asked, despite knowing the answer himself. “So I can threaten you into getting food whenever I want, correct?”

[Aaron]The anthro gave another soft laugh as he flashed a grin. “Or you could simply ask, you know,” he replied, reaching up to point at the controls beside the door, “And I’d be glad to offer you more food if you’re still hungry. All you have to do is ask, and I’ll type in a new order for you. No threats needed~”

[Denya]“Is that right?” Bruce asked, allowing himself a slight smirk along his elongated snout. “This just might work out after all.”

[Aaron]True to his word, Aaron allowed the alligator to feed pretty much whenever he wanted, providing a wide variety of meat prepared in an equally broad array of styles. It seemed almost odd; before, the crocodilian’s diet had been pretty restricted, mostly to raw fowl or scraps of beef. Yet now he was treated to gourmet dishes, and as much as his scaly belly could handle; it was almost like the anthro was encouraging him to eat more, judging by the approving smiles and the oddly invested look Aaron got after each of the gator’s meals, as though waiting for some reaction from the reptile that he hadn’t shown yet.

After several days of this, the foreign nature of the situation began to fade, and Bruce was able to relax steadily into his new routine, for the most part. It was still off-putting to have the anthro around at all hours, watching his every move like a hawk throughout the day, before curling up on a patch of grass and using his lab coat as a blanket at night, only to repeat that observation the next day. Aaron still attempted to strike up friendly conversations, though these were usually cut off by a grumbled reply or a huffish growl. Yet the anthro never relented, seeming bound and determined to win over the alligator for reasons Bruce had yet to comprehend.

Normally, Bruce would have tried eating someone who voluntarily locked themselves in an enclosure with him, but lately the gator found himself with more than enough food to drop that thought. Used to regular feeding schedules of controlled portions, the reptile still couldn't wrap his head around the concept of eating as much as he wanted whenever he wanted, starting off with a meal whenever he was hungry, but as the days passed and the variety of flavors etched themselves into his tongue, the gigantic gator started demanding more. It was no longer enough to eat until he was sated, Bruce now gorged himself until his stomach bulged with food, only to laze in the middle of the lake to let the pumps digest his meals. He ate when he was bored, annoyed, happy, angry, and more commonly, when he was hungry. Normally, the reptile had a routine of wondering around his enclosure, but the heavy influx of greasy, fatty foods left him feeling more worn out and lazier, a trait that only intensified as his meals grew bigger.

On one notable day, Bruce gorged himself until he couldn't move! After finishing off one more of many countless fried chickens, the gator huffed and puffed loudly, grimacing in pain. He was painfully bloated, and the only cure was the jets in the lake, yet he couldn't find the strength to haul his heavy self into the water. Breached by his own gluttony, the reptile snarled, glaring at the watching serpent. "Hurp...S-see? I told you I *hic* could finish all of that!" Even though the signs of fullness were overwhelmingly prevalent, Bruce still clung to his pride, even if it was one of the few things in reach for him.

Aaron gave a low, impressed whistle as he looked over the emptied trough, chuckling and nodding affirmatively. "I never should have doubted you! Clearly you have an appetite to match your apex predator status!" the hybrid replied with another of his all-too-familiar friendly grins, though that expression shifted slowly into a less-familiar one of concern, "But are you alright? You're looking a tad strained, there. Do you need help getting back to the water, Bruce?"

Bruce's chest would have swelled with pride were it not so difficult to breathe. Of course he could eat all of that, he was the biggest alligator out there! Aaron should be ashamed for doubting him, even if this was the third time this week that his words had sparked a feeding spree for the gator. "I'm fine...just, a little worn out, is all," he grunted, willing his legs to carry him further. Unfortunately, all he managed to do was scratch the grass and slide forward a few inches before wincing from the pain. The lake was looking further and further away, and, with a heavy sigh, finally relented. "Meatsack, I demand you...help me," he grumbled. Swallowing his pride was even harder than an entire turkey.

The anthro just nodded at the demanding request, getting to his feet and stepping around the alligator, humming as he looked over the enormous predator. "Alright, this might be uncomfortable," Aaron commented, crouching down beside the alligator and reaching out, only to pause and look towards the feral's face with a gentle smile, "You do me a great honor in allowing me to help you, Bruce. Do I have permission to make contact?" There was something beyond the usual playful, teasing expression of the anthro, something that the alligator wasn't used to seeing; trust. The snolf had put himself into a very vulnerable position, so close to the crocodilian, well in range of both a nasty bite or a clobbering swipe of the gator's tail, yet Aaron's tone and face both showed a belief in the massive reptile, a leap of faith that no other anthro had shown they were willing to perform with the enormous predator. Yet here was this kooky, persistent scientist, his face free of fear as he simply gave his ward that caring look, patiently awaiting permission to assist the beached gator.

At first, Bruce was actually annoyed that this lowly anthro didn't show the slightest hint of fear in the face of possible instant death; if he wasn't so stuffed, he would thrash out at Aaron so he would learn his place! But, on second thought, he realized he wouldn't attack even if he wasn't so full. He hadn't expected the snolf to actually walk towards him, he thought about the crate that carried him in earlier. To receive personal care from an anthro directly rather than one behind glass and metal was actually a rather pleasant surprise.

"Hmmf, so what you will, as long as I make it back to the pond," Bruce grunted, grateful that his dark green cheeks made it difficult to discern his blush. This would be the first time in quite a while that an anthro would make contact with him; he had forgotten what they felt like. "Just don't be afraid to push hard. I don't think a shrimp like yourself could move someone as formidable as myself," Bruce grunted, a rare smile spreading across his muzzle.

"Perhaps, but I'll do my best regardless," Aaron replied, before gently setting a hand behind the reptile's shoulder, the other curling around the gator's chest as much as it could reach. The hybrid held that position for just a moment, waiting for some sort of objection from the alligator, yet when none came, he started to push forward as hard as he could, his feet grating over the grass rather fruitlessly as he attempted to shift the bulk of the stuff alligator.

Panting hard, Aaron tried several times to get the gator moving, shoving and heaving with all his might, before abruptly feeling his arms give out as he fell slightly against the alligator. Snorting, the snolf suddenly burst out laughing, bearing a broad, jovial grin as he sat back in the grass. "Sheesh, you're huge, Bruce!" Aaron laughed good-heartedly, flashing one of those kind, affectionate smiles, "You're not kidding about that formidable thing; I think you've got to be the biggest gator in the complex, for sure!" Again, even sitting in striking range, the hybrid seemed completely absent of fear, regarding the alligator beside him with only good humor and fondness, though that expression again slowly transitioned to concern as he looked over to the lake.

"Though I guess now you don't get to enjoy the jets after your meal," Aaron hummed softly, reaching up and rubbing his head thoughtfully, then smiling as he looked back to Bruce,

“Tell you what, I bet I can provide the same service those jets do for you. Would that be acceptable for you, of Bruce the Mighty and Massive?”

Bruce grumbled quietly as he felt his scaly head scritch, still not used to someone touching him familiarly. Rather than shake Aaron’s hand away (or better yet, biting it off), the gator sighed and allowed the gentle scratching. “The funny thing is, I know you’re simply trying to feed my ego...but you’re right,” Bruce rumbled, trying to hide his pleasure of his new nickname. “Very well, I knew I was too impressive for someone as scrawny as yourself. Try to...”

Bruce froze, a look of doubt on his face. Alligators never rolled on their sides; their bellies were their most vulnerable weak spot! It would be hard to snap at or whap Aaron if he rolled over, a thought that worried the gator more than it probably should have. He liked feeling in control, knowing he could end his taker’s life at a moments notice if he so desired...but then again, Aaron was a whimp who couldn’t even budge him. What harm could an anthro like himself do? Besides, if worst comes to worst, the gator could get back on his feet and attack.

With another soft groan, Bruce shifted himself to expose his swollen stomach: A spherical mass of scales jutting out several inches from the rest of him. Immediately, he felt relief at heaving his mass off his middle, but he continued to glare threatening at the anthro, bearing his sharp teeth.

The hybrid was surprised that the reptile seemed to actually be taking him up on his offer, yet that surprise was accompanied by a genuine, sincere smile. “Hehe, I should have known you’d see right through my flattery,” Aaron commented, sitting up straight as he scooted up to the alligator’s middle, reaching out to gently place his hand on the tightened surface, before looking over to Bruce as he held that friendly, respectful expression, “Are you sure this is alright, Bruce? I don’t want to make you uncomfortable, big guy.”

“I’m *bwurp* already very uncomfortable,” Bruce groaned, rolling his eyes. “I just hope you’re very aware that I will not hesitate to dismember you should I perceive you as a threat...on second thought, I could go for an after-dinner sala-” The gator winced, a sudden gas bubble moving about in his stomach, causing its contents to shift painfully. “No, nevermind, hurry up and rub my belly!”

Aaron had to suppress a laugh at the insistence of the alligator, instead smiling as he rested both of his hands on the taut middle of the overfed reptile. With slow, gentle motions, the anthro’s palms kneaded carefully into the gator’s belly, making sure to only apply just enough pressure to be soothing. “There we go, that should help a bit,” the hybrid crooned softly to the predator, looking towards Bruce’s face curiously, “How’s that feel, big guy?”

“It feels awful, what the hell are you doing? I ought to snap you in two like the twig you are!” Was what Bruce wanted to say. Instead, when he opened his mouth, an enormous belch escaped instead, the gas bubble in his stomach rushing out. Even the gator looked shocked at how much relief that brought him, and it was because of the serpent’s gentle rubbing.

“You’re...doing alright, I suppose,” Bruce grumbled, closing his eyes to better enjoy the massage. While he may appear strong and stoic on the outside, the gator was trying his absolute hardest not to grin.

Aaron didn’t let it show, but he knew that begrudging reply was high praise, coming from the grumpy reptile. After the belch was released, the ophidian wolf felt the tautness of the gator’s gut lessen slightly, and he allowed himself to put a bit more of his weight into the massage he gave, dexterous fingers tracing the edges of Bruce’s strong ventral plates. The anthro started to hum softly while he comforted the alligator’s stuffed stomach, a gentle tune that matched the slow and steady pace of his caressing hands, tender care communicated through those ginger motions.

“Feel better?” the hybrid asked after a few minutes, looking towards the alligator’s face while he patted Bruce’s rotund tummy.

There was no response, the reptile continued to lay still with his eyes shut. Just as Aaron was considering asking again, a muffled snore erupted from Bruce. He had fallen asleep. While it didn’t take much to get the gator unconscious, especially considering he tended to take naps after heavy meals, this was the first time he had drifted off so close to an anthro, and one that was touching him no less.

The anthro gave a few blinks as he looked to the resting gator, before feeling another fond smile coming over his face, continuing to gingerly caress the reptile’s round paunch as Bruce slept off his meal. After a while, the hybrid pulled back, taking off his lab coat and carefully draping the long coat over the alligator’s torso, before standing and stretching his back. With light steps, the anthro tip-toed over to the control panel by the door, pressing in on a little red Record button and murmuring into it.

“Subject beginning to display projected behavioral changes, recommend upping dosage to facilitate this shift,” Aaron whispered into the microphone within the control panel, glancing back towards the sleeping goliath in the grass and smiling again, adding after a moment, “And let’s increase the serving size another twenty percent; subject seems to respond well to his larger meals. Will continue to report my findings as they emerge.”

There was a blink of acknowledgment from the light in the control panel, and the anthro once again took a seat against the door, leaning his back against it to watch his roommate rest. “Side note,” Aaron hummed to himself, smirking slightly, “Subject is getting cuter by the day~”

Bruce woke up that evening very confused. Very, very confused. He wasn’t drifting in his lake, but rather on his side in the grassy field. Normally this would leave his scales dry and itchy, but a damp fabric covered enough of him to mitigate that problem somewhat. Most people would feel grateful that someone would go out of their way to make sure they were uncomfortable, but not Bruce. He saw it as a threat that Aaron would get so familiar with him while he was unconscious.

With a growl, the enormous gator tried reaching his head back to grab the fabric, but was met with resistance in the form of a bulging tyre of neck flab. How strange, he didn't remember his neck being that thick before. He was still groggy and not in the mood to shake it off, which left him with little choice but to look for Aaron himself. Bruce groaned as he got to his feet, noting a slight feeling of strain on his legs. Maybe this was the result of overeating earlier, but the reptile couldn't help but feel a little heavier than usual, or how much higher he had to stand so his belly wouldn't drag along the floor.

The gator didn't have to look hard, as the anthro was sitting by the pool, his bare foot paws dangling into the water as he watched the clouds above, his gaze moving to meet Bruce's eyes when he caught movement in his peripherals, flashing a friendly grin. "Evening, big guy!" Aaron greeted amiably, giving a friendly wave, "How're you feeling? I tried my best to make sure your scales didn't dry out while you slept, though I couldn't get the ones you were resting on." The hybrid's serpentine tail waved slowly through the air as he spoke, looking far too relaxed for someone that had their legs ankle-deep in an alligator's pool.

It shouldn't come to anyone's surprise that Bruce grumbled at the sight. "I don't recall giving you permission to sully my lake with your feet," the gator lazily waddled towards the serpent, his bulk wobbling the soaked coat on top of him. "And I didn't ask for your useless cloak as well! Remove it from my hide at once!" The gator stepped his forearm on the wolf's leg, bringing his head within easy chomping distance.

Giving a low grunt from the sudden weight on his leg, Aaron regarded the predator with a cocked brow for a moment, before shrugging as he carefully leaned over and took the coat in hand, sliding it off of the gator obligingly. "There we go, your majesty," the hybrid said with a playful smile, reaching out as he felt the urge to pat the alligator's softer-looking neck, though he thought better of it at the last moment, pulling back gently from under the gator's claws and getting to his feet instead, stretching his back and holding his hands high over his head while he asked, "So, how's your stomach feeling? I was a bit concerned when you couldn't make it to the water earlier."

Bruce glanced up at the anthro, or rather the soft paws hanging high above him, before snorting and sliding into the water. Sighing at the relief of weightlessness, the enormous reptile kicked his legs slowly until he could better face the anthro, just in case he needed to teach Aaron another lesson. "It's better now. Your hands make a decent substitute for the jets, I suppose," the reptile reluctantly admitted, staring directly at the anthro. "But that doesn't mean you may touch me as you please! Remember your place, meatsack, my hide isn't something you can freely rub your grimey paws over!" Bruce spat those words out with as much malice and anger as he could muster, making it all the more obvious that he was lying.

Aaron listened patiently to the growling gator, nodding as he put up his hands in surrender. "I know that, Bruce, but I do have an obligation to make sure that you're healthy," the anthro replied calmly, before his smile returned as he gestured towards his coat, the fabric still wet from being used to keep the gator's hide from drying out, "So I hope you'll forgive the intrusion; I meant no offense by it."

Turning in place, Aaron moved over toward the tree that grew just beside the pool, tossing his damp coat up over one of the limbs, spreading it out to dry as it hung in the tree. “And this meatsack is willing to go to any lengths to make sure you’re taken care of, Bruce,” the anthro said as he adjusted his coat along the branch, before pivoting on a foot and looking towards the gator with a grin, “Besides, I wouldn’t dream of getting all touchy-feely without your permission. Which, might I remind you, you did give before you’d gone to sleep.” Stepping over to the pool, the snake-wolf sat down again, once more dipping his paws into the warm water as he looked towards Bruce, “Though if I overstepped my bounds in my efforts to ensure you didn’t dry out while you slept, I do apologize.”

Bruce didn’t respond right away, he simply grumbled and blew bubbles underwater at realizing the anthro was right. He did ask for help rubbing his belly, not to mention he enjoyed the contact far more than he expected. Aaron was starting to reveal traits of him that he himself didn’t know he had; that made the anthro a very dangerous adversary. “I appreciate the help,” Bruce winced. He had meant to say “tolerated.” A worthy adversary indeed.

Suddenly, a different growl emanated from the alligator, one that came from his midsection. Bruce was mildly shocked; a feast like earlier should have kept him sated for the day, yet now he was craving even more! He glared at the anthro, and with a quiet shy, swam towards him. “Back on your feet, meatsack. I demand additional food.”

The anthro tilted his head for a second, before chuckling as he obligingly stood up once more. “Sure thing, big guy,” Aaron affirmed, pausing a moment and looking to the gator with a little smile, “Would you like me to bring you your food this time? I wouldn’t want you to wind up stuck in the grass again.”

This time, Bruce snapped at the air, bearing his teeth. “I am not so foolish as to make the same mistake twice, I’ll have you know!” For a moment, it appeared as though the gator was seething with murderous intent, but instead of acting on it, simply beached himself on the shore, his lower half still in the water. “However, I’m still feeling somewhat worn out, so I’ll allow you to handle and bring my food, just this once.”

Aaron had to suppress a giggle at the complete shift in attitude, smiling to himself as he moved towards the control panel. “Such an honor you have given me this day!” the anthro commented teasingly, looking back towards the gator with a big grin, holding his keycard up to the panel as he asked, “What would you like for dinner, Bruce?”

The gator grumbled at the nonchalant response, but didn’t pursue it further, although he did crawl out further onto the grass. “I want some of the brown crispy chickens, and the chewy pork things, and the red boney steak things, and make it snappy!”

“Aye, cap’n!” Aaron snapped a sharp salute, tapping the order into the panel, as well as typing in a request for a tray. A few moments later, the feeding chute opened and a broad tray slid down into the trough, holding the requested food on its surface. The servings seemed visibly

larger than the last meal that Bruce enjoyed, the anthro grunting as he lifted up that heavy course and bringing it over to the water's edge.

"Your order, good ser," the hybrid reported with an exaggerated, posh tone, setting the tray in easy reach of the alligator. The anthro then took a seat a short distance from Bruce, smiling as he leaned back on his arms in the grass, tail flicking side to side casually, "I hope it's to your liking, oh Bruce the Imposing~"

Bruce's jaw dropped at the food carrying his food to him, scratching the grass excitedly. No sooner did Aaron released the meat did the gator dive forward, gobbling up large mouthfuls at a time. He didn't seem to realize his dive forward brought him within petting distance of the anthro, his mind focused on the succulent feast before him. Crispy, breaded chicken, so full of grease and fat that it melted in the reptile's maw, sending shivers along his reptilian back. His smile was prevalent once more as he devoured morsel after tasty morsel, each one tasting better than the last.

The anthro observed with keen interest, his eyes locked onto the change in Bruce's expression for a moment, before shifting his gaze to look towards the gator's flank, watching as that scaley hide started to stretch once again. Scooting a few inches closer, Aaron's hand lifted from the ground as he leaned forward, pausing as he reached forward and looking towards the eating predator. "Bruce?" the hybrid said gently, smiling hopefully as he spoke, "May I rub your belly while you enjoy your meal?"

It took the gator a few moments to recognize he was being spoken too, and even then he finished swallowing his mouthful of pork before responding. He glanced at the anthro and gave a curt nod, slightly leaning away from the anthro to reveal his fat belly. If he wasn't so insistent on stuffing his face, he might have noticed how his middle wobbled and sagged a bit further than he was used to, but of course there was food to be eaten and a belly to be rubbed.

Aaron's face lit up at the alligator's unspoken reply, once again scooting closer to rest his hand on the reptile's paunch, rubbing slowly across the tough scales and feeling the way that those scutes started to yield under his touch. It certainly felt like the gator was gaining padding from his new diet, a fact that brought a smile to the anthro's face as he rubbed across Bruce's stomach gingerly. "Is this alright?" the hybrid checked, both hands kneading into the alligator's belly softly, pressing in until he felt some resistance against his palms, before rubbing slowly up towards the gator's chest, the anthro's tail swaying happily behind him.

Bruce grunted in response, yet again too busy stuffing himself to offer a proper response. He felt somewhat tense when he noticed Aaron's paws straying away from their designated area, but was quick to dismiss it when he realized it felt amazing regardless. Being the large, somewhat tubby gator that he is, Bruce struggled to reach most of his body with his comparatively short arms, so to feel a pair of dexterous paws scritch and knead where he couldn't felt amazing. He even found himself chuffing when Aaron rubbed along his fattened flanks, slowing down with his meal to better appreciate the massage.

The anthro grinned wider as he noticed the gator allowing him to pet more areas, leaning in as he slowly walked his palms back down Bruce's flank, humming softly as he rubbed along the reptile's filling gut. Watching that curvaceous dome growing, Aaron gingerly placed a hand on the apex of that swelling dome, before starting to scritch at those tough scales lightly, his claws finding their way between the crocodilian's strong scutes to scratch comfortably at the hide between the plates. "How's that feel?" Aaron checked as he traced his claws between the armored scales of his companion, looking ready to pull back right away if the alligator objected to the feeling.

"Gooooood," Bruce allowed a single, low growl to explain his enjoyment, shuddering once again when he felt a new area scritch in his hide. He swallowed his mouthful and sighed, looking at the rest of his meal just out of maw's reach. The gator was starting to feel rather stuffed, but he wasn't fully satisfied, but at the same time he didn't want to move from his spot. He felt heavy, so wondrously heavy, content to lie on his side and feel his overworked stomach kneaded and squeezed.

Aaron smiled again at the pleasantly-surprising reply, noticing after a moment that the gator was starting to struggle with reaching his meal. Wordlessly, the anthro's tail curled around the tray, turning it to put the rest of the meat in easier reach of the reptile, before pulling his tail back as he went back to massaging the reptile's paunch. The wolf-snake's hands started to wander up Bruce's side, rubbing up his flank until one of his hands slid just behind the gator's forelimb, scritchng under the limb gingerly while his other hand caressed the feral's pudgy chest. "Let me know if I'm overstepping my bounds, big guy," the anthro said after a moment, looking to the reptile with an affectionate expression.

Bruce huffed and grunted, a lackluster attempt to hide the sweet enjoyment he was feeling. His facade of 'tolerating' the serpent was starting to melt away; even his hind leg twitched like a pet when Aaron found a sweet spot! He could yell at Aaron later though, right now he had an enormous feast to finish! Even with the hybrid's rubbing, however, the gator was filling up quite rapidly, his scaly stomach straining to hold so much food in it. This was more food than he had ever eaten in one sitting, after all; he wasn't sure if he could finish it all.

Thankfully, the strain of Bruce's belly was lessened by the efforts of the anthro beside him, Aaron's hands returning to the gator's gut to knead into the tightening surface carefully, once again being careful not to apply too much pressure to the overfilled organ. "Wow, I had no idea an alligator could eat so much at once," the canid serpent commented, scritchng and patting at the reptile's stomach comfortably, "You've got a heck of a predator's appetite, big guy. It's really something!" Though they seemed teasing, Aaron's words held an earnestly impressed tone, smiling as he looked towards the last bits of the gator's meal, "Think you can finish off the last bit of dinner, Bruce?"

Bruce snorted indignantly. Of course he could, this meal was nothing! He could easily scarf through his dinner no problem. He had a reputation to uphold, at least in Aaron's eyes. The gator was a big, scary monster, and to prove it so he continued chowing through his meal with renewed gusto. Bite by bite, the rest of meat vanished into the reptile's scaly middle, causing it to

swell further and further out, until at last, with one final gulp, it was gone. Bruce gasped and panted, breached once again on his side as he looked at the tray, which contained nothing but grease stains. “Hurf...th-that all?”

The hybrid gave a low whistle as he looked over the gator’s cleared tray, giving Bruce’s bloated belly another gentle pat. “Goodness, I knew you had a hearty appetite, but even I didn’t expect you could make clearing all that look so easy,” Aaron praised, giving a fond smile to the reptile that he gently comforted, before seeming to realize something and pulling away from the alligator, “Sorry, you said belly rubs just during your meal. Would you prefer me to give you some space, now?”

“No...wait,” the gator huffed, looking at the anthro with a sense of longing. He wasn’t a powerful and prideful monster anymore, he was a helpless animal desperate for one thing: “Please, continue rubbing...it feels nice.”

Aaron stopped at the unexpected reply, his expression softening into a sincere smile again. “Alright, I’ve got you, big guy,” the hybrid replied, scooting close again and gently returning his hands to Bruce’s abdomen, brushing in the same comforting circles as before. The anthro’s fingers gingerly pressed into the softened scales that covered his companion’s tightened midsection, once again stroking softly along that bloated curve as he helped the gator’s gut contend with the massive load within.

“That help, Bruce?” Aaron asked as he massaged the reptile’s swollen stomach, holding himself closer than he had before and showing that look of sincere care to the massive predator.

The reptile closed his eyes and nodded, letting out a deep sigh. Why was he allowing this? Any other creature who dared tried touching him would get their limbs yanked off, yet Bruce was allowing the hybrid to rub and pet him like some pet. No, he told himself, he wasn’t the pet. He was the master, the owner of this land, and Aaron was simply his servant who was allowed to live so long as he served him. Bruce allowed himself a smirk when he came to that realization, a smirk that persisted even as he drifted off to sleep.

The next few days passed with a growing sense of regularity, the alligator getting into a rhythm of waking up, eating as much as he could, and then resting off his latest meal with a nap, before repeating the process. Though as the days went by, that simple routine was broken up with a bit more chatter between the feral and his handler, mostly in the form of Bruce bossing Aaron around in some way or another, yet those demands became more frequent, with a growing sense of some need that the alligator was unfamiliar with.

Thankfully, the anthro was as patient as ever, providing the gator with plenty of food and listening to the grumbly reptile voice his disdainful comments. To most, the beration of the feral would have been grating; yet Aaron heard the message behind the grouchy tone. Bruce was uncertain, feeling something new, and the only way he had to express it was with his demands. And so the handler would go along with those orders, giving a few gentle words of

encouragement and support now and then, and most importantly simply letting the gator know that he was there for Bruce, and he wouldn't be leaving.

As the gator's insecurity grew, so too did his waistline, the reptile's figure taking on a very distinct, broad pancake shape when he pulled himself up out of the water, and becoming rounder and more orb-like when he was swimming. The food he ate seemed to put more and more weight on him every day, pounds of doughy flab piling on with each heavy meal. And that wasn't all the food brought; with each time he ate himself into near-immobility, Aaron was right there, a hand to gently rub the overfed predator's stuffed belly, and a smile to comfort him as he rested.

Bruce took comfort in knowing that he at least had plenty of food to drown his troubles away in, even if more often than not it left him breached on his side and reliant on the caretaker to knead his stomach. Again, everything he did always ended with Aaron involved somehow. He slept under the wolf's eyes, lazed while the anthro spoke to him, and of course ate with his help. He should be infuriated he should have to share his life with someone else, but he wasn't. It was unusual, rather worrying in fact.

"Hey, meatsack!" Bruce called out one evening as he slowly dragged himself out from the water, feeling his flab bunch up by his legs as he waddled forward. There was so much more traction whenever he walked now, his belly sliding heavily along the floor, flattening out to take up a significant amount of space. He was fat, at least to anyone observing him; to the reptile, he was large and powerful, an enormous gator that should be feared.

"Meatsack, I'm talking to you!" the gator growled yet again as he shuffled over to where Aaron sat, snarling at the hybrid's lack of fear towards him. To establish dominance, Bruce rested his fat head on the snake's lap, filling it with its pudgy self while pinning the anthro down. Bruce said he did this to "make sure his reserve snack was within biting distance," but in truth he did so because he appreciated the head scratches he would receive.

The anthro blinked as his lap was suddenly occupied by a very heavy head, before smiling and gently resting his hand on the gator's skull, scratching back towards his flabby collar gingerly. "You alright, Bruce?" Aaron asked, looking back to the flabby reptile's gut, "Are you hungry again, big guy? I can get you some nice chicken and pork, or whatever's your current craving." As he spoke, the hybrid's other hand came up in front of the feral's muzzle, making sure that Bruce could see the limb coming before gently sliding his fingers under the alligator's chin, scratching the soft scales there as well.

"Perhaps later," Bruce grunted, closing his eyes as he felt his sensitive chub squeezed and kneaded. He was a lot bigger than he remembered, and softer too, no doubt due to how powerful of a predator he was. He was in complete control of the situation, he assured himself as he closed his eyes and relaxed into the gentle rubbing, taking slower and deeper huffs once he finally relaxed. It was hard work crawling, after all. "I've...been feeling unusual lately...and it's your fault," the gator grumbled, although he remained still.

Aaron's head tilted at the accusation, his ears pricked forward with interest as he regarded the chubby alligator resting against him. "Oh? How do you mean?" the anthro asked, seemingly intrigued by the reptile's words as he leaned forward attentively, still gently scritchng and rubbing along the doughy scales of Bruce's neck, "Are you feeling unwell, big guy?"

Bruce took a moment to respond, closing his eyes in deep thought, or perhaps he was simply enjoying the scritchng. "Perhaps...I'm not quite sure. I'm starting to develop a dependence on you," the gator mumbled, thinking out loud. "I'm starting to crave your touch as much as a soak in my marsh. Obviously, I'm very unhappy about that...well, I'm unhappy that I'm not unhappy about it...this is complicated."

The anthro felt himself smiling more at the alligator's hesitant confession, his hands gently stroking along the reptile's brow and cheeks. "Is that such a bad thing, Bruce?" Aaron asked in a gentle, understanding tone, his claws gingerly scritchng under the alligator's jawline, "You don't have to worry about getting your own food, you've got me to take care of all your needs, and all you have to worry about is getting comfortable and relaxing. That sounds pretty nice, to me~"

"I suppose..." Bruce attempted to think of a better comeback, but came up blank. He really did have it good here, even if he didn't like the term "taken care of." He had his pride to tend to, after all. "Just so you know, I can end your life whenever I deem necessary," the gator grumbled, pressing his right claw on the lupine's knee in order to rise closer to eye level, forming thick rolls along his arching back. "Whenever I want...even though I would much rather not."

"Oh, I'm quite aware," Aaron replied, grunting softly at he was pinned under the crocodilian's heft, though he still gave a small smile in spite of the threat, "But I trust you, Bruce. You're not going to hurt me unless I give you reason to. And believe me, I have no plans on giving you that reason!" The scientist laughed softly, reaching out to gently pat the limb that pinned down his thigh, "And don't you worry, I know you could definitely still care for yourself, as well. It's simply my pleasure to make sure you don't have to, if you don't want to. I'm not one to underestimate a predator as formidable as yourself!"

Bruce looked away, seemingly nervous before the anthro. "Well...glad we've come to an understanding." There wasn't anymore he could say. He truly, genuinely didn't want to cause the anthro any harm. In fact, seeing the look of discomfort on the hybrid's face caused the gator to quickly step off his thigh, choosing to instead lie his head back on it instead. In the back of his mind, he knew he could; no, he should chomp through the anthro, but he didn't want to. Were the other anthros as kind and caring as Aaron was?

He grumbled loudly again, and seeing Aaron glance down at him, blushed. "T-that was my stomach," he muttered, despite having eaten rather recently.

"Oh?" Aaron asked, his head tilting as he glanced over towards the soft, rounded curve of Bruce's flank, smiling again while he petted along the gator's head, "Are you hungry again, big guy? Or do you just need some belly rubs, perhaps?" Though he tone was a bit playful, the

hybrid's voice carried a great deal of care in it as well, a hand carefully sliding down under the gator's chin to scratch the sensitive spot gingerly. Every tender touch against the reptile's tough, yet supple hide communicated a gentle affection, reassurance spoken through the delicate caress of those blunt claws against the alligator's scutes, the anthro's tail swaying side to side in a relaxed manner all the while.

"Well..." Bruce hadn't intended on eating so early, but a snack wouldn't go unappreciated by the gluttonous gator. "I'd like both. Make sure you rub all around my middle though, not just nearby stomach. I promise I won't snap," the gator hadn't meant to sound so friendly (well, friendlier than usual) but the thought of eating while his caretaker kneaded his squishy middle sounded pleasant. Maybe he could feign immobility again and watch the frail wolf try to roll him again.

The anthro nodded affirmatively, chuckling as he gently patted the reptile's side. "I'm going to need my legs back if you want me to get you food, big guy," Aaron commented playfully, winking as he gently wiggled a thigh under the gator's head, "You're a taaaad heavy for me to unpin myself on my own!" The hybrid flashed a teasing grin, reaching up to scratch the fatty flesh on the gator's neck, "If you'll pardon me, good ser, I shall endeavor to fetch you a suitable refreshment~"

With some reluctance, Bruce lifted his head and slowly crawled backwards, grumbling softly. "Make sure you sit back down once you've returned. I demand to use you as a pillow."

Aaron laughed fondly at the demand, again nodding as he got to his feet. The hybrid moved over to the control panel, swiping his card and typing in a brief order, the requested food sliding out on a tray from out of the chute. Taking the order in hand, the anthro stepped back over to Bruce, taking a seat in his previous spot while he set the tray of fried chicken and bacon strips in front of the gator. "Your meal, ser," the lupine serpent announced, before giggling as he patted his lap, "And your cushion, as well! I do hope both are to your liking~"

Bruce snorted indignantly, unintentionally giving off the air of a pompous royal. That is, until he did something completely unprecedented for his species. Tucking in his legs, the alligator rested his head on the hybrid and rolled onto his back, exposing his rotund belly in its entire glory. "Feed me," he demanded, patting his jiggling gut while opening his fatty maw.

The anthro gave a grunt as he was suddenly rested against, looking down to the alligator with a surprised expression. That shock didn't last long, shifting quickly into a fond, sincere smile as he nodded in understandingly. "Yes, sir!" Aaron chuckled, taking up a handful of chicken and bacon strips, holding them over the reptile's maw, "You promise not to nip my fingers, right?" The question was only half-playful, the scientist's normally-calm demeanor actually showing a bit of hesitation as his hand drew close to Bruce's powerful jaws.

"Of course," Bruce grunted, rolling his eyes. To show that he was serious, Bruce waited until he could see both paws clearly in his field of vision before biting down, and even then he carefully shut his jaws. "Do not bite the hand that feeds you" was a proverb taken very seriously

to the tubby gator, who didn't want to do anything to hinder his flow of food. The gator purred even though he was eating slower than he would have liked, feeling the greasy, crunchy bacon dance in his mouth. A shame his tongue was trapped on the roof of his maw, he would have loved to flick it around his mouthfuls.

That soft sound rumbling from the gator's chest quickly returned a warm smile to Aaron's face, taking up another handful of meat and holding it up to the reptile's maw. The anthro's free hand started to gently caress the flabby neck of his scaly companion, scritching under the doughy rolls and along the soft curves with tender care. At the same time, the hybrid's serpentine tail gently rested over the crocodilian's round belly, the strong limb gingerly rubbing up and down the length of Bruce's torso, all to make sure the alligator was as comfortable as possible.

He was a big gator; Bruce was reminded of that when he noticed how little of his entire mass the hybrid could rub at one time. The reptile wiggled his stubby chubby limbs, swishing his powerful tail slowly as he ate. He was extremely comfortable, it actually astounded the gator he could be more comfortable on land than on water. He didn't want to leave, even when Aaron finished feeding him the rest of the juicy meat, instead happy to bask on his back with a big happy grin.

The anthro didn't seem eager to be rid of his lapful of gator, either, his hands curling behind Bruce's jaws and kneading into the strong, powerful muscles he could still feel under the gator's flab. Meanwhile, the hybrid's strong tail gently patted and stroked along the alligator's fattened belly, gingerly rocking that doughy orb side to side. It was amazing to Aaron just how quickly the changes had come over his reptilian ward; much faster than even his most optimistic projections would have shown, and he was all-too-happy to find the treatment working as planned.

There was a moment of gentle stillness, before Aaron felt bold enough to slowly lean forward, his snout lightly brushing Bruce's own nose and nuzzling with the most delicate of touches. The position he'd put himself into was a vulnerable one, yet the anthro didn't seem worried, simply smiling to the alligator in his lap wordlessly as he waited for Bruce's reaction.

The gator slowly opened his eyes, staring back into the anthro's own while he lay there. What an odd situation he was in. The nerve of Aaron, sticking his face within inches of his own as if tempting him to reach out and take a bite. Still, Bruce simply snorted, too content to really attempt it. "Why are you putting yourself in danger?" He couldn't help but ask.

Aaron gave a soft chuckle, lifting his head as he smiled down to the gator. "Is that what I was doing?" the anthro asked innocently, chuckling as his claws tenderly caressed the underside of Bruce's jawline, "Here I thought I was just cuddling with a friend." The hybrid gave a little wink, kneading down the crocodilian's doughy neck and scritching at the loose folds delicately, "I trust you, Bruce. Just like you trust me to comfort you like this; we're friends, showing our vulnerable sides is what we do."

"I have no vulnerable sides," Bruce flicked his tail against the ground. "I'm large and powerful, and you are small and weak. I could roll on top of you and pin you effortlessly, leaving you at my mercy. I...simply choose not to because I feel pity." The crocodile, despite his words, displayed a moment of insecurity by glancing away. He hadn't mentioned his ability to kill the anthro, mostly because the thought was actually rather disturbing to the reptile. Not only that, but he had unknowingly let out his feelings for Aaron by changing up his reasons for sparing the wolf snake, going from the anthro being his sole source of food to feeling bad should he cause the anthro any problems.

The anthro giggled again, smiling amiably. "Oh, my mistake, then," Aaron humored the massive reptile, his claws caressing under the gator's chin, "Regardless, I do trust you not to hurt me, Bruce. Large an impressive as you are, I feel safe around you, and I hope you feel safe around me as well."

Aaron leaned forward again after a moment, reaching out to take the alligator's claw in hand, squeezing the limb gingerly. "Is it presumptuous of me to think of us as friends, big guy?" the hybrid checked, looking to Bruce with a fond, patient smile, "I didn't hear any objections to the term, just now~"

Bruce was vaguely aware of how anthros show signs of affection, although he still wasn't prepared for his claw to be grabbed like that. His slitted eyes swiveled towards his claws, looking at it curiously before giving the crocodilian equivalent of a sign. "I suppose, if that's what you want to call it." He didn't say no, and that could certainly be attributed to how warm he felt inside, a rather unusual feeling for a cold-blooded predator like himself.

The scientist's smile grew at the reptile's words, gently squeezing Bruce's claws once more, before letting the limb go to pat and rub the reptile's chest and shoulder instead. "Friends it is," Aaron affirmed, his own chest lightly touching against the alligator's head from his leaned-forward pose. It seemed like an insanely vulnerable position to put oneself in with an alligator, yet the anthro didn't show any signs of worry, just humming softly while he caressed the feral like a beloved pet.

"You know," the hybrid said as he massaged along the gator's shoulders with both hands, feeling his digits sinking into the layers of padding covering the limbs, "I'm really glad for my time working with you, Bruce. I'm lucky I was picked to be your handler; I don't think I'd have met any other friends quite like you are!"

"Like me?" Bruce asked, with genuine curiosity. For the first time since he had been introduced to the enclosure, the gator finally started pondering the possibility that Aaron might have purposely sealed himself in to be with him. But why would anyone do that? He was an alligator! People were supposed to scream and run when they see him, not hug him and be his friend! This went against everything Bruce had believed in, flipping his viewpoint upside down.

It took some time for Bruce to recover from the shellshock, during which he was even quieter than usual, only speaking when he needed food. But, despite his new silence, the tubby

gator would still crawl over for snuggles, belly rubs, and of course, to be hand-fed food. Although he was lost in thought, the rotund reptile still subconsciously cared for his owner, even if he didn't view him as such. He found comfort in the anthro's touch; it settled his restless mind and overworked body (seriously, why was it so hard to walk on land now?!) in a way that even the jets couldn't compete with. It was during one of those cuddling sessions that the gator finally came to terms with why Aaron tried so hard to befriend him: he wanted the gator's protection!

One morning, after a heavy sleep from an heavier meal, Bruce made his way out of the water towards his friend to disclose the information he had come up with; at least, he tried. His appetite had only increased over time, which lead to dozens, if not hundreds, of extra pounds onto his already pudgy frame. In the water he could be mistake for some incredible log or fallen tree trunk, but on land he was a big scaly pancake. He had to splay his chubby limbs out far in order to reach the ground past all that belly, and even then he still had the task of waddling his hefty body forward. "No wonder he needs my protection, I'm so massive and intimidating that there isn't a predator in the world who wouldn't fear me," Bruce muttered to himself to justify his intense weight.

Finally, after an eternity, the obese reptile plopped his heavier head in the serpent's lap, his chubby face filling up more space than he remembered as he panted and heave, his broad backside rising up and down with each breath. "Not...to worry...I'm here...to protect you..." he sighed. If only he had someone to protect him from his own appetite!

It didn't take a master hunter's eye to spot the massive reptile coming, and Aaron had set aside his notebook well in time to greet the reptile as Bruce rested against him. "Oh my, and such a big, strong protector I have!" Aaron chuckled softly, his arms wrapping around the doughy neck of his scaly companion, nuzzling over the gator's brow lovingly.

"Hey there, big guy. Feeling extra cuddly today?" the anthro crooned as his claws caressed the squishy back of the girthy gator, feeling just how well-padded the crocodilian had become under his treatment, scritchng along the scutes of Bruce's spine gingerly, his head tilting curiously after a moment, "You alright, buddy? You seem a tad out of breath."

"I'm fine...it's just a little humid today." Bruce loved the humidity, but he couldn't think of any other excuse for why he was so winded besides the obvious. "It takes a lot of power to move a beast my size, you know. I'm an unstoppable force, after all. I could lay fully on top of you and completely smother you beneath my vast being, so I suggest you start kneading my flanks right away." The gator may be friends with the anthro, but that didn't mean he would stop bossing Aaron around. He was the alpha male, after all.

The ophidian wolf gave a good-natured laugh, nodding as he gently scooted out from under the alligator's head. "Yes, sir!" Aaron said with a snappy salute, before shuffling around to Bruce's side and resting both hands on the splayed flab that spread over the grass, kneading into the soft flesh and humming softly in joy. There was simply no missing how much weight the alligator had put on, now; the anthro could easily bury his arms under all that flab and still only

just reach the midline of the crocodilian's form, a fact that seemed to brighten his ever-present smile.

"You could just call me over to the water, you know," Aaron pointed out as his hands slid under the squishy curve of flab that protruded from Bruce's side, scratching up against the doughy hide tenderly, "I don't mind setting aside what I'm doing and coming to you if it's more convenient for you, buddy. Though I think it's sweet that you make the effort to come to me; just warms my heart, it does~"

"Hmmf, if that's what you think. I just needed to crawl over and make sure you could still move," Bruce grumbled, although the thought of never having to leave the water felt nice. While moving on land was difficult, swimming had become far easier lately thanks to his added buoyancy, although moving his fat-filled legs was a little cumbersome, especially with his belly partially in the way, sagging beneath the rotund reptile like some legendary iceberg.

Speaking of belly, the gator's gut choose a wonderful to start grumbling, signaling his needs before he even began talking. "Aaron, hurry up and bring me my tribute." Friendship doesn't come without a price, after all.

The anthro gave a familiar, well-humored laugh as he nodded, patting the alligator's back gently. "Aye, oh Bruce the Bountiful and Benign!" Aaron replied with a wink, getting up again and moving off to retrieve food for the reptile. The hybrid had gone from using a tray to having a trolley provided through the feeding chute, the sheer mass of food it took to sate the gator grown to the point that wheeling it through the grass was simply more practical.

"For dinner tonight," the lupine serpent announced with a fake French accent, putting on an absurdly posh persona as he began lifting chafing dishes from large trays of meat, "We have chicken, fried, roasted, stewed, and baked, all to your preferences! As well, zere is honey-roasted ham, the largest, primest cuts of steak, and for ze special treat, baked venison for ze charming gentleman!"

Aaron's dignified expression was quick to devolve into a goofy grin as he giggled to himself, taking a seat neat Bruce's head as he took up one of those trays. The crocodilian didn't waste any time scooting up to the hybrid's lap, though he certainly had difficulty getting himself rolled over for feeding, again huffing and puffing as he grunted with the effort of sloshing over onto his back, before opening his long maw wide to be fed.

The anthro's silly grin shifted into a fond smile at the sight of all that corpulent gator laid out before him, taking a moment to look over the expansive gut of the reptile, splaying out to his sides once more as he lay on his back. "Goodness... how you've grown, Bruce," Aaron couldn't help commenting quietly, before gently setting the first bite into the alligator's mouth, his free hand gently caressing his friend's pudgy cheek.

The gator snorted at the comment, a sly grin spreading across his broad, dimpled muzzle. Of course he had grown; how could he eat as much as he was without doing so? Bruce purred

happily as he ate from the anthro's paw, always making sure not to snap until he knew Aaron's hands were out. Now that he thought about it, he had been growing far faster than before under the snolf's care; perhaps this "friendship" thing wasn't so bad after all. The gator even allowed himself to squeeze at his own sagging flab with his arms as he ate, enjoying just how doughy and soft he had become.

Aaron blinked in surprise as he watched his companion playing with his own fat, before giving a low chuckle while he gently patted the gator's chest. "You like that, huh?" the anthro asked with another fond smile, rubbing along the doughy collar of his weighty ward, "You honestly look quite nice with the extra padding, big guy. Like you were meant to be large and in charge!" The hybrid winked as he tittered affectionately, his hands gingerly gripping the doughy flab that ringed Bruce's neck and kneading the sensitive hide delicately, "Quite adorable, if you don't mind me saying~"

Bruce stopped his eating to scowl at the hybrid, even if he had to fight past his flabby cheeks to glare at his feeder. "I am an alligator. I am not adorable. You will refrain from using that term around me," he grumbled, using as few words as possible in order to continue eating. He completely agreed with everything else the anthro said though, the part about being meant to be large bringing a bigger smirk to his chubby face.

"Ah, duly noted," Aaron replied, nodding in understanding while he rubbed the dimpled cheeks of his obese companion, "I just mean you look both impressive and charming with your extra weight, that's all." As he clarified himself, the anthro's hands squeezed and kneaded along the gator's doughy cheeks, rubbing in slow circles around the softened domes, "Plus, you're ever so wonderful to cuddle up to when you're this soft~"

"Fair enough," Bruce muttered after a moment's silence, unable to refute the hybrid's claims. He was squishy and cuddly, 'a big flabby pancake' according to the anthro. He had no idea what a pancake was, but he figured it had to be something fierce and powerful if he was shaped like it. He allowed himself a rare smile as he felt his doughy cheeks worked on, wiggling happily on his back. "Hurrf. It feels wonderful becoming so large and powerful. I'm starting to become worried I might accidentally break you, once my size becomes too much," the reptile cackled mischievously, arching his back just enough to push his belly higher, pressing more weight onto the hybrid's lap. "Not to worry, Aaron, I'll make sure to keep you well protected. No one would dare approach a beast such as I, after all."

The anthro paused at those words, his head tilting as he gave a big, warm smile. "Why, Bruce, that's so sweet of you," Aaron praised earnestly, heart warming at the gator's comment, "I feel safer already!"

The hybrid tittered softly to himself as he continued to massage along the reptile's cushy neck, rubbing down to the crocodile's chest and patting the plush scales tenderly. "And don't worry about squashing me, big guy," Aaron replied as he scritch'd and kneaded over Bruce's chest, "I trust you'll be careful, and I should be fine as long as it's just your head resting against

me, like this.” The wolfish serpent leaned down to playfully boop noses with the alligator, flashing a fond grin, “You’re kind to worry about me, though~”

Bruce snorted. “I can’t break my best source of food now, although I might consider it if they don’t feed me.” He was a bit spoiled, to say the least, used to doing next to nothing and getting rewarded for it, not to mention most of the anthro’s praises fueling his ego. He leaned back and opened wide yet again, bunching up his squishy jowls.

Aaron laughed at that as he nodded affirmatively. “Ah yes, we can’t forget that~” he replied, returning to feeding the gator those bacon and chicken strips, still wearing a fond grin on his face while he dropped each caloric treat into the gator’s maw. As Bruce was fed, the anthro’s long tail wrapped around the reptile’s midsection, kneading in slow, comforting motions along the exaggerated curvature. The anthro’s free hand gently cupped the fat feral’s soft cheek, his thumb tenderly brushing the scaly cheek of his flabby companion, and the gator could have sworn he heard a soft, subdued, “good boy,” murmured under the hybrid’s breath.

The gator grunted when he heard the compliment, the tip of his tail twitching somewhat. The concept of good was rather lost on the feral; to him, life was either eat or be eaten. There wasn’t enough room to be good, so to be called that was rather...interesting. More food for thought, while he had more food for belly.

It wasn’t a very large snack, at least compared to his normal meals, but Bruce felt comfortable stuffed afterwards. Once he finished his meal, he continued to laze on his back and sigh, letting the anthro explore his rotund body, squeezing every new roll of flab that had developed on him recently. He almost fell asleep in that spot, when a sudden thought entered his mind. “Can you swim, Aaron?”

The hybrid’s head tilted at the question, his ears flickering curiously. “Reasonably well, though I wouldn’t really call myself a swimmer,” Aaron answered as his fingers roamed along the gator’s padded, yet powerful jaw, kneading into the soft flab to massage the strong musculature underneath all that pudge, “Why do you ask?”

Bruce chuffed as he felt his flabby jaw squish, waiting until Aaron’s paws moved away from it until he spoke again. While a gator could clamp their jaw shut quite powerfully, they couldn’t open their mouths if a force equal to that of a rubber band held them shut. Fun fact. “There may be a time where I can’t protect you if you stray too far away, especially when we’re on land, due to my...size,” the gator mumbled, starting to look somewhat bashful of his size. “Because of this, we’re going to practice swimming together to make sure you can stay afloat while I deal with threats at hand. Roll me back onto my feet, if you will.”

Aaron had to subdue another fond chuckle at the protective behavior of the alligator, though he still humored the massive reptile. Carefully sliding out from under Bruce’s head, the anthro moved around behind the gator and pressed his hands into the flabby back of his scaly companion and pushing with a low grunt, managing to roll the alligator upright with a good deal of help from Bruce himself.

“W-whew, I might not be able to roll you over soon, big guy,” the hybrid commented, getting to his feet and brushing off his lab coat while he gave the gator a fond smile, “You want me to get into your pool, Bruce? Here I thought that was off-limits for me!”

“Don’t get the wrong idea, this isn’t an open invitation. I will be very cross if you enter my lake without permission,” the gator grumbled as he grumpily waddled towards the lake, huffing and panting as he drew near. Aaron could hear the sigh of relief from the rotund reptile as he slid into the pond, effortlessly floating like the big spherical log of scales and fat. “Now come in. Use my hide as a flotation device if you must, for if you were to disappear beneath the water’s surface I won’t be able to retrieve you.”

The hybrid followed along behind Bruce, waiting for the gator to get comfortable in the water before he slipped his coat off, rolling it into a ball and setting the article on the dry grass, along with his shoes and socks. Aaron paused at the edge of the water for a moment, looking to Bruce with a brief flash of uncertainty, before wading slowly into the heated water, feeling the warm moisture soaking into his fur. The anthro moved into the pool until the water came up to his waist, looking a bit nervous as he held his hands up above the pond’s surface, giving his companion a slightly-timid smile.

“So, what did you have in mind?” Aaron asked as he stood in the water, his normally-casual tone tinged with a bit of nerves as his soaked tail swished through the pool slowly.

“I...” Bruce swallowed. He honestly wasn’t sure how he was supposed to teach an anthro how to swim, especially since his swimming skills all came from instinct. It was quite clear to him that Aaron didn’t have the natural skill that he did, the gator starting to regret mentioning his inability to dive should Aaron go under.

“Erh...hold onto me and practice kicking your legs. We’ll just float for now,” the big brute muttered, inching closer against the snolf.

Aaron hesitated for a moment, before giving a little nod as he gently leaned against the floating gator, curling an arm over the reptile’s shoulders and letting Bruce lead him deeper into the water. The anthro’s feet eventually left the silty bottom of the pool, his ears folding as he gave a soft yip of surprise when he started floating, and the gator beside him felt the grip around his flabby back tightening slightly.

“W-woah, okay, it’s been a while since I swam,” Aaron admitted with a sheepish expression, his legs kicking unsteadily as he clung to Bruce’s flank, feeling himself sinking against the surprisingly-warm side of his cold-blooded companion. The lupine’s free arm was held out awkwardly to the side for balance as he looked down to his feet through the clear water, and though he was certainly trying, the alligator could tell that if the hybrid hadn’t been holding Bruce’s side, he’d likely be having a bit of trouble keeping his head out of the water.

Bruce was starting to get nervous as well. "You're worse at this than I thought. Hold onto me with both arms, I can't have you fall," he commanded, a hint of worry creeping into his voice. Instead of drifting through the middle like he had originally planned, the gator floated closer towards the edge of the pool, close enough that Aaron would have an easier time propelling himself to safety should he fall. It wasn't an ideal way of working off a heavy meal, Bruce realized quickly, as the snolf's shaking and swimming motions kept jiggling and disturbing his stuffed stomach, but he didn't complain so long as the anthro was fine.

The anthro calmed visibly when they were in the shallower water, holding himself closer to the reptile as his arms both held gently around Bruce's collar, concentrating on holding his weight up with the kicking of his feet. While Aaron wasn't the most confident of swimmers, the gator could see he was trying his best, slowly getting his bearings in the water. The ophidian lupine's fur was flat against his skin, making him look comically lean compared to his normally-fluffy appearance and accentuating his mildly-anxious expression.

After a few moments of treading water, Aaron looked to his helper with a little, hesitant smile, his ears flat against his head. "H-how am I doing?" the scientist asked, looking oddly vulnerable compared to his usually-composed demeanor, though obviously doing his best to please the massive reptile.

It took all of Bruce's will power not to roll his eyes at that statement. He still couldn't believe he was doing this, but if something had happened to Aaron on land and he couldn't reach him in time, then it would all be his fault. "Fine enough, I suppose. Just keep moving your legs, that seems to be the only way you can float for some reason." Bruce didn't even have to try to stay afloat, even before his massive weight gain.

He could tell this experience was rather draining for the snolf, so after some gliding he deposited the hybrid back on shore before turning to face him. "We will try this again sometime until you're ready to go deeper. I can't figure out how to swim for you, you have weird lanky limbs and a very lean body, so you have to keep doing that weird squirming thing you do in order to float. I'm sure you can figure it out, but for now I need to rest," Bruce groaned. His stuffed stomach was feeling rather nauseous after all that shaking, not to mention the nervousness he felt for the snolf.

Aaron somewhat hastily pulled himself up onto dry land, letting out a long sigh of relief once he was back on solid ground. Though as he sat and let himself drip dry, the snolf noticed the strained expression on Bruce's face, his head tilting with concern. "Are you okay, big guy?" the anthro asked worriedly, scooting over the ground and gently resting a hand on the reptile's scaly shoulder, "I-I didn't hurt you, did I?"

"I'm fine...just...a little...sick." Bruce's face was greener than usual, his claws carefully rubbing his bloated belly beneath the water. Now that the shaking had stopped, the gator was shocked to find himself feeling even sicker than usual, his stomach screaming in pain. He felt he was about to hurl at any moment, something he did not want to do before the snolf, but there was no stopping the movement he felt rising up his throat.

Fortunately it wasn't bile that sprang from his maw. What came out instead was an enormous, gurgling belch strong enough to scare away a nearby flock of seagulls, propelling the gator back slightly! Once it was over, Bruce huffed and panted, feeling even more tired than usual. His stomach certainly felt much better, although he swore he expelled so much gas he was sinking half an inch deeper into the water.

"Aww, poor guy," Aaron crooned softly, not even waiting for an invitation before he started to gingerly rub over the side of Bruce's gut, kneading and brushing over the exaggerated curve tenderly. "Thank you for helping me, buddy," the anthro said gratefully, his other hand reaching out to scritch at the doughy chub encircling his friend's neck, "And sorry for shaking your stomach like that, I guess I'm more out of practice than I realized!" The hybrid gave a self-conscious chuckle, before tilting his head slightly as he smiled to the gator, "Are you gonna be alright, big guy?"

"I just said I'm fine," Bruce growled, yet leaned closer into the scritchings anyways. Secretly, he was just happy that Aaron was fine, happily nuzzling the anthro's paw. Of course, he didn't want to get too close, for he could feel his sore belly start to rub against the ground before his paws could reach it. "Our lesson is done for today. I'm going to take a nap now, but when I awaken, I expect there to be plenty of food by the end of my lake, followed by plentiful rubs and massages." The gator grunted. Climbing out of the water was starting to become too much of a hassle for him.

The reptile's caretaker nodded as he got to his feet, stepping out of the water's edge and getting himself dried off. He wore a smile on his face as he glanced back to the flabby log in repose; the treatment was undoubtedly having its intended effects, judging by the tender care that Bruce was trying so hard to hide. Aaron kept that knowledge to himself, of course, simply letting the alligator rest in preparation for the next caloric dose.

The pair spent the next few days practicing swimming together, the anthro slowly getting less unsteady in the water, though Aaron still clung tight to the reptile as he was given his private swimming lessons. And, of course, Bruce was rewarded most generously after those lessons with large, fattening meals, each one seeming just a bit larger than the last, and that much tastier. Those massive meals had quite the impact on the obese alligator, as well; in only a few days, the crocodilian found that he simply couldn't pull himself up out of the water anymore without winding up stuck in place, needing assistance to get himself scooted back into the pool, where his buoyancy allowed him to float effortlessly.

This development expedited the gator's need to get his caretaker more confident in the water, pushing the anthro more fervently to improve his swimming. After a particularly-tough session in the water, Aaron was left panting as he sat in the shallower edge of the pond, the water coming up to his chest as he caught his breath. "O-oof, how do you make this look so easy, big guy?" the hybrid puffed tiredly, giving a somewhat hoarse chuckle as he looked over to Bruce with an abashed smile, "Thanks for being so patient with me, I think I'm kinda starting to get the hang of this, a bit."

Bruce snorted as he floated as close to the shore as he could without breaching himself, which was growing further and further away as the days continued. While on the surface, it looked as though he was simply swimming close to the edge, truth was his stomach was pressing against the floor, the hanging sack of flesh larger than Aaron himself.

The gator was a massive pile of lard, having quickly gained weight once he abandoned any real exercise of crawling out of the pond. His days were primarily spent sleeping, eating, and floating around with the anthro, nothing that required more than slight lethargic movements. Every inch of him was bloated with excess lard: his arms and legs now packed sausages that formed heavy creases when he bent them, his tail a plump series of sausage-like rolls, his belly, as aforementioned, large enough to breach him off the ground by a good several feet. His head especially was looking soft and cherubic, his enormous pudgy cheeks and softened flabby jaws hiding most, if not all, of the reptile's powerful jaw muscles and sharp teeth. Rather than the powerful and threatening creature he believed himself to be, Bruce now appeared like a balloon animal stretched out to nearly fill the size of a queen-sized bed.

"You're starting to do better, I see. We can start going into the deep end soon if you're feeling brave enough," the gator panted, even that mild exercise was starting to become a little draining at his size.

Aaron gave a shallow nod, still smiling and he scooted through the water to get himself cuddled up to the gator's side, both hands coming to rest on the reptile's flank and kneading into the deep flab gently. "Thanks again for all these lessons, it's quite an honor to be taught by an apex river predator," the anthro said earnestly, his blunt claws curling between the squishy folds on Bruce's side and scritchng delicately at the sensitive flab, giving a low hum as he appreciated just how soft the reptile had become. It was truly incredible how much breadth the crocodilian had gained, and it was with a good deal of surprise that Aaron suddenly realized that his ward had become nearly as wide as he was long.

That thought brought an even broader grin to Aaron's features, leaning in close to lay his head against the scaly back of his companion. "You know... you're big enough that I just might be able to use you as a raft, at this point," the anthro commented playfully, winking to the blubbery gator as he patted Bruce's belly, "You've got plenty of room to lay out over with how big you've gotten~"

"A raft?" Bruce growled. He was a gator, not some tool for an anthro to use to their whim...but Aaron wasn't just any anthro, was he? Besides, the gator felt his pride swell when his size was mentioned and, feeling rather zealous, decided to prove just how enormous he really was. "Would a raft look like this?"

He pushed himself away from the coast, giving himself enough room to maneuver. The obese reptile rocked back and forth, creating small waves in the water, until one last heave rolled him fully onto his back. It would have looked as though the gator was laying on the ground, yet in actuality he was floating on the river, his excess chub keeping him fully buoyant.

Bruce flicked his tail and propelled towards the shore again, patting the end of his enormous stomach. "This could be useful should you ever not learn how to fully swim...and this way I can keep a close eye on you," the gelatinous gator mumbled. "And so you can rub my stomach while you're up there..."

Looking over the floating glacier of fat for a moment, Aaron grinned wide as he nodded in agreement, getting to his feet and taking a few steps back, before hustling through the water and leaping up as hard as he could, landing with his arms outstretched against the side of the alligator's flabby paunch. The anthro laughed as the gator's bloated form listed to the side from the impact, climbing hastily up to the apex of Bruce's gut and laying out over the crocodilian's broad, almost mattress-like belly. "Wow, it's super cozy up here," the hybrid commented playfully, smiling down to the gator while his arms brushed over Bruce's scales, "You're right, though; you look far more impressive than any raft would!"

Bruce's response was in the form of another belch. "Be careful not to squeeze me too much up there, or I fear we might sink," the gator responded in a tone that made it difficult to tell if he was joking or not. Aaron was lighter than he looked, but he still sunk a great deal into the flabby reptile's middle, which jiggled and wobbled like a scaly water balloon. Pushing off from the coast, the duo drifted towards the middle, floating along at a very slow and steady pace. "If you're feeling nervous, let me know and I'll paddle back."

The anthro gave a near-silent gasp when his "raft" cast off, clinging tighter to Bruce's belly as they drifted into the middle of the pool. "I'll be alright," Aaron insisted in a smaller voice than he'd meant to use, his eyes a bit wider than usual while he glanced over the gator's broad, doughy flank to the water below, looking to Bruce after a moment and giving another sheepish grin. "You'll help if I fall in, won't you?" the lupine asked abashedly, rubbing the back of his neck self-consciously.

"I'll do my best," Bruce grumbled, not too keen on thinking about that possibility. "In the meantime, I want you to start scratching. There's an itch deep in that third fold on my right that's been bothering me for a while," the tubby gator grumbled, trying to point to it with his snout.

"Aye, aye, cap'n!" Aaron replied with silly salute, tittering as he moved to the indicated roll and gently sliding one of his hands into the flabby crease, scratching softly under all that flab, "You're getting quite a collection of fatty nooks and crannies, aren't ya, big guy?" The anthro smiled as he spoke, his other hand pressing deep into the yielding flab on Bruce's gut and rubbing in slow, gentle circles to comfort the floating fat-berg.

Bruce growled contently, a big derpy smile spreading across his fat face. "Of course I am, it's what happens when you grow beyond your preconceived limits," the gator growled proudly, his fatty neck wobbling as they drifted off. "Hopefully I shouldn't grow too large for you to handle. It'd be quite embarrassing of you if you were to one day spip between one of my folds and get lost."

Aaron laughed brightly at that, imagining just how big the gator would have to grow for such a thing to happen. "Oh gosh, you'd be sooo big at that point!" the anthro said, and there was an almost hopeful, eager tone to his voice at the comment, the grin on his face showing he had no objections to that idea whatsoever, "Though I'd still do my best to tend to your needs, of course. Even if it takes me a couple hours to scratch aaall those squishy folds you'd have, it'd be time spent in good company~"

Bruce was pleased to feel his stomach grumble during that talk, knowing full well the anthro on top of him could feel that gurgling organ beneath several feet of lard. "You don't seem off put by the idea at all. In fact, if I had to wager a guess, I'd say you're actually eager for me to grow larger," the gator's smirk widened as he gently wobbled his enormous stomach. "I can't say I blame you. I am quite the amazing sight. It would be natural for someone small like yourself to want to bask in my glory~"

The anthro found himself giving another slightly-bashful smile as he was called out, chuckling and rubbing his neck abashedly. "I can't deny that I think you look much more endearing with the extra weight," Aaron replied, patting the gator's gut tenderly while he layed out over the broad, comfortable surface of Bruce's belly, "And definitely more impressive, that's for sure! Nobody could deny the predatory skill of an alligator this well-fed!" Flashing a jovial grin, the canid scooted up the reptile's torso, resting on the crocodilian's chest as he reached out to rub under Bruce's chin, "Not to mention that it makes you much more comfortable to rest against like this~"

Bruce return the smile, looking up at the snolf with a genuine, almost endearing look. While it may be difficult to tell a gator's emotions by their expression (those flabby cheeks don't help either), it was safe to say that Bruce genuinely enjoyed the hybrid, even going so far as to lift his head to nuzzle his snout against the snolf. "I suppose I have you to thank for allowing me to grow so large."

The serpent felt his heart warming with the gentle gesture of affection he received, curling his arms gently around the alligator's broad shoulders as he gave Bruce a gentle hug. "It's been a pleasure helping you with that, my friend," Aaron purred, rubbing his fuzzy cheek against the gator's collar tenderly. Even out in the middle of the lake, it seemed like being close to the reptile was enough to help the scientist relax, no traces of fear evident on his face as he nuzzled under Bruce's chin in comfort.

The gator sighed contently, doing his best to return the affection, a faint blush forming on his chubby cheeks. He never would have imagined he'd end up one day making a friend out of an anthro like this, a soft purr emanating from his large head. Soon, they approached the other side, but before Aaron could get off, the gator looked up and wink. "For payment, I demand you help make me grow even larger. I won't be satisfied until I'm the biggest gator to date~"

Aaron blinked in surprise at the demand, before giving a broad, jovial grin as he nodded affirmatively. "Oh, don't you worry," the anthro replied as he returned that wink, "You'll not only break that record, you'll smash it to pieces until nobody would even consider trying to

outdo the size you reach! Though I hope you're hungry, because that'll take a looot of eating, my friend~"

"Eating, drinking, I'll do whatever it takes to be the fiercest predator," Bruce growled, curling his pudgy gator toes in excitement. Floating towards the edge of the lake, the gator's stomach growled once again. "Hurry up and fetch me the richest, most filling food and drink you can!"

The hybrid nodded again as he slipped down from Bruce's chest, splashing into the water and wading through the pool hastily. "Aye, cap'n! Plenty of vittles, coming right up!" Aaron replied, quickly ordering more food for his obese companion and wheeling another massive meal to the gator.

The pair spent the next few hours simply enjoying one another's company as Bruce was fed ridiculous amounts of rich, fattening food by his fluffy companion, the anthro making several trips to the food chute to collect more caloric offerings for his friend. Each trolley full made the gator's gut rise higher and spread wider, the weight of all that food making the buoyant reptile sink steadily into the water until his back was resting against the silty bottom, his head cradled gently in the hybrid's lap between trips to refill the trolley.

By the time the sun was setting low in the horizon, Bruce found himself thoroughly stuffed to the brim with an abundance of meat and various drink, his caretaker sitting in the shallow water and holding the gator's head gingerly in his lap, brushing the reptile's cheeks softly. "All full, sweet gator?" Aaron asked when the crocodilian didn't ask him to fetch another trolley of food, smiling adoringly at the chubby head resting against his thighs.

"I... I..." The gator couldn't even speak properly, stunned by his incredible fullness, not to mention his pinning weight. One prod by Aaron onto his gut, however, was all it took to release enough gas to speak. "Oof, I've never felt wonderfully, gloriously heavy in my life. Any more and I may pop," the reptile panted, smiling up at his friend. "I'm full for now, thank you, but come tomorrow I'll be ready for another feast of equal or greater proportions!"

"That's the spirit!" Aaron laughed brightly, looking up to the gator's mountainous belly and letting out a low, impressed whistle, "I doubt there's another alligator in the facility that comes near your size, big guy. You're like a green, scaley hill!" The hybrid gave a silly grin, kneading around Bruce's cheeks softly and tilting his head, "Would you like me to go on up there and rub your belly, now? Or should I stay here and let ya rest against me, buddy?"

The gator carefully weighed his options, for like a second or two. "What's the point of being so large if there's no one to share my bulk with?" Bruce chortled, thumping the side of his tummy. "Get up there start rubbing, or else you'll be rubbing it from the inside~"

Aaron laughed as he playfully booped the gator's nose, before sliding out from under Bruce's head and moving around to the reptile's side. Though the canid disappeared from view around the horizing of the alligator's gut, the feral could feel his caretaker carefully climbing up

the side of his belly, steadily cresting over the taut hill and laying over the rotund ball of scales and flab, rubbing slowly and nuzzling the stretched hide of his overfed companion. “Ya like being nice and full like this, buddy?” Aaron checked as he massaged over the alligator’s tummy, smiling down to Bruce fondly as his fluffy tail lightly waggled across the reptile’s stuffed stomach.

“What kind of question is that?” Bruce grumbled, clawing at the sides of his bulbous belly, “It feels wonderful! All discomfort aside, the only reason I wouldn’t want to feel this full constantly is because the thrill of hungrily awaiting my next meal is even better. I’d suggest it to you as well, put a little meat on them scrawny bones. You just might swim better,” the gator snickered.

Flushing slightly at the suggestion, Aaron chuckled to himself as he rested over the taut curve of his friend’s stomach, fluffy muzzle brushing slowly across Bruce’s tightened tummy. “I wouldn’t want to deprive you of any of your food, though,” Aaron replied with a playful tone, patting over the drumlike surface of the alligator’s abdomen carefully, “Though I bet nobody would guess you to miss any food if they were to look at you now, big guy!”

The gator snorted humorously, his mountainous middle quivering as he tried not to giggle at the soft muzzle rubbing his ticklish middle. “Suit yourself. You seem to know how to possess infinite amount of food, so I’m sure you could make do with a little extra. Of course, you can always feed it to me, I’d put that food to good use,” he growled playfully, rubbing his own snout against his doughy chest.

“I bet you would!” Aaron giggled along, before focusing his attention on massaging Bruce’s overstuffed gut. His paws pressed gently into the alligator’s stomach, assuaging the strained scales and stretched hide with every pass of his palms, the heavenly feeling allowing the reptile to relax more and more, eventually fading out into dreams under the care of his fluffy friend. The anthro spent long moments simply enjoying the activity of rubbing the affectionate alligator’s belly, until he too felt the pull of sleep, looking down toward the grass below for a moment, before smirking to himself as he simply curled up on top of Bruce’s belly, closing his eyes as he sighed long in comfort.

The next morning, a low rumbling sound resonated through the enclosure, working its way through the gator’s dreams until he was roused from the depths of sleep, finding that he was surrounded by several other researchers and workers, one wall of his enclosure pulled open to allow a crane through. The crocodilian’s head was resting in the familiar lap of his lupine handler, and Aaron gave a reassuring smile as Bruce came out of his dreams.

“Good morning, big guy,” the hybrid said softly, brushing over the reptile’s round cheeks, “Don’t mind them, they’re just going to help move you into a bigger enclosure; this one’s running out of room for you to grow!”

With wide open eyes, the gator growled and quickly tried to shoot back up, helplessly pinned by his own stomach. Once again, he found his home being invaded by several loud, noisy

anthros, many of them wielding what looked to be dangerous tools! Bruce's heart rate skyrocketed, the gator puffing loudly as he looked at Aaron with wide, angry eyes. "Aaron, I want you to get behind me and stay hidden. I'll make sure to scare them off so they won't hurt you."

The hybrid gave a soft smile, tapping the alligator's collar gingerly. "It's okay, Bruce. I asked them to come here," he said in a low, reassuring tone, scritching gently under the reptile's chin, "They're just going to move you to your next enclosure, and then they'll leave us alone again." Aaron lightly touched against the crocodilian's snout with his palm, waiting for the gator to look him in the eye before continuing, "I'm right here with you, so you can protect me if any of them look like they're up to any funny business!"

Bruce's panic subsided gradually as he looked up at the anthro, his breathing returning to normal. "So it's just like the last time you moved me?" Upon seeing the nodd, the reptile sighed and grumbled. "Next time make your enclosures larger. All this moving around is a pain in the rear." With that said, the gator's nervousness was replaced with annoyance. He growled when the anthro's came to strap him to the crane, bearing his teeth at anyone who got too close to his face, but for the most part did his best to remain calm. However, as they were getting ready to move, the gator found himself smirking. "I doubt those fools can even budge me."

Aaron laughed softly, nodding as he gently slid out from the gator's head to make sure that everything was in place. "I'll be right back, don't worry," the anthro promised, before calling out to the other researchers as he moved around the alligator to make sure he was securely strapped in, and Bruce felt a few tugs on the heavy-duty harness that had been lashed around his form. After a minute or two, the hybrid came back around the other side into the reptile's view again, patting the gator's blubbery chest tenderly. "You ready to go, big guy?" the canine checked, kneeling down by the reptile's head with another of those reassuring smiles.

The obese reptile was shocked to find the straps actually budged him a few inches, digging deep into his incredible girth. His mood dropped even further, a scowl etched into the beast's flabby face. "Let's hurry and get this over with. There better be a meal waiting for me at the next enclosure," Bruce grumbled. Hopefully, after a few more meals like yesterday's, he'll finally become too large to be carried.

"Alright, let's get you going," Aaron said, reaching out and giving the gator's pudgy paw a gentle squeeze, before looking up and nodding to the crane driver.

With a low, hydraulic hiss, Bruce found himself lifting up slowly amid the sound of creaking metal and straining gears, his one friend among the many anthro's keeping a gentle hold on his claw to provide some measure of reassurance. The crane moved with slow and careful motions, making the trip between enclosures an uncomfortably long one for the reptile. Fortunately for him, Aaron walked alongside him the whole time, listening to the complaints that Bruce gave and being there to reach up and gently rub the gator's chin whenever the crane hit a bump in the road, letting the reptile know that everything would be alright.

Finally, after what felt like nearly an hour, though was probably closer to only a third of that, the gator could finally see the next habitat they had for him. This one was fully outside, with only a small fence to keep out any trespassers, the fence encircling a broad spacious segment of a wide, deep river, big enough for even a gator as obese as Bruce to have plenty of room to grow into. And best of all, there was a familiar chute that lead all the way up to the water's edge, ready to deposit its food directly into a waiting maw at the end.

"Alright, just a bit more, big guy," Aaron said softly to the suspended doughball, smiling at the way Bruce's excess flab pooled around the straps that carried him, "This is the last time we'll be moving you like this, I promise. And look, I made sure that they installed the feeding chute so it's easier for you to reach from the water!"

It took a moment for the anthro to realize that Bruce couldn't really just look, due to his sheer girth and the fact that he was strapped to the arm of a crane, the hybrid chuckling self consciously as he rubbed his neck. "Ehehe, one moment, then you'll be able to see," Aaron murmured, before calling over to the crane driver, "Alright, set him in the water, nice and easy!"

After another few minutes of being hoisted about on the end of a glorified fishing pole, Bruce found himself nestled into the deep part of the river, and the harness was steadily unstrapped from around him. Finally, the milling anthros pulled away from the floating blob of pudge, packing up their gear and heading out of the new enclosure, leaving Bruce and Aaron on their own once more, this time under an open sky, with fresh air moving past them.

"And that does it, you're now free from worrying about that ordeal anymore," the alligator's handler declared, sitting at the edge of the water as he grinned to Bruce, "How do you like it, buddy?"

Once free from his restraints, the gator quickly swam his spherical body forward, putting as much distance as he could from the anthros. "That was horrible, I hope I never have to be handled in such a way again. I'm more than capable of..." Bruce was about to finish that statement with "moving on my own," but upon realizing that even swimming was becoming a hassle for the obese beast, chose to blush and continue paddling away.

Right to the feeder.

"This will deliver my meals to me?" Bruce grumbled, inspecting the large hose carefully. After his stressful ordeal, as well as going quite a while without eating, the massive gator was too fixated on getting his next meal to be concerned with his new enclosure. Sure, the fresher air felt nice, but what would feel even nicer is a burger or 20 in his stomach.

The reptile's handler smirked slightly as the gator went straight to his food source, giving a nod while he stepped up beside the chute, tapping the top with a broad grin. "You bet! This one's more automated than the last, no need for a keycard or anything," Aaron explained, before pointing down towards a control panel covered in symbols of various food, "You just tap these buttons, and it'll deliver your order in seconds!" The hybrid took a seat by the chute at the edge

of the water, smiling to Bruce warmly, “You can give it a try, if you’d like. You look a tad peckish from all that excitement~”

Bruce didn’t even wait for Aaron to finish talking before slamming his pudgy claw against the panel, pushing multiple buttons as he looked up at the chute. “Whatever gets me food fastest. I’m so hungry I could eat a cow,” the impatient gator growled. Always the pessimist, he had a sinking suspicion that this food wouldn’t taste as good as his last enclosure’s.

The anthro simply smiled as he listened to the sound of the conveyor within the chute activating, gears ticking and clicking as the smell of several different courses slowly wafted from the front, which slid open to deposit several burgers straight onto a steel plate below the chute. The meat smelled just as lovely as the offerings that Bruce had been given before, a testament to the high quality that Aaron expected out of the feed that was offered to the gator. “There’s no limit on how much you can order at once, by the way,” the hybrid said as he reached up to tap the side of the metal slide, grinning wide to the hungry reptile, “Well, unless you happen to deplete our stores with your orders, of course!”

Before he could react to the goodness/challenge, Bruce was suddenly bombarded with more food than he knew what to do with! His maw opened just in time to take in a large mouthful of the juicy meet, his pudgy cheeks swelling even further as he struggled to chew and swallow the load, by which point he was met with even more. The gator let out a throaty groan, his neck bulging as chunk after chunk of meat passed his lips, filling up his hollow middle.

Aaron watched with keen interest, his muzzle split into a broad grin, as though this was exactly the result he was hoping for. “Thaaat’s it, just enjoy, big guy,” the hybrid crooned softly, before getting up to his feet and wading carefully into the water, moving up to Bruce’s flank and resting his hand on the gator’s gut, “Have as much as you’d like, buddy. You more than deserve it~” As he spoke the anthro’s palms pressed gently into the yielding scales of his obese companion, rubbing slowly up and down that rolled flank, the snolf purring quietly in affection all the while.

Bruce didn’t need to be told twice. He was eating twice as fast as before considering eating directly from the chute was far more effective than the snake’s hand feeding. He had only been eating for 15 minutes, but it felt like an hour when the burgers finally started to dissipate. The gator panted softly after a moment, looking back at the anthro rubbing his wobbling flanks. “I...I take it back, this is my new home.”

The canid laughed brightly, looking over to Bruce with a fond smile. “I thought you’d like that!” he commented with a playful wink, scritching along the swollen curve of the alligator’s paunch with both hands, “Does this make it worth the unpleasantness of the move, friend?” The hybrid’s sinuous tail joined in assuaging the gator’s stomach, and Aaron leaned his whole weight against the pillowy, broad side of his companion, grinning wide while one ear pressed against Bruce’s scales, “Lots of happy sounds going on in there, at least!”

The whale-like reptile burped loudly, groaning in ecstasy. His muzzle mimicked the happy sounds erupting from his belly, a goofy grin spreading across his pudgy muzzle. "Hrrrf. Well, Aaron, seems as though I don't need you to feed me anymore; however, I expect you understand that that means you'll be spending more time massaging my gut." Bruce gave Aaron a toothy smirk, before looking back at the control panel.

There was simply too many options to choose from! It would take him weeks to learn each new flavor, even with his incredible appetite! Bruce purred loudly as he started tapping buttons randomly, the churning gears like music to his ears. "I'm going to become enormous," he growled happily before opening his maw wide, a wave of hot dogs sliding down his gullet.

Aaron gave a soft chuckle, lowering himself so he was seated on his knees in the shallow water, which came up to his chest as he slid his arms under the floating behemoth, pressing his palms up against the underbelly of his flabby friend. "The biggest ever, and you'll smash that record so hard that no other gator would even think to try outdoing you," the anthro cooed encouragingly, nuzzling at the rippling pudge on Bruce's flank, "All you have to do is eat, and eat, and eat, and I'll make sure everything else is taken care of for you, big guy~"

Most predators would be appalled to leave their trust to someone else, least of all someone they'd consider prey, but Bruce wasn't one of those predators. In fact, he lavished the idea of never having to move a muscle, looking quite forward to being the fattest, most spoiled gator to date. He chowed through those hotdogs, and then the pulled pork that followed, his stomach stretching to accommodate so much greasy food. Already he was starting to feel full, having eaten more in an hour than he could eat in a day a month ago, but he knew he had to continue when he noticed how wide Aaron's grin grew when the gator's stomach started to grow.

The early afternoon sun beat down on them as the gator finished up the last of the shredded beef, letting out a satisfying growl. For the past few hours he had been eating non stop, stuffing himself from the chute like a balloon tied to the hose. He lost track how many different meats entered his maw, only dimly aware that now they all reside within his belly.

And what a belly it was! Stretching over three feet larger than earlier, Bruce was the largest he had even been! His middle was crammed full of meat, more than any reptile his species should be able to handle. Naturally, he felt ready to explode, the obese gator looking weakly at his friend. "Please... more rubbing...I beg you."

Aaron had lost all sense of time as he rested against the swollen gator, watching the crocodilian inflate like a food balloon before his eyes. That entranced state was interrupted by the plea from his engorged friend, and he gave a soft, sympathetic coo as his hands returned to massaging into Bruce's taut, stuffed middle. "Aww, sure thing, big guy!" the anthro crooned reassuringly, his tail reaching up to gently curl around the alligator's forepaw, giving the pudgy limb a tender squeeze, "You did so good, Bruce! No other gator in the world could match your appetite, I'm sure! Just look at you, now; so big and impressive, I bet you'd be the envy of any other alligator who laid eyes on you~"

Bruce didn't even have the energy to revel in the hybrid's praises; he was too busy panting and being full. "More...rub more," he begged, leaning away to show off more of his stomach. However, due to his incredible buoyancy and his food-filled belly acting as a counterweight, the whale-like gator accidentally flipped entirely onto his back, the rest of his stuffed midsection rising out of the water like a green iceberg. "D-don't stop," Bruce whimpered, his taunt tummy rising and falling with his quick, shallow breaths.

"Aww, don't worry, I got you," Aaron purred as he carefully climbed up onto the gator's chest, taking a seat facing the reptile's rotund abdomen and starting to massage into the tight, swollen dome with both hands. The anthro's palms worked in slow, symmetrical circles across Bruce's gut, steadily massaging from the midline of the alligator's abdomen out to the sides of his engorged stomach, the canine's snout tenderly brushing over the packed scales. "There ya go, is that better, sweet buddy?" the hybrid checked as he glanced over his shoulder to smile at the crocodilian, ever-so-gently patting the gator's gut.

After a few burps and hiccups, Bruce was finally able to enjoy his gentle massage. He was so wonderfully, ludicrously stuffed, seeing how his usually flabby belly was now taunt and round like a balloon. His whimpers of pain soon turned into more pleasant sounds like grunts, sighs, and even a few mewls. If only his arms and legs weren't so short and flabby, he'd be hugging the anthro tightly against his chest! "Thank you so much, Aaron," the spherical reptile mumbled after some time, blushing softly. "I admit I may have overdone it just a tad."

The canid on Bruce's chest chuckled softly, before carefully turning himself around to face the reptile, smiling warmly to the bloated gator. "Not at all; you're just training your stomach to handle more food," Aaron hummed reassuringly as his tail continued the ginger massage across the alligator's belly, laying out over the crocodilian's chest and giving the obese log a careful, yet affectionate hug as far around his chest as the hybrid could reach, "I'm so proud of you, big guy; just think, soon meals like this are going to be light snacks for you! The real meals will be even bigger, just like you will be so much bigger than this~"

Bruce didn't need to say how wonderful that sounded, his beet-red cheeks did all the talking for him! Curling his flabby tail in delight, he imagined being able to eat so much without any effort, or of filling more and more of the river with his bulk. More importantly, he was looking forward to doing so with the anthro he trusted the most. "I think our swimming lessons should be postponed," the gator snorted, before leaning forward. Due to his biology, Bruce wasn't able to lick the hybrid's snout, but he was more than capable of nuzzling his best friend, even bumping the tip of his snoot against Aaron's in a mock kiss. "For the next few weeks, I want you to devote as much time into making me as big as possible~"

The morning rays gently caressed the sleeping anthro, rousing Aaron from dreams as he slowly opened his eyes, giving a long yawn and sitting up sluggishly from the doughy surface he rested over. Rubbing his eyes for a moment, the hybrid smiled as he rested his hands back down on the supple curve that served as his bed for the past several weeks, rubbing the verdant scales

tenderly. “Bruce, breakfast time~” the canid announced in a singsong tone, turning in place to grin down towards the head of the mountainous blob of crocodilian chub that he sat on, having to crane his neck to get a good look at the gator’s flabby face around the hills of fat that dominated the reptile’s belly and chest.

Those beautiful words roused the reptile from his slumber, his raucous snoring soon degrading into a series of snorts and lip-smacking. Eventually, that gave way to a very noisy yawn, Bruce opening his muzzle as wide as his chins and neck would allow it before grunting. “Hmmf, breakfast already? I swear you’re waking me earlier and earlier,” the gator grumbled, trying to suppress his anticipation for his upcoming meal. The sun had barely come out, but Bruce knew that if the anthro had waited any longer, his own stomach would growl and gurgle until he woke. Such was the life for the world’s largest alligator.

A life he wouldn’t give up for anything.

Gigantic was starting to become a bit of an understatement to describe Bruce after weeks of non stop sleeping and eating. Roused by the hybrid’s words, the gator had abandoned their swimming practice in favor of lazing by the food chute, stuffing his face whenever possible. He was determined to grow out as far as possible, to take up more and more of his lake with himself, by regularly stuffing himself into food comas and moving as little as possible. Every meal would leave him panting and burping, yet after several hours of heavy sleeping he would wake up bigger and hungry for more.

He wasn’t alone in this endeavour. No matter what, Aaron would always stay within rubbing distance of the reptile, whispering encouraging words to the fattening gator while kneading his expanding mass. It was Aaron who helped convince him to eat a little more even after he reached his bursting point. It was Aaron who reminded the gator how big and imposing he had grown. It was Aaron who fearlessly climbed on top of him to knead and massage his overstuffed belly, to help digest it and turn into more gator chub, that made him into the enormous lardball that he was today. And for that, he was eternally grateful, even if he didn’t always act it.

Thankfully, the alligator’s caretaker knew him well enough to pick up on the subtle cues of gratitude from his charge, always returning those little gestures with a kind smile and a warm hug. Of course, Aaron always seemed keen on giving those; even now as he blinked away the sleep in his eyes, the anthro wrapped his arms around as much of Bruce’s flabby neck as he could, feeling the limbs sinking deep into the tire of fat that swaddled the gator’s collar.

“And what might my big, snuggly gainergator like for his breakfast today~?” Aaron crooned as though to a beloved pet, flashing his familiar, playful grin to the blob of verdant scales he rested across, playfully jiggling the flabby hide of Bruce’s neck, “Will it be your usual today, good sir; a dozen of everything with a side of a dozen more~?”

The gator snorted, one of the few acts he could still perform with his incredible size. “Add an extra helping of the crispy meat sticks. I’m feeling particularly carnivorous today.”

What prompted him to try eating more, aside from his increasing appetite, was the hybrid's casual way of mentioning what his 'usual' meal was. There was nothing usual about his meals, and he will keep upsizing them to prove it!

Aaron snapped a quick salute at that, grinning and sliding down from Bruce's chest before stepping over to the chute that the gator rested directly under. With a cheerful hum, the anthro leaned down towards the controls, tapping at the icons for several long moments; these days, it took a few minutes just to input the alligator's massive orders, let alone the length of time it took such extravagant meals to be eaten! Soon the sound of gears turning within the chute came to the pair, the song of food on its way to the eagerly-waiting reptile.

"That's what I like to hear," the hybrid said with a pleased grin, taking a seat by Bruce's head and gently brushing over the alligator's snout, "I ordered you six extra helpings, though; one is just not ambitious enough for an appetite as legendary as yours!"

Bruce grunted in approval. Truth was, with how massive his meals had grown, he had forgotten how large a usual helping was supposed to be; one serving to him was now apparently six to most normal gators. That was fitting, considering he weighed far more than six gators combined, at the very minimum. He couldn't see a thing past his gigantic stomach, which rose upwards of at least a dozen feet, constantly growing and demanding more food. Even now, he confined him to his back, far too large and heavy to let him even think about rolling onto his back, but he was quite fine with this. It was easier to eat food with gravity's aid, plus it did allow Aaron to snuggle more of him.

Suddenly the reptile's snout picked up on the delicious food being prepared and he smiled, wiggling the very tip of his sausage-like tail. "Hmmf, couldn't come soon enough," he said, his vast stomach growling loudly. Seeing the rolling mass of food crawling towards him, Bruce opened his maw as wide as possible, swallowing the enormous mushy mounds of pure fat and calories, his fat neck bulging out just a bit with every gulp.

As the gator gluttoned himself on the food that was delivered directly to his waiting maw, he felt his caretaker gently brushing over his doughy cheeks, and heard a familiar tune hummed in the comforting voice of his friend. "Such a good boy," Aaron purred in approval as his claws scritchd tenderly under the doughy jawline of his immobile companion, tracing the abundant folds and rolls that creased the reptile's strong scales. The anthro even playfully tickled at a few of those juicy handles of fat, grinning wide in affection for his blubbery friend.

Aaron was reworded with the sight of the obese mound of fat chortling, shaking his many rolls. The fact that he managed to laugh while his mouth was crammed full of food was testament to his impressive ability to consume enormous meals without any trouble breathing, a skill he developed with the hybrid's help. Soon, that laughter gave way to a quiet, purring rumble as he felt his hollow middle gradually fill up with more and more food.

That is, until his breakfast was suddenly interrupted.

“Huh? Who dares?” Bruce growled when his gaping maw was suddenly empty, flashing his sharp teeth. He looked towards Aaron to yell, only to notice the hybrid was a little farther than usual, a rather shocking observation. It took a few good moments to connect in the gator’s mind that Aaron wasn’t rising, but rather he was being lowered, the water in the lake draining beneath him! Bruce flailed and wiggled about as much as a gator his size could, but found himself helpless in this bizarre situation.

Aaron perked up at the sudden outburst of his companion, his ears flicking at the sound of an industrial suction device. “Oh! I completely forgot, we’re cleaning out your enclosure today,” the anthro explained, gently patting the alligator’s snout as he gave a reassuring smile, “Don’t worry, they’re just going to drain the water for a bit and make sure everything is clean, then they’ll refill your section of the river again. Nothing to be too concerned about, big guy~”

Indeed, the water had been blocked off upstream, diverted through a temporary canal as several unfamiliar anthros began to fill into the enclosure bearing cleaning supplies, the vast majority giving the impressive hill of flab a wide berth. “Hey, tell you what,” Aaron continued, gently cupping Bruce’s chin and tilting the gator’s muzzle so he could look the reptile in the eye, “I have a camera on my phone, why don’t I take this opportunity to snap a picture of you, now that you’ll be on full display out of the water? And I can show you just how huge and impressive you are!”

Bruce thought he already had a feel for how tall he was, given how easily the serpent’s hand vanished into his numerous chins. But, he knew better than to say no to an offer to revel in his vastness, especially from Aaron. “Hmmf, if you think that camera of yours can capture the entirety of my splendeur, then you are welcome to try. Just make sure you don’t stray too far from me; I still don’t trust these meddlesome anthros,” the gator growled, casting his gaze towards one of the closer workers. “What I wouldn’t give to have one of them slide down my food chute...”

Aaron gave out a laugh as he flashed a bright grin, patting his companion’s flabby cheek tenderly. “Don’t worry, I’ll be careful,” he promised, before sliding out from under the alligator’s head and backing away to get a good look at the flabby reptile. Bruce truly was enormous; if there was ever a fatter crocodilian out there, Aaron certainly hadn’t ever heard of them! He could barely make out the gator’s flabby claws in the depths of his doughy flab, the limbs engulfed in tremendous tires of fat that made it difficult to discern where the alligator’s obese chest ended and his previously-little arms began. Beyond the rippling mound that was Bruce’s chest, his belly rose up in hills of swaying lard, which steadily descended as the water was drained away, settling outwards and rolling over the revealed riverbank like an advancing tide of tubby flesh.

Stepping back more, the snolf reached into his pocket to pull out his phone, bringing the gadget up to his eyes and tapping the screen to bring up the camera. He had to take several more paces backwards before the whole gator would fit in the frame, several workers stepping out of his way as he did so. Finally, with a flash and a click, the anthro snapped a picture as the last of the water was drained away, humming a cheery tune as he moved around to Bruce’s flank. A few

minutes and a couple more flashes later, and the hybrid jogged over to his friend's head, smiling wide while he got sat down beside the gator.

"Got some good angles of ya! Wanna see?" Aaron offered, already tapping at the gallery on his phone and starting to pull up the freshly-taken pictures, his tail wagging with enthusiasm while he held his phone's screen up so that the fat hill could see the image of himself from the side, "I personally like this one; you cut a striking profile, big guy!"

Bruce frowned, furrowing his fat brow. "That's me?" He asked. He couldn't recognize himself under all that blubber, but as he saw the various angles, his flabby tube of a tail, his watermelon-sized cheeks, the reptile realized it really was all him.

Needless to say, he blushed.

"H-heh, that's certainly me," Bruce smirked, dimples forming in his pudgy cheeks. "I mean, I honestly expected myself to be even larger! I feel as heavy as a whale," the gator purred, gesturing to his bulk. Still, he was at quite the gargantuan size, more than any gator he could think of, something that brought him a hint of uncertainty. "I'm not... too big, am I?"

That question seemed to catch Aaron off-guard, the anthro's head tilting as his ears flicked curiously. Quietly, the hybrid gently slid his hands under Bruce's head, grunting as he strained to lift the gator's skull from the ground while scooting closer, before letting out a soft puff of air as the reptile's head nestled into his lap, giving a little, reassuring smile while he wrapped his arms gently around the alligator's snout in a careful hug.

"Never," the snolf said simply, giving Bruce's nose a soft nuzzle, "You can just keep enjoying as much food as you want, I'll be here to make sure you don't have to worry about anything else, big guy."

Bruce closed his eyes and smiles, choosing not to say anything and to instead enjoy the moment. From this elevated angle, he could see even more of his pountiful pudge, but he still smiled regardless. "Thank you, Aaron," Bruce muttered after some time. A warm, salty crocodile tear slipped out from Bruce's eyes, before promptly getting lost in his abundant cheek rolls. It vanished so quickly the gator wasn't sure if he had even cried at all.

Aaron gave his companion's muzzle another gentle, loving embrace, before letting go of the gator's maw and smiling fondly. "Hey, we still have the rest of your breakfast to enjoy, remember?" the anthro reminded his friend, playfully nudging at the gator's snout as he gave a big grin, "I know you must still be hungry, big guy; you only had a tiny snack so far!" The hybrid gave a playful wink as he nodded up towards the chute overhead, gingerly kneading into the doughy cheeks of his blobbish companion.

Bruce sniffed once, then smiled once more, nudging back with his oversized head. "I'm practically wasting away here! Hurry up and bring me the rest of my breakfast before I get *really* hungry," the gator smirked teasingly at the anthro, a low rumble emanating from his stomach like

a bear growling in a cave. As much as it pained him to see Aaron leave, he knew he'd return with more than enough food to satiate his incredible appetite. He always does.

But just in case..

“On second thought, double my order! I want to fill this river by the end of the year!”

It felt good to be the king.