

The Ghost's Halloween Feast

By: Indigo Rho

Frat Row rumbled with Halloween parties in full swing. Every other house had front doors wide open, the sound of music and laughter pouring out into the night. College students roamed the neighborhood in costume, dipping in and out of parties as they filled up on booze.

An elephant sat on the sloped roof of a small yet lively frat house. He wore a red letterman jacket with no hope of buttoning up around his massive ball of a belly. Despite his size and precarious position, he went unseen by revelers below. Literally.

Tamblyn hadn't counted himself among the living for many years now. Like countless other college students on his voracious campus, he'd screwed up and become an exceptionally filling meal for someone else. But before that fateful day, he'd had the time of his life, glutting on his peers and enjoying every party he could. He firmly believed the experience had been worth it, even if he'd never made it to graduation and now haunted his former stomping grounds.

"Halloween parties were the best," the elephant mused from his perch. "So many great costumes. So much beer." Cheap beer, but that didn't matter when he guzzled it by the keg. "So many tasty meals." His stomach would've growled if it could.

Down below, a bulky brown bear wearing overalls and dressed like a classic handyman made his way up the path to the house. A small rabbit in a vampire costume stood off the path, fingers darting over his phone as he texted. The brown bear glanced at the distracted rabbit and licked his lips. With plenty of unnoticed warning, he snatched the rabbit the second they crossed paths.

The rabbit yelped and dropped his phone. Horror flashed across his face seconds before his head and shoulders were shoved into the hungry bear's maw. Deep, greedy gulps sent the unlucky rabbit racing down the bear's gullet. His kicks of protest did nothing to slow his descent.

The bear's belly swelled and bounced as his meal emptied into it. It wobbled from left to right, the rabbit's struggles amounting to little more than faint bulges. Content, the bear slapped his gut and waddled into the house.

"That's what college is all about," Tamblyn sighed wistfully. "I *have* to eat tonight."

Eating posed a slight challenge to a ghost like Tamblyn. His incorporeal form could scarf a person down with ease, but his senses were considerably dulled. He wouldn't taste his meal or feel the weight of them wiggling in his

stomach. And causing a public spectacle brought in ghost hunters, some of whom actually knew how to banish spirits to the next life.

However, if he found a suitable body to borrow for the evening, he could have all the fun in the world.

Tamblyn pushed away from the roof and floated over the middle of the street. There were plenty of folk around, but he needed someone isolated. Then he saw him, the perfect host.

A scrawny, tan wolf hurried down the sidewalk, ears twitching and eyes darting around. He wore a cowboy costume clearly cobbled together from whatever he had in his wardrobe, along with a couple of vital accessories—jeans, a light blue button-up, thin suspenders, and a cowboy hat. His glasses were real, while the dull sheriff badge was not.

The guy didn't seem to be the frat row sort to Tamblyn. Too jumpy. And maybe too thin. Nothing fattened someone up quite like frat life. Tamblyn guessed he was taking an ill-advised shortcut on his way to somewhere tamer and trying not to get caught along the way. Lucky for him, his ghostly guardian angel would ensure he didn't end the night as a snack.

Tamblyn settled behind a bush and lay in wait for his target. Once he sighted the wolf, he lashed out with his trunk and dragged him through the bush.

The wolf fought for his life, practically squeaking in fright. His struggles wouldn't have worked any better on a living pred, but Tamblyn liked his energy. He'd have made a great wiggling meal if he wasn't destined for greater things.

When the wolf finally locked eyes on the spectral elephant holding him, though, he stopped dead in his tracks. His jaw dropped open, the wolf at a loss for words as he stared at—and through—a real ghost.

It was exactly the opening Tamblyn had hoped for. With haste, he released the wolf and forced his way down his throat.

The wolf's eyes bulged as an elephant three times his size slid effortlessly down his throat. A chill came over him, freezing him in place. His flat middle ballooned outward, followed by his sides and rump. The more of the ghost he swallowed, the thicker his body grew, steadily gaining the proportions of the spectral invader. His clothing stretched to match his new bulk, creaking but never tearing. He flailed some at first but found himself losing his grip on his own body. All thoughts were pushed to the far back of his head, and the door slammed shut.

The rotund wolf shut his jaws tight, forming a wicked grin. Tamblyn was in full control.

“It’s always so good getting to feel again!” Tamblyn smacked his gut and laughed. “Was a bit of a tight squeeze, but you round out pretty damn well, nerd. I like giving my host a preview of what they’re missing out on, anyway.”

The wolf squeaked on about wanting to be let free, nothing Tamblyn hadn’t heard a million times before from hosts and prey.

Tamblyn ignored most of it. “Quit yer whining, I’m just borrowing your body for the night. You might even gain an appreciation for a hearty meal when this is over.” Or become a waddling feast for an ambitious pred. He didn’t quite care what happened to the wolf when he was finished with him.

Tamblyn plucked the glasses off his snout and tossed them away. “Won’t be needing those anymore. Time to party!” He rubbed his thick paws together and headed towards the frat house he’d lazed around earlier.

While idly people-watching, Tamblyn had seen a bunch of tasty snacks drop by the house, and he planned on adding more than a few to the wolf’s waistline. The frat was small—he doubted more than a couple dozen lived in the house, with barely twice that living elsewhere on campus. Cozy compared to the massive frat he’d belonged to in life, but he liked being a big fish in a small pond.

Heavy EDM mixed with stock Halloween music blasted from speakers dangling in corners. Orange and purple string lights lined the walls. Fake spider webs were haphazardly draped between furniture. What the party lacked in elaborate decor, it more than made up for in beer. Bottles and cans littered every surface, most of them still full.

Only around half the guests wore costumes, and most were clearly designed with predation in mind. Few buckles and buttons to burst and plenty of space for a squirming middle to swell. Some had already proved their worth as the first prey of the night struggled in bulging bellies.

Tamblyn was in paradise.

The large wolf got the usual glances as he strolled in. Open-door parties on Frat Row let everyone in, but smart guests eyed up newcomers to determine if they were a threat or a treat. None gave him confused looks of partial recognition. Just another sign the nerdy wolf he’d taken over wasn’t a regular.

He started with the beer, and the lean tabby cat who had the misfortune of standing right near it. “Bottoms up,” Tamblyn smirked right before he grabbed the cat and shoved him in his mouth. Never one to savor his meals, he shotgunned the cat like a bad beer, eager to fill his belly as swiftly as possible. A few futile kicks and a roaring belch later, and the cat fell into the pit of his stomach.

The buttons of his shirt strained faintly, and his suspenders dug a little more into his girth. The feline was the perfect appetizer—small with a bit of a

kick. Every bounce felt incredible to Tamblyn. In the far back of his head, the wolf groaned at the unfamiliar sensation of a person struggling in his gut.

So you really hadn't eaten anyone before, Tamblyn thought. Nothing beat introducing someone to good eating. He already knew the night would be fantastic.

Tamblyn cracked open a beer and emptied it in one go, dousing his meal. Then he grabbed another and meandered. As one of the largest guests at the party, he received ample attention. He'd adored being massive in life. Peers swerved to avoid his path, fearful of being swallowed in one gulp. He could get a whole group to step back with a belch. Once, merely implying he might eat someone caused them to faint on the spot. Naturally, he'd gobbled them up after, happy to indulge in the free, unexpected meal.

His temporary wolf body earned him about the same respect and awe as his real body did, along with some hungry looks. Not that he could blame them. He'd have jumped a hefty clone of the wolf without hesitation. Though no harm would come to him if someone did get the upper hand, he still preferred to play the role of the dominant pred while possessing people, so he took a mental note of the daring ones for later.

Eventually, Tamblyn's lazy travels brought him down a hallway blocked by a maned wolf and a hyena making out against a wall. The maned wolf was tall and chubby, dressed in plastic devil horns and just enough red clothing to sort of make the costume work. The hyena aggressively groping him was over a foot shorter and two feet wider. He had on a bent halo headband, along with a tight white toga likely salvaged from an older costume that might have fit thirty pounds ago.

Combo meals always appealed to Tamblyn.

Tamblyn cleared his throat, earning the attention of the hyena. "What do you want?" The hyena scowled, puffing himself up to look more menacing than delicious. He failed.

"Howdy, partners." Tamblyn tipped his hat. "Y'all are blocking a fire exit, so I'm afraid I've gotta take you in."

The maned wolf snorted. "Didn't you say you wanted to eat well tonight, babe?"

The hyena smirked. "Sure did."

Tamblyn responded by lunging and pinning the couple against the wall with his enormous belly. Devil and angel squirmed with all their might, cursing as they attempted in vain to push away the large, ravenous wolf. Tamblyn's bulk and supernatural strength thwarted their efforts. Their shoves were like pats.

“Word of advice: never bite off more than you can chew.” Tamblyn grinned.

He squeezed the lovers into a tight embrace and lifted them off the ground, holding them like a giant, writhing sub sandwich. He wrapped his jaws around their heads and slurped them up, packing them away with the ease of an experienced glutton. They squirmed the whole way down, as feisty as they were delicious. His gut swelled with every gulp, widening the gaps between his buttons until tufts of fur stuck out. His suspenders creaked, and the button of his jeans threatened to pop off. But when all was said and done, his costume held together, even as his belly swung in front of him like a wrecking ball.

“Gorging is the best, bro,” Tamblyn moaned. He smacked his massive middle with both paws. “Some have an angel and a devil on their shoulder, I’ve got mine in my belly.” The pair in question shouted a string of muffled insults.

Tamblyn’s host groaned, overwhelmed by the feast. He mumbled on and on about feeling like he was gonna explode, like a frosh after his first meal. But beneath the grumbling, there was a hint of bliss. The wolf had never expected to eat anyone. He often worried about becoming a snack for a dumber, fatter peer. But now, the sort of people who typically eyed him up as a meal were squirming in his stomach, and there was satisfaction in that.

“See, letting me take over for a bit’s not that bad after all,” Tamblyn chuckled. “Let’s go throw your weight around some more.”

Tamblyn returned to wandering, showing off his belly and letting everyone in the house know he’d added another two guests to his middle. He drank and danced and drank and talked and drank some more for good measure. He basked in the vices normally out of reach of ghosts. Along the way, he scarfed down a cute ferret for good measure.

Hours of partying smoothed his squirming belly into a soft, sloshy ball. He carried the bouncing mass with pride, enjoying the fear, awe, and jealousy it evoked in others. Everyone knew to give him the run of the place. Everyone but a single guest with an equally bottomless appetite.

The brown bear who’d initially inspired Tamblyn’s ravenous revelry strolled into the living room, having kept his distance the entire night. His overalls clung to his round belly like spandex, struggling to contain his feasting. He wasn’t as large as Tamblyn, but he carried himself with the cool confidence of an unstoppable pred. He was undoubtedly used to everyone he set his sights on losing hope immediately.

“You’ve been eating pretty darn well tonight,” the bear said with a toothy grin.

“Can’t help it, bro. The menu’s been great.” Tamblyn tapped his swollen gut.

“Certainly has. And I’ve watched the night’s special get better and better as it goes on. I think it’s time to finally burst the buttons on these overalls.” The bear straightened his back to loom a few extra inches taller.

Tamblyn had to give the bear credit for building an imposing air around himself. In life, he might actually have been nervous. Instead, he saw a filling main course. “I love it when a meal comes to me.”

The two bulky preds lunged for each other, but Tamblyn was a split second faster and a great deal stronger. He grappled the bear and pulled him in close to his maw. The bear’s confidence drained away as he looked down the dark tunnel of a gullet for the first time in his life. Tamblyn was about to introduce him to a lot of firsts.

Inch by inch, Tamblyn’s jaws stretched over the whole of the giant bear. His furious prey thrashed about in disbelief as he descended into oblivion. His gut swelled out from under his shirt, a furry tan mountain too immense to be held back. Halfway through his meal, Tamblyn plopped down on a couch, flattening it instantly. The bear steadily vanished from sight, becoming a tremendous, bouncing bulge in the wolf’s belly.

Tamblyn slapped the sides of his wobbling gut and howled, gaining the whole room’s attention. “Don’t worry, dudes, this tank’s got plenty of room left. Keep the beer and the prey coming!”

The guests cheered, though a noticeable tinge of nervousness permeated the room. No one was quite sure if the wolf was joking or not.

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“*Bwoooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo!*” Tamblyn’s belch shook the empty frat house. The wolf’s middle rose like a mountain, home to everyone who’d lingered at the party too long. He’d lost count of how many prey he’d scarfed down. Enough that the frat would have to do some serious recruiting next semester, at least.

He made a passing attempt to sit up, only managing to jiggle his gut some. “I might have—*urrrp*—overdid it,” he laughed. “Totally worth it, though.”

Unable to move and with no more prey in sight, Tamblyn decided to call it a night. The wolf’s jaws opened wide, and the ghost wiggled his way out. His host shrunk a little, but the feeding frenzy had left him blubbery for good. Tamblyn himself was twice as wide thanks to the horde of fattening souls. Even a ghost could grow fat if they were gluttonous.

The wolf moaned, and his eyes spun in circles.

Tamblyn patted the dazed wolf’s belly. “Enjoy your new heft, bro. And your new reputation as a ravenous pred. All of campus is your buffet now.”

The wolf burped and passed out.

“I might borrow you again sometime. If you don’t waddle yourself down someone’s throat, first.” Tamblyn snickered and floated off, abandoning the swollen nerd. He couldn’t wait for his next party.