“Natsuuuu! Are you seriously planning on going through with this?!” asked Happy as the winged, blue cat hovered around the head of the pink-haired, Fire Dragon Slayer he called his partner. The fit young man was strolling down one of Magnolia’s many paved, riverside paths with his arms nonchalantly folded behind his head.

“Huuuh? What’s gotten into you?” Natsu replied as he eyed the Exceed as if he had just asked something silly and inane. “It’s a challenge, Happy! A challenge!” The teenage Mage clutched his fist and held it up to his grinning face. “Have you ever seen me refuse a challenge?”

“But Natsu, this is Romeo we’re talking about!” Happy reminded his friend as he began floating in front of the human’s face; Natsu’s black eyes narrowing in discontent. “If you go all out against him in a fight, you might hurt him!”

“Not might—will!” the simpleminded teenager corrected his partner rather swiftly. “That’s what you do in a fight, Happy! You hurt the other person until they can’t stand up anymore. Romeo wouldn’t have challenged me to a brawl if he were afraid of getting a little bruised, right?”

“He’s just a kid, though…” the flying blue cat muttered gloomily, but Natsu dismissed his concern with a wave of his hand.

“He is not! Don’t you ever listen to him back at the guild?” The rosy-haired man placed his hands on his hips and took on an angry expression. “Stop treating me like a kid, dad! I’m a Mage of Fairy Tail now!” Natsu cracked a smile and resumed his normal posture. “If he says he isn’t a child anymore, we should treat him like a man! Anything else would be an insult to Romeo!”

Happy sighed as he drifted out of Salamander’s face—trying to get his long-time friend to see reason was never easy; at times it was downright impossible. Releasing his Aera Magic, Happy’s white wings vanished and he dropped to the pavement below. His large, blue head hung as he followed right behind his taller guildmate. How this “fight” between Natsu and Romeo would go was so predictable it wasn’t even funny. Romeo was going to get his ass kicked so hard he’d be out of commission for weeks. Back at the guild, Macao and the rest would be furious at the fire Mage for not holding back against a kid like Romeo. As he got earful after earful, Natsu would remain ignorant to why everyone was so angry at him. In truth, it would be partially Romeo’s fault; what was the boy thinking challenging Natsu to a real match? Wasn’t he aware the power gap between the two of them was akin to the gap between Natsu and Gildarts?

After several more minutes of strolling through Magnolia Town, the duo came upon a blue, brick bridge that passed over the channel they were walking alongside. While Natsu walked right by it, his sensitive ears noticed the soft squeaks of Happy’s footsteps get farther and farther away. Looking over his shoulder, the Fairy Tail Mage saw that the blue cat had crossed the bridge and was now on the other side of the water.

“Yo, Happy! Where do you think you’re going?!” Natsu called out to his friend; waving his arm to signal the Exceed before he got too far away. Happy stopped and looked back the pink-headed teenager. Biting his lip, the young male looked away nervously.

“I’m sorry, Natsu, but I can’t bear to watch Romeo get beaten to a pulp! I’m heading home early today, so I’ll see you later!” Giving Natsu a quick wave with his paw, Happy spun around and started jogging out of Natsu’s sights. The Dragon Slayer looked on in disbelief; obviously saddened that his partner was ditching him. Choosing to express that sadness with anger, Natsu squeezed his hands into fists and barred his teeth.

“Fine, be that way! I don’t want you there to cheer me on anyway!” Natsu cried out; attracting the attention of a couple ferrymen that were passing in front of him. “After this quick fight, I was gonna treat myself to a nice, hot dinner too! No fish for you, Happy!” Natsu smirked, expecting his partner to come flying back at the mention of his favorite food. Surprisingly, there was no sign of the blue-furred feline. Had he not heard him…or was Romeo’s wellbeing even more important to him than fish. Scoffing, Natsu laced his arms behind his head and continued on. “Man, what’s the big deal anyway? It’s not like this’ll be the first time I fought a kid! Did it all the time when I was Romeo’s age…”

It wasn’t long afterwards that Natsu reached his destination. After passing numerous, boring old houses and shops, the pink-haired Wizard stopped in front of a home that looked no less average and uninteresting than all the rest in this neighborhood. After spending a few seconds standing there and observing the building, Natsu wondered if he had perhaps made a mistake. This was his first visit to Macao and Romeo’s house since his return from Tenrou Island, but before that he had come here plenty of times. He was…70% sure this was the right address, yet the house looked much different than his memory recalled.

“Weird…I swore Romeo lived in a sickly gray house, not a blue one. And that roof…it was practically falling apart last time I was here.” Natsu turned his gaze to the mailbox next to him and spotted the name “Macao” signed into it. That settled it: this was the right place. “Well, I guess it has been seven years since I was last here!” Natsu smiled widely, deducing that Romeo had probably helped his father fix up the house when he became old enough. The six-year-old, Wizard wannabe he remembered always hanging out in the guild sure had matured. Walking up to the house’s front door, Natsu was just about to give its wooden frame a few pounds with the back of his fist when he caught a familiar scent in the air. He recognized it as Romeo’s, and judging by the direction it was coming from… “In the backyard, eh?”

The rosy-haired teenager made his way around the bluish house until he came upon its fenced-off backyard. The wooden gate was open, however, so he invited himself in and almost immediately spotted his soon-to-be opponent standing in the center of the yard; barely anything around him but grass and two thick trees on either side of the lawn. Romeo had his back to Natsu and seemed to be looking at something in his hands. Whatever it was, it was giving off a bright glow.

“Yo, Romeo! Whatcha got there, bud?” Natsu asked loudly, startling the younger male and causing whatever was glowing to quickly cease. The purple-haired boy turned around and smiled at his senior guild member; his empty hands dropping to his sides.

“O-oh, nothing really!” Romeo shouted back, for there were still several meters separating the two flame users. “Glad you came, Natsu-nii!” The energetic teen snickered through a grin as he faced Natsu with his hands on his hips. Despite the earlier statement that Romeo had matured, the truth was he had only grown about a foot in the past seven years. At 4'10", Romeo Conbolt was a few good inches shorter than most 13-year-olds. Compared to Natsu, the young man only reached the Dragon Slayer’s chin. Still, while there was little Romeo could do about his height, he had trained his body hard since the Tenrou Island incident. Few in his age group could claim to have built up muscle like him; that well-chiseled six-pack that poked out of his open jacket spoke volumes about Romeo’s potential.

“Man, this place sure looks different. What happened to your treehouse, swings, and all your toys?” Natsu questioned as he advanced closer to the younger Mage.

“I grew up.” Romeo replied firmly; narrowing his blue eyes with annoyance. He shouldn’t blame Natsu, though. What was seven long years for everyone else had been mere hours for him and the rest of Team Tenrou.

“Right, right…” Natsu continued to scan the plain backyard when his foot bumped into something he had failed to spot. Looking down, the pink-haired man saw a metal barbell much like the ones he had at home (except those were makeshift and made of stone and wood).

“Ah, sorry! I was warming up earlier and forgot to put that away!” the younger male apologized as he laughed nervously and scratched the back of his head.

“Oh, so you can lift these now, Romeo? Not bad!” Natsu complimented his friend…just before he reached down and effortlessly picked up the heavy weight. Romeo looked on in awe as his fellow Fairy Tail Mage lifted the barbell up over his head like it was made of paper and threw it behind him. The weighty object made a loud CLANK as it hit the side of the house and fell to the grass below. Natsu was so ridiculously strong—it took Romeo everything he had just to carry that barbell outside! Romeo wanted to be like Natsu…to be that powerful…he wanted Natsu’s strength! “So…we doing this here?”

“Huh? Oh, yeah!” responded Romeo as Natsu snapped him out of his trance. “That a problem?”

“Not at all!” Natsu grinned toothily as he slammed his fist into his open hand. “Just feels a little weird, ya know? Seems like only yesterday I was giving you piggyback rides back here, but now…” The son of a dragon gave Romeo an intimidating look as he cracked his knuckles ominously. “…now this is where I’m gonna bash your face in, Romeo!”

The young teen gulped audibly and took a step back; second thoughts rapidly filling his head. Was Natsu trying to scare him into surrendering? Would such a victory even satisfy the skirmish-loving Mage? Regardless, Romeo wasn’t going to back down now! He knew getting hurt was unavoidable, but…

“You’re wrong, Natsu-nii!” Romeo smirked and moved into a combat position; feet spread and hands at the ready. “You’re the one getting beaten today!”

“Haha, that’s the spirit, Romeo! I’m all fired up now!” Natsu parted his teeth, letting flames leak out as he touched his hands to his hips. “You get the first move! Give me everything you got!”

Romeo’s smirk widened. Part of him had worried that the faster, stronger Natsu would take him out before he even had the chance to enact his scheme, yet here the Dragon Slayer was, giving him an ample opportunity right from the get-go! “You’re gonna regret that, Natsu-nii! With this…” The dark-haired teenager held out his hand and a small, bright flame of pure white appeared above his palm; bathing the Wizard in a familiar illumination. “…it’s my victory!” Romeo spun his arm in a circle, building up momentum while Natsu raised a pink eyebrow curiously. “Eat this!” The young fire Mage took a large step forward and threw the white fireball toward his older opponent. Even as that bright, flickering ball of flames closed in on him, the cherry-blossom-haired man did not budge and merely watched the fireball with a hint of disappointment. Taking the youth’s advice, the stationary Natsu opened his jaws wide and the white fireball made a clean entry into his maw. Snapping his chops closed, the Fire Dragon Slayer murmured as he tossed the fire around his moist mouth for a while before swallowing it with one, mighty GLURCH. A glowing bulge was pushed down his muscular throat and vanished behind his checkered scarf.

“C’mon, Romeo, what was that?!” Natsu shouted with a little annoyance as he pounded his chest. “That was an interesting flame, but you should know Fire Magic won’t work on me! If you’re gonna feed me some new Rainbow Fire, at least give me something with taste!” Natsu used his thumb nail to pick between his canines. “That attack was like swallowing air! I hope you have something else up your sleeve!”

Natsu’s young challenger said nothing. Instead, the silent boy kicked off the ground and charged toward his pink-haired idol. Hopeful that his guildmate would show him something interesting, Natsu continued to stand there idly with his hands on his hips. Just before the two males collided, Romeo drew back his fist, shouted a battle cry, and plunged his small hand into Natsu’s stomach. It was an impressive punch; its impact created enough force to disturb the air around the duo and blow back the grass surrounding them. Perhaps that blow would have made an average Mage wince, but Natsu was no average Mage. By merely tensing his abdominal muscles, the elder Fairy Tail Wizard has absorbed the entirety of Romeo’s punch.

“Well…that was something alright. I suppose you could make Lucy flinch with a punch like that.” Natsu glared unhappily down at the shorter male. “Are you really taking this seriously, Romeo? You didn’t even cloak your fist in flames; that would have at least doubled the power! Maybe you’re just not ready to…” The fire-spitting Mage trailed off as he noticed something odd going on below him. Normally when one’s attack fails like this, they would immediately jump back to get some distance between them and their unaffected adversely. Romeo, however, was still in front of him with his small knuckles pressed against his clothed abdomen. What more, a strange glow was emanating from the boy’s sleeveless arm; like liquid the white light seeped up the length of the teen’s limb. After blinking a few times in confusion, Natsu flashed an amused grin. “Oh, so you do have a trick up your sleeve! Well, I’m not sure what you’re doing…” Raising both his arms, Natsu gave the smaller boy a powerful shove that forced the kid into stumbling a few feet backwards. Romeo was still hopping on one foot and trying to regain his balance when Natsu raised his left fist and aimed it at his comrade. “…but I’m not gonna just let you do whatever you want! Fire Dragon’s…Flame Elbow!”

Romeo had just enough time to look up before Natsu plunged his powerful fist right into his face. Backed up by a jet of flames that rocketed out of the Dragon Slayer’s elbow, the punch was incredibly fierce; leagues above Romeo’s feeble strike. Natsu wasn’t holding anything back; this was a fight like any other and the goal of any fight was to defeat your opponent as quickly as possible. Thus, the mighty Dragon Slayer of fire aimed to end this with a single blow. His face-busting attack sent the younger Mage flying back several meters; his body spun in midair and even dragged across the ground a couple times. It was only when the boy’s form collided with one of the trees in his backyard did it finally come to a stop with an ear-splitting CRACK. The tree’s thick trunk snapped in two and it collapsed; consuming Romeo and the surrounding area in a cloud of dust and leaves. Natsu smirked and shook some of Romeo’s blood off his knuckles.

“Easy-peasy.” the spiky-haired teenager said with a snort as he turned around and laced his muscular arms behind his head. “Now, I think I’ll treat myself to some nice hot wings! Think I’ll even have time for two plates!” Just as Natsu started to walk away, he heard a cough and the crunch of wood behind him. Eyes wide, Natsu looked over his shoulder and saw the veil of dust begin to clear; revealing a still standing, still conscious Romeo. He stepped out of the dissipating cloud; wiping some dirt and blood off his face. As one might expect, the young Wizard was in bad shape—his nose looked broken, his lip was split, and one side of his face was badly swollen. “You’re still conscious?! Wow…” Natsu dropped his arms back to his side and gave the plum-haired kid a toothy smile. “Not bad, Romeo! You’ve gotten pretty tough!”

“Hehe…it was…weaker…” Romeo whispered under his breath, but Natsu’s sensitive hearing allowed him to catch the words.

“What’d you just say?” he asked, narrowing his black eyes.

“I said…” the young pyromancer spat out a tooth and smiled at his senior guildmate; showing that several of them were missing. “That punch was…weaker! It still hurt like hell…but not quite as much!”

Natsu folded his arms across his chest and stared at Romeo suspiciously. What was that supposed to mean? Nothing about that punch had been weak! He had defeated plenty of Dark Mages with that very attack; knocked them right into unconsciousness! And yet…it had failed to K.O. Romeo? Romeo, a 13-year-old kid whose flames were so weak they could be blown out? Just what did that…? Natsu didn’t have time to ponder it, because Romeo was once again going on the offensive. Ignoring the fact his face felt like it had been struck by a train, the young Fairy Tail member formed two yellow fireballs in his hands. Charging out of the debris left by the ruined tree, Romeo threw the two bright balls of flame toward Natsu. The Dragon Slayer stood motionless and prepared himself for another energizing snack…until he remembered what the yellow fire was. At the last minute, Natsu chose to dodge the fireballs instead; sticking his nose up as the second one soared past his nose. Stupid, rancid fire smelled like rotten cheese! Temporarily distracted by the foul-smelling flames, Romeo was able to get close enough to Natsu that when the older Mage turned his attention back to him, the athletic young man had already wrapped his arms around his waist.

“H-hey! What are you doing, Romeo?!” Natsu cried out as he waved his arms in the air; caught off guard by his fellow fire Mage’s sudden action. “This is a fight! We’re supposed to be hitting each other; don’t hug me in the middle of…” Once more, the pink-headed teen trailed off as noticed Romeo was squeezing his midsection with quite a bit of force. The youth was even grunting as he did so! “Ooooh, I get it! You’re trying to subdue me with a bear hug! Bwuahaha!” Natsu laughed loud and obnoxiously; recalling the times Elfman had tried the very same thing. Now those hugs hurt! But this…? “Sorry, Romeo, but you gotta grow up a bit before you can do any damage with this! Let me show you how it’s really done!” Natsu grinned evilly as he wrapped his strong arms around the younger Wizard and lifted him clean off the grass below. Romeo shrieked in pain as his smaller form was compressed by Natsu’s inhuman strength; his bones creaked and all the air was forced out of his lungs. He kicked his legs wildly, but Natsu didn’t let go and just continued to fill Romeo’s ears with his laughter. “Don’t worry, Romeo! It won’t be long before you pass out! Unless you think you can break free!” Natsu snorted at the idea; increasing the pressure he was putting on poor Romeo’s ribcage while the younger male squirmed fruitlessly. At least…it started out fruitlessly.

Slowly, Natsu’s mocking laughter started to fade as he realized something was wrong. Instead of having his strength drained, Romeo’s struggles seemed to intensify with every passing second. They were getting more forceful as well; Natsu was actually starting to sweat trying to keep the boy contained in his arms! And…was it just him, or did Romeo seem to be getting…heavier? He wasn’t imaging it; slowly but surely it was becoming difficult to hold the young teen in the air! Before he knew it, Romeo’s brown-clad feet were back on the ground. Soon afterwards, the newer member of Fairy Tail broke out of the bear hug by forcing back Natsu’s arms with his own. He then hopped backwards to catch his breath and wipe some sweat off his face with his yellow scarf. Natsu was left standing there in puzzlement; looking down at his reddened palms as he tried to figure out what just happened.

“Haha…did you gain some weight or something, Romeo? How did—?” Natsu interrupted himself with his own gasp as he looked forward and realized a couple startling facts about his opponent. First, as the kid wiped down his face, Natsu noticed most of the injuries he had sustained were gone! The swelling had vanished, his lip was healed, and his nose seemed back to normal. Even more astonishing, however, was Romeo’s height! Just minutes ago Natsu stood almost a head taller than the boy several years his junior, but now…now he was looking straight into Romeo’s face! “What the hell?! Did you have a growth spurt during our fight, Romeo?!”

“Heh, so you finally noticed, Natsu-nii?” Romeo smirked as he used his thumb to wipe a bit of sweat and dirt off his nose. “Look again; I didn’t grow!” Natsu’s eyes went wide as he looked down at himself, noting how the ground seemed closer than it did when they started this little brawl. “You shrank!”

“Are you kidding me?!” Natsu’s face filled with worry as he started patting himself down. It was the Sun Village all over again; he had turned back into a kid! …wait, no, that wasn’t it. He was short like a kid, yes, but he could still feel the matured muscles of an adult body beneath his clothes. This was something else. “What did you do to me, Romeo?! Does this have something to do with that weird, tasteless flame I ate?!”

“Bingo, you got it!” Romeo grinned toothily and snickered like a mischievous imp. “That flame is called the ‘Pure Flame’! Totomaru-sensei created it for the specific purpose of taking you down! However, he’s been really busy with classes and stuff lately, so I had him teach it to me!”

“And? The hell does it do?” inquired Natsu as he touched his stomach with both hands and tried to sense if there was anything odd going on inside him. As far as he could tell, he felt as fit as a fiddle!

“It’s quite simple!” Romeo began as he smiled. He seemed overly proud for what he had accomplished. “As soon as you swallowed the Pure Flame, it was instantly digested and spread throughout your entire body! The empty, featureless flame bonded with your Magic Power, your raw energy, your life-force, everything about you! All I have to do is touch you and I can suck out some of the Pure Flame, taking some of your power along with it! The more energy you lose, the smaller and weaker you become!”

“I don’t really get it, but…basically you need to touch me in order to weaken me, right?” Natsu asked as he observed his hand; opening and closing his fingers.

“Yeah…pretty much.”

“Well in that case…!” Igneel’s son grinned excitingly as he slammed both his fists together. “I just have to beat you without letting you get close! Piece of cake!” Before Romeo could ask how Natsu planned on doing that, seeing as most of his attacks were melee oriented, he saw the rosy-haired Wizard sucking in air through his mouth. The dark-haired, younger male made an “oh crap” face just before…”Fire Dragon’s ROAR!!” Opening his mouth, Natsu unleashed a massive stream of red-hot fire from the orifice; razing the area in front of him with scorching flames. Natsu may have been shrunken down to a kiddie-like size, but he was still strong enough to unleash a terrifying breath attack worthy of a Dragon Slayer. It was Natsu’s hope that Romeo was burning in defeat within those flames, but a quick glance upward revealed the younger boy leaping into the air above his attack; his boots the only causalities of the flames.

Doing a front flip in midair, Romeo shouted another battle cry as he brought his leg down upon his similarly-sized friend. Natsu ceased his Dragon’s Breath attack and threw up his arms to block the kick. As soon as the outstretched limb made contact with his X-crossed arms, Natsu grunted through his teeth as his sandaled feet were pushed into the dirt.

S-strong…! Natsu thought as he pushed Romeo back; the kid recovering with another flip so he landed on his bare feet. His slightly torched soles touched down upon the blackened, grassless area of his backyard that Natsu had incinerated with his flames. Not even a second after landing, Romeo pushed off the earth and lunged at Natsu; his readied fists cloaked in purple fire. For the next minute or so, the two equally-sized teenagers exchanged blow after blow with each other. Being far more skilled than Romeo at hand-to-hand combat, Natsu was able to either dodge or block every punch Romeo threw his way. On the other hand, Natsu’s fists always made contact with the younger Wizard; either getting barely blocked or hitting true. In fact, it was quite odd—Romeo seemed determined not to dodge any of Natsu’s attacks. Even punches that should have been easy for Romeo to avoid, he made sure he blocked them with his own arms, usually leaving him open for a devastating follow-up.

“How long can you keep this up, Romeo?!” Natsu exclaimed as he got the 13-year-old good in the face with a one-two combo. “Just kiss the dirt already! I’m gonna knock you out before you even have the chance to steal any more of my power!”

“Heh…weak…” Romeo mumbled as he blocked one of Natsu’s strikes and smiled as the older teen hit him in the chin. “Getting…weak…” Romeo’s right fist flew through the air and Natsu blocked it with his forearm, but winced at the soreness in his arms.

“Speak up, Romeo! You got something you wanna say?!” Natsu bellowed as he hurled another punch toward his young friend’s mug. The fist was easily caught by Romeo’s own hand; bringing it to an abrupt halt just before it could smash into his nose. Natsu’s fist shook in Romeo’s grip as he tried to pull it free, but he couldn’t make it budge. He also noticed, to his dismay, that the hand keeping his fist in place seemed a tad larger than it. Romeo grinned at Natsu while his face bled from a few new wounds; the Dragon Slayer taking note of the boy’s newly-grown teeth.

“You’re getting weaker, Natsu-nii!” stated the user of colored fire as his hand started glowing with that white light. Natsu started to panic as tried to tear his fist out of his opponent’s grasp. While he did this, he discerned something horrifying. He didn’t notice it when he threw the punch, but his arm was positioned above his head; elbow pointing to the sky! He had to actually reach up in order to punch Romeo in the face; something he only ever had to do with opponents that were taller than him! Yes…Romeo was indeed taller than him now; Natsu’s forehead was leveled with the kid’s chin! It was like their original heights had been flipped!

“When did you…?” Natsu’s eyes filled with enlightenment. No way…in those brief moments they made contact during the fist-fight…Romeo had been slowly sapping his strength with every touch! That’s why he never dodged any of his blows!

“Looks like you realized too late, Natsu-nii!” Romeo shouted as he used his other hand to grab Natsu’s upper arm. With it secured in his tight grip, the younger Mage released Natsu’s fist and used his freed hand to secure another grip on the older man’s limb. Before Natsu could even think of retaliating… “Ooooraaaah!!!” Romeo spun around, held Natsu’s arm over his shoulder, and lifted the now-smaller male off the ground. Natsu cried out in surprise as he was carried up above the younger Mage before getting his back slammed into the solid earth.

“Gah! Damn it!” Natsu cursed in pain as he tried to push himself up off the grass. Before he could, a bare foot slammed into his taut chest and forced him back down with a gasp. Natsu’s eyes traveled up the foot, past the green pant leg, and into the blue gaze of the youthful Mage that now loomed over him. Thinking fast, Natsu grabbed the large foot around the ankle and gritted his teeth as he struggled to lift it off his body. Even after all he had lost, Natsu was still fairly strong, and slowly but surely he was lifting the dirtied, bare foot off his chest.

“Hehe, so you still have this much strength? Right now I’d say…we’re about equal, Natsu-nii!” Romeo explained as he watched his diminished hero sweat and struggle to lift up the foot he was pressing against him.

“Ugh…why…why are you…so strong?!” Natsu demanded to know; hissing in desperation as he put every ounce of his strength into pushing away the foot that was keeping him pinned against the dirt. Something just seemed…off. Even if he was a little shorter than Romeo now, that didn’t mean they should be equal! Natsu had years of experience, he had been trained by a dragon, he was a Dragon Slayer! He should still be strong enough to overpower a normal, amateur fire Mage!

“Oops…I forgot to mention something.” Romeo confessed as he smiled and spread his arms out. “The Pure Flame isn’t just a type of Fire Magic, it’s also an Absorption Magic! All that Magic Power and raw strength you’re losing…where do you think it’s going?”

“D-don’t tell me…”

“That’s right! As you get weaker and smaller, Natsu-nii…” Romeo took his outstretched arms and flexed the both of them; his young biceps perking up with vigorous energy. “I get stronger! Time for another drink!” Romeo laughed gleefully as that radiant white light seeped out of Natsu and traveled up the young Mage’s leg; eventually covering all of him in its glow. The Salamander thrashed underneath Romeo and shouted curses up at him as his body, ever slowly, diminished in size. Romeo practically moaned in ecstasy as he breathed in deep; his muscular chest pushing aside his scarf and coat as he relished in the awesome power passing into him. “Mmmmm…yeah! I feel great! You have so much Magic Power, Natsu!” As the lustrous boy cheered, the bruises and cuts that tarnished his boyish face started to heal and within seconds it was as if he had suffered no injury whatsoever. Below him, Natsu bit his lip and groaned frantically as bulging veins popped up all over his body. He kept pushing and pushing, but it was no use; Romeo seemed to get heavier every second and soon the flat sole of the boy’s foot was back to pressing against his chest. “Don’t wanna take all of it! Just…enough to…THERE!” With a final cry, the glow around Romeo vanished and he pushed down on Natsu with all of his newfound strength. With that one action, he demonstrated that he had surpassed the Dragon Slayer in strength. Natsu Dragneel’s body was pushed deep into the ground as if gravity had suddenly turned against him. With a drawn-out gasp, all the oxygen was pushed out of Natsu’s lungs by Romeo’s stomp. The young son of Macao removed his foot and smirked down at Natsu imbedded into the dirt; his mouth frozen in a gape as he wheezed. Romeo was just about to proclaim himself the winner when Natsu coughed and started pushing himself out of the earth.

“I’m not…gonna lose to you!” Natsu grunted, pushing himself into a sitting position after quite a bit of effort. He sat there and panted; his left hand clutching the center of his chest where Romeo’s foot had been. “It’s not….over yet! I’m still fired u-WHOAAA!”

“Nah, I think this fight’s over.” Romeo declared upon reaching down and grabbing Natsu’s right ankle; lifting the shorter male up with the strength of just one arm. He held Natsu upside-down before him; the fire Mage too stunned by the change of view to do anything immediately. Romeo pulled back his other hand and coiled it into a fist; igniting it with violet fire. Licking his lips, the younger Mage of Fairy Tail huffed just before his entire arm erupted with bright, crackling fire of the darkest purple. The flames were so hot and powerful that the air around his arm blurred. Natsu took one look at that raging fist and, for just a moment, felt fear.

“Oh shi—“

Romeo roared loudly and plunged his fist into Natsu’s stomach. No tensing of the abs would shield him this time; that fist was backed up with an enormous amount of strength; all stolen from Natsu himself. The flames increased Romeo’s punching power even more to deliver an unstoppable blow that sank into Natsu’s gut unhindered. Natsu coughed up some blood; none of which got on Romeo, as the Dragon Slayer was already rocketing through the air by that point. Natsu’s spiraling form struck the ground, but not even that stopped it; chunks of dirt was unearthed as Natsu crashed through it on his way toward the second tree decorating Romeo and Macao’s backyard. He smacked into it, splitting the tree clean in half, before continuing on a couple more feet and finally crashing into the wooden fence that circled the yard. People in the surrounding houses opened their windows to look out and see what all the ruckus was, but all they saw was their neighbor Romeo walking toward a thick cloud of brown dust.

Romeo swung his hand and fanned away the dust; scanning the ground for his opponent. Eventually, the biggest toe on his left foot bumped into something and he looked down to see Natsu’s black, sandal-clad foot. As the rest of the dust cleared, the rest of Natsu was exposed; he was unconscious and laying upon the broken, splintered remains of a large portion of the fence. His mouth was opened and a trickle of blood trailed down his chin. His eyes were rolled into the back of his head and a large hole had been burned into his top; exposing his bruised abdominals. All in all, Natsu the Salamander looked utterly and completely defeated.

Romeo was silent at first, but slowly his mouth began to twitch and he was soon sporting a jovial grin. “I won! I beat Natsu-nii!” The young boy jumped around Natsu’s fallen form in celebration; thrusting both of his fists into the air victoriously. “Haha, I feel…I feel…!” An audible growl came from Romeo’s stomach and he touched his exposed abs. “….I feel hungry. Beating up Natsu-nii sure works up an appetite!” Surveying the area, Romeo noticed people were staring at him from every direction. Turning his gaze to the defeated Natsu, Romeo decided he should probably bring Natsu inside with him instead of leaving him out here for the townsfolk to gawk at. As Romeo picked the smaller Natsu up and slung him over his shoulder like a sack of flour, he sensed the Pure Flame within the fellow Mage. The Pure Flame…fused with all that potent Magic Power and energy. Romeo wondered just how much more powerful he could get by continuing to extract it from the elder teen. Just how weak could he make the Fire Dragon Slayer? “Hehe…I think we’re gonna have a lot of fun, Natsu-nii~” Romeo cooed as he carried the sleeping Natsu into his house and away from any witnesses.

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“Time to wake up, Natsu-nii!”

When Natsu started coming to, the first thing he heard was Romeo’s voice calling out to him. His eyelids twitched faintly and started to open, but as soon as feeling returned to him he squeezed those eyes shut and recoiled in pain. His entire body ached; he felt like he had tried to take on Erza, Laxus, Mirajane, and Gildarts all at once.

“Come on, Natsu! Get up! It’s already been half an hour!”

Following this, Natsu felt something slam down upon his somnolent face. It rubbed itself against his countenance harshly and made him groan in discomfort. Then, he felt it pinch and twist his nose painfully. Giving a startled yelp, Natsu’s black orbs flew open and, unable to immediately believe what he was seeing, he instinctively took a whiff of it to confirm that it was indeed…

“GAAAH!! What the hell, Romeo?!” growled Natsu as he started writhing and thrashing his head around. Romeo, the giggling teenager, was sitting on his stomach with his foot hovering over the older man’s face. “Get your freakin’ foot out of my face!” Upon saying this, the senior Mage sat up and easily threw his younger guildmate off him. …at least, that’s what should have happened. Instead, Natsu struggled simply to raise his lower back up a few inches off the floor before the weight of the mass sitting on top of him forced him back down.

“What’s the matter, Natsu-nii~? Having a little trouble?” Romeo shot Natsu a sly grin as he used both of his bare, lightly scented feet to massage the pinknette’s mug. Other than the obvious humiliation Natsu was feeling from having a pair of feet shoved into his face, the Dragon Slayer was also perturbed to discover how big the young Mage’s stompers were. Together, the two appendages almost covered his entire face! It hadn’t been a dream…Romeo had stolen some of his size and power and was now bigger, heavier, and stronger than him!

“T-the fight!” Natsu blurted out once Romeo moved his heel away from his lips. “What happened with the fight?!”

“Hmm? Did I hit you so hard you forgot, Natsu?” Romeo chuckled before sticking out his chest so he looked more triumphant. “I won, of course! Knocked you out with a single punch!” The Fairy Tail member flexed the arm he had decked Natsu with; using his other hand to rub his bicep appreciatively.

“You’re joking! I lost? To you!? No w—“ Before he could finish, the larger Mage squished Natsu’s face between his warm soles. The comedic sight of the pyromancer’s compressed face made Romeo snort out a laugh. While the boy got a kick out of Natsu’s sorry state, the rosy-haired teen groaned in misery. “N-no…way. I can’t…believe it.” Natsu gritted his teeth angrily before grabbing both of Romeo’s ankles. The strain in his face was real as he tried his hardest to push back the musky feet from his handsome face. “R-rematch! I want a rematch!”

“A rematch, huh?” Romeo repeated as he scratched his chin and pondered the thought. Eventually he kicked both his feet out of Natsu’s grip and stood up off the fallen hero. Glad to be rid of the extra burden, Natsu managed to raise his head up an entire inch before one of Romeo’s meaty feet forced it back down. With the younger boy’s sole covering his nose and mouth, Natsu’s confused whines were muffled. The cherry-blossom-haired teenager grabbed Romeo’s foot with both hands and tried to pry it off him, but the harder he pushed, the more weight Romeo applied. “I’ll consider it, but only if you take a big, long sniff of my foot, Natsu-nii!” The child Mage smiled broadly while placing his hands on his hips. Natsu saw it all from behind the youth’s wiggling toes; Romeo stood on him like a hunter posing with his freshly slain prey.

“You wha—“ Natsu started to protest, but was silenced when Romeo’s heel pressed firmly against his mouth and forced the older man to kiss the solid, baked skin there.

“Just do it! You already got a whiff of it, so what’s the big deal?”

Natsu glared spitefully up at the smug Wizard, but ultimately decided to acquiesce to the self-abasement rather than let Romeo get away with his fluke of a victory. Keeping his glare on Romeo so the boy knew of his dissatisfaction, Natsu inhaled deeply until his clothed pecs swelled into visibility. Judging by the way he groaned and rolled his eyes into the back of his skull, Romeo’s foot did not smell pleasant. While it didn’t smell as bad as, say, Romeo’s Yellow Fire, it was still the stench of another guy’s foot; amplified further by Natsu’s superhuman sense of smell.

Getting what he wanted out of the obedient Dragon Slayer, the chuckling Romeo stepped off of his idol’s face. “That’s a good boy! Unfortunately, I don’t really feel like having a rematch with you right now!”

“Huh?! But you said—!” As Natsu finally got the chance to sit upright, he hissed in pain and grabbed his abdomen. Moving his arm, the Fairy Tail Wizard saw the damage Romeo’s wrecking ball of a punch had caused. His abs looked slightly discolored; a detail Natsu was only able to observe thanks to the gaping hole seared into his coat. “Damn it, not again…” Natsu mumbled, recognizing his clothing damage to be similar to what Sting had done during the Grand Magic Games.

“I said I would consider it! I’ve decided I don’t want to fight you right now!”

“Oh? Is someone afraid they might lose this time~?” Natsu replied with a cunning smirk as he wobbled to his feet. His words were meant to intimidate Romeo, but Natsu found he was the one getting intimidated. Standing beside Romeo for the first time since their match, Natsu now had a good understanding of their current height difference. The highest spike of hair on Natsu’s head…only reached as far as Romeo’s chest. The mighty Natsu Dragneel was a mere three and half feet tall; shorter than Romeo had been seven years ago!

“Afraid? Nah! Hungry?” Romeo probably followed this question with a “yes”, but Natsu wasn’t completely sure. Even with his sensitive hearing, the dragon-raised teen could not hear Romeo’s voice over the roaring growl that emanated from his belly. So primal and so loud was the bowel noise that for a second Natsu thought Acnologia was nearby! The owner of this noisy gut moaned with discomfort and gave his abs an exaggerated rub. “Man, I am starving! I feel like I haven’t eaten anything in weeks!”

“Haha…I can tell.” Natsu responded, chuckling nervously as he did so. All that excess energy Romeo had taken from him must have given him a monstrous hunger. Looking down, the older Mage touched his own stomach and listened to it grumble as well. Compared to the taller male in front of him, however, it was like the snarl of a tiger cub.

“You too, eh? Well don’t worry, Natsu-nii, dinner should be here any—“ It was Romeo’s turn to get cut off, this time by the sound of someone pounding on the front door. “Ah, that must be it now! Wait here!” His mouth practically watering as he left, Romeo rushed out of the room and left the shrunken Natsu by himself. After watching the purple-haired boy disappear down a nearby hall, Natsu took a moment to survey his surroundings. Between Romeo’s feet in his face and getting spooked by the kid’s tummy rumbles, Natsu hadn’t yet been given the chance to identify his current whereabouts. It looked like Romeo had carried him into a kitchen; most likely his own. A large, square table of wood filled the center of the room; much larger than what was needed for a family of two.

Moments later, Romeo returned with a large, brown paper bag in his arms. “Here it is! I ordered us a feast from a new shop that opened up nearby! They have almost everything!”

“A feast?! You had enough to buy all that?!” Natsu questioned as Romeo dropped the bag onto the kitchen table with a WHAM.

“Yup! I got a hefty bonus in my last job!” Romeo grinned gleefully as he pulled open the bag of food and peered inside. “Although…I was a few thousand Jewels short, so I borrowed some from you~”

“Say what?!”

“Don’t worry about that right now, Natsu-nii! Look! Food~!” Drool trickled down the younger man’s chin as he started spreading out the bag’s contents. Chicken breasts, pizza slices, bowls of rice, drumsticks, sandwiches, loafs of bread, and even a liter of cola! The sight of this banquet made the hungry Natsu immediately forget about the loss of a few thousand Jewels. Food…food to fill his starving belly was all that mattered right now! “Dig in, Natsu-nii!”

“You don’t need to tell me twice!” shouted Natsu as he pulled up a chair and seated himself at the Conbolts’ table. As soon as he did so, however, he remembered something even more important than money or sustenance. The Fire Dragon Slayer blinked a few times before turning his gaze back to Romeo. “Hey, hey, hey! Aren’t you forgetting something, Romeo?!”

“Hmm?” Romeo had just seated himself next to Natsu when the young boy turned to him with a stupid, ravenous look on his cute face. What was this pink-haired midget so upset about now?! He was keeping him from his delicious, appetite-sating food! Wait…midget… Upon realizing that the only part of Natsu that rose above the tabletop was his head, Romeo had to slap a hand over his mouth to suppress his giggle.

“My size! The fight’s over now, so give me back my height!”

“Right, right…I don’t wanna!” was Romeo’s quick reply as he poured some cola into two paper cups that had come with the food.

“You don’t…wanna?!” Natsu confirmed with disbelief in his voice. “Why the hell not?!”

“Because this is just so awesome, Natsu-nii! I’m the big one for a change; the stronger one! It’s like you’re my little, baby brother~” Romeo grinned as he placed his hand on the smaller Natsu’s head and rustled his spiky hair.

“Grrrrr…s-stop that!” Natsu yelled as he thrust both of his arms into the air and pushed away Romeo’s hand (though only because the dark-haired boy allowed him to). “You can’t just keep me like this! You think I want to spend the rest of life the size of a five-year-old?! No one will take me seriously!”

“Few took you seriously in the first place.” Romeo replied in a quiet whisper. The 13-year-old grumbled peevishly as he took in the mouth-watering food before him. Natsu wasn’t going to let him chow down unless he returned him to normal, but Romeo didn’t want to do that yet! On the contrary—Romeo wanted even more of Natsu’s strength and energy; he wanted to see one of Fairy Tail’s greatest dwindle before him! Eyeing their respective, hungry bellies, an idea popped into Romeo’s head. “I know! Let’s have a contest, Natsu!”

“A contest?” Natsu titled his head puzzlingly. What was the crafty kid up to now?

“Yeah! An eating contest!” Romeo swung his arm and motioned to the feast laid out before their ravening eyes. “The person who eats the most wins! If you win, I’ll give back what I took from you!”

“Hmmmm…interesting!” Natsu showed off his razor-sharp canines as he grinned toothily. “Alright! I—“

“But…if I win…” Romeo gave Natsu a few hearty pats to his broad back. “…then I take a little more of your power! Deal?”

Suddenly, Natsu’s eagerness to accept took a major blow. Romeo would absorb even more of his energy? He would…shrink him even smaller?! Natsu shook the hesitation from his head. No, that would only be the case if he lost! He would not lose; especially when it came to eating! “Fine by me! I hope you had fun being the big guy, Romeo, 'cause it’s about to come to an end!”

“We’ll see about that!” The adolescent fire Mage exclaimed back as he picked up a bowl of rice in one hand and a pair of chopsticks in another. Natsu did the same; his black eyes lighting up when he noticed the white rice was topped with some bright, orange hot sauce. “On your mark…get set…GO!”

As soon as Romeo gave the signal, Natsu tipped the small bowl up to his mouth and started shoving hot, spicy rice into his mouth. Once his chopsticks had pushed the last of the grain into his mouth and his cheeks bulged with full capacity, Natsu chewed briefly before gulping powerfully. His muscular throat bulged as it pushed an entire bowl’s worth of rice to his awaiting stomach. The rice hadn’t even arrived in his belly when Natsu put down the empty bowl and reached for something else. However, while the bowl of rice had been nearby at the edge of the table, everything else was a bit out of the small teen’s reach. Natsu groused quietly as he leaned up and forward a bit so he could reach a breast of chicken (which he recognized as Fire Chicken; his favorite!).

“Being short freakin’ sucks!” Natsu voiced as he sat back down and ripped into the extra spicy chicken. The Dragon Slayer chewed noisily what would make most people spit flames. A fork and knife weren’t even required; Natsu messily devoured the sauce-drenched meat in seconds and happily licked his fingers clean while tossing the barren bone away. He was still licking the juices from his lips when he reached for some more chicken, a leg this time, and sank his teeth into it. “Mmmm…so good~!” Natsu moaned with delight as he polished off a chicken bone, then two, and then a third. His hands looked like he had dipped the both of them into buckets of hot sauce when he grabbed a small loaf of warm, fluffy bread and devoured half of it with one bite. Succulent noises of content filled the air as Natsu smacked his lips and savored the taste on his tongue. Baked bread covered in a buttery, creamy glaze with a hint of spiciness transferred from his palms—it was pure heaven to the famished Wizard. As he swallowed and tossed the second half of bread into his maw, he seemed to forget all about why he was feasting so diligently. Returning to his normal size? Paying Romeo back for disgracing him like he did? No, the only thing that mattered right now was this delectable grub that was slowly filling his empty gut.

Giving his jaw muscles a short break from gnashing and chomping bird meat and baked dough, Natsu grabbed the cup of soda Romeo had poured for him and drank. While the cool, refreshing beverage made its way down his gullet, Natsu decided to glance over at Romeo to see how the kid was faring.

He almost choked on his soda.

“Mmmmm…YUMMY!” Romeo bellowed with a mouth packed with meat, bread, and rice. Even with his cheeks looking like they were about to burst, the energy thief crammed a big bite of pizza in as well. His jaws worked like an indomitable machine; grinding and masticating without prejudice. Throwing his head back, Romeo swallowed once and emptied his mouth completely. Such an attempt should have left the boy choking and gasping, but his inner muscles had become so strong that it was simple for them to crush the bolus down into where it belonged. No sooner had Romeo’s prominent neck-bulge vanished into his chest that the boy picked up two bowls of white rice. One after the other he poured them into his mouth; he didn’t even bother with chopsticks. Dump, chew, swallow, done. Natsu stared, dumbfounded, as Romeo wolfed down helping after helping. The hungry teenage boy left no trace of meat on the bones, not a single seed of rice stuck to the bottom of the bowls. He had his young face buried in one of the plastic bowls and licking its greasy bottom when he noticed Natsu watching him from the corner of his eye. “What’s wrong, Natsu-nii? Throwing in the towel already?” Romeo kept eye contact with his opponent as he drained the cola from his cup. It wasn’t nearly enough to quench his thirst, but the strengthened boy didn’t bother filling it back up. Instead he crushed it with a squeeze of his fist, burned it to ash with some Purple Fire, and grabbed the entire soda bottle. Wrapping his lips around the thread, Romeo tilted the whole liter of cola upside-down and started guzzling the fizzy soft drink.

GULP GULP GULP GULP

Once half the beverage had disappeared from its container, Romeo slammed it back down on the table and wiped his mouth off with his arm. “Suit yourself! As for me, I still have room for mo-OOAAAAAAAARRRRRR!!!!” That last word the young Conbolt had uttered became something else entirely as the flame Mage belched in Natsu’s face. The stunned Dragon Slayer had his sakura-colored hair whisked back in the vile wind until Romeo finished and nonchalantly smacked his chops. Forgetting to apologize, the youth returned to his meal and grabbed a relatively chunky chicken leg. The end that carried all the juicy meat was engulfed by Romeo’s jaws and a moment later it was tugged out—not a scrap of bird flesh remained clinging to the white bone. Every bit of it was being smoothly crushed and compacted by the larger boy’s teeth; proving humanity’s dominance over the common chicken.

“Wow…” was the only word Natsu uttered after witnessing the spectacle before him. Gradually the awe in his expression turned to fury and he ground his teeth together hard enough to make noise. “Goddammit! I won’t lose!” These words seeming to fire the young man up; Natsu leaned his shrunken body forward and grabbed not one, but two slices of cheesy pizza. He slapped these pepperoni-topped pizza wedges together, forming a sort of pizza sandwich, before cramming it all into his mouth. The tongue-burning heat of the melted cheese and bubbling tomato sauce didn’t seem to bother Natsu in the slightest as he munched a few times and used his tongue and cheeks to mold the Italian food into a soft ball of cheese, sauce, dough, and meat. He then attempted to swallow…but the large helping of food got stuck halfway into his gullet. The Dragon Slayer’s eyes went wide and he started to sweat as a few more gulps failed to push the pizza ball down. Panicking, Natsu desperately pounded his chest with his fist until the large glob of compacted ingredients finally continued its trip into his gut. “Geez…what gives?!” Natsu rasped before grabbing his soda and washing down that last bite with what remained in the cup. In the past he could get such huge helpings down no problem, but suddenly two slices of pizza was too big for him?! “Argh!! Damn this weak body!”

Refusing to let this little setback slow him down, Natsu continued to grab food off the table and introduce it to its new home in the depths of his swelling gut. Two more piece of Fire Chicken, another slab of bread, a second bowl of rice. As Natsu got halfway through that helping of white grain, he suddenly started to feel a bit queasy. Pain in his belly was making him cringe and whimper softly and the last trace of rice he pushed into his mouth took a fair amount of effort to swallow. When he finally did push it down, the Fire Dragon Slayer had a face drenched with sweat. He looked down at his noticeably pudgy abs with unease while gently caressing them. “Ugh…full already?” Natsu hissed with pain as he glanced at Romeo, hoping the younger male was having as much trouble as him. Judging by the way he was practically inhaling a foot-long sandwich, that answer was probably no.

“Keep…going!” Natsu ordered himself as he grabbed his own foot-long sandwich. He brought the thick combination of bread, ham, lettuce, tomato, mayo, and more to his mouth and stuck his nose up at the sight. It looked absolutely, mouthwateringly delicious and probably tasted as much, but Natsu wasn’t confident he could fit all of it into his jam-packed stomach. Not only that, but Romeo had already eaten so much—Natsu would have to eat so much more after this to win! The more he doubted his victory, the more flustered the teenage Mage’s face became. “I can…do this! I can keep eating!” Natsu forced himself to grin; mentally telling himself he would eat more and more and this giant sandwich was the next step! He opened his jaws wide and positioned them to take a large chomp of the sandwich.

\*chink\*

Natsu expected to feel a soft crunch as the layered ingredients that made up the sandwich were met with his powerful chompers, but instead his upper teeth had collided with his lower ones; he had literally taken a bite out of air! He wasn’t puzzled as to why; he had definitely felt the sandwich get tugged out of his mouth at the last second. The question was…why? The pink-headed man only had to look to the other end of his meal for the answer. Romeo, in his blind hunger, had grabbed the opposite end of the 12-inch ham sandwich and was now devouring it with so much speed one might think he required it simply to live. “Um…Romeo, that’s m—“ Natsu tried to protest Romeo’s food theft, but his words came too late. Within seconds the young boy had polished off the sandwich up to Natsu’s end and with a final bite he consumed the last of it…as well as something extra.

“Narf…suck…nom…” Romeo made a variety of satisfied sounds as he savored both the sandwich…and one of Natsu’s hands that had been holding the edible item. He didn’t even bother using his teeth; the

meat, bread, and veggies softened beneath his potent saliva and tongue alone. Natsu’s eyebrow twitched as he felt his hand getting soaked and touched by the younger man’s active tongue. Romeo didn’t even seem to realize he had someone’s appendage inside him; but if his pleased moans were anything to go by, he was delighted by the smaller Mage’s taste~ In fact, as his moist tongue slapped against Natsu’s palm, his own hands were slowly guiding the attached arm between his lips as well!

"Romeo! Stop eating my damn arm!"

Romeo was snapped out of his daze; his blue eyes staring at Natsu curiously. The kid looked down at Natsu’s outstretched arm and quickly realized he wasn’t seeing the older man’s hand because it was what he was sucking on! Uttering a muffled “oops”, Romeo pulled Natsu’s five-fingered appendage out of his maw with a wet pop. Thick strings of drool connected Natsu’s digits to Romeo’s mouth for a moment before they broke. “Sorry about that, Natsu-nii! Got a little carried away there.” Romeo apologized after gulping down the soggy, barely chewed sandwich chunks with little difficulty. Natsu held his hand up to his face and winced at the sight of its slimy exterior; scraps of lettuce and bread sticking to his skin. As the Fairy Tail guild member wiped his hand off with his pant leg, Romeo sat back in his chair and sighed while rubbing his gorged belly with both hands. “Man, I am so stuffed!” the boy announced as he lightly patted himself. He looked toward the table, littered with empty bowls and containers, and saw that there was still quite a bit of food left; more than enough to feed his father and him for the week! Turning his gaze back to Natsu, Romeo couldn’t help but grin triumphantly. “I guess we both know who won, don’t you think?” Romeo gave his round belly a loud smack, attracting the Dragon Slayer’s attention to it. Natsu only needed to compare its size with his own; it was obvious which contained more food…which was capable of holding more food.

“I-I can…I can still go on…!” Natsu retorted as he picked himself up and laid his body upon the table so he could reach for a large slice of pizza waiting near the center. Just as he was about to grab it, he groaned in pain and let himself slide back into his chair. He touched his slightly swollen abs with both hands and looked disappointedly at himself. It was no use…he couldn’t take another bite. If he had succeeded in eating that sandwich, he might have blown up! He never stood a chance of winning this competition…not since the very beginning!

“Aww, don’t look so down, Natsu-nii! I was watching you—you ate like a champ! It’s just…” Romeo hopped out of his chair and stood over Natsu. The spiky-haired teen bit his lip as he looked up at the taller male. Romeo was looking at his seated form through half-opened eyes; one of his hands gently nursing his enlarged gut. “I ate like a grand champ. Now, don’t you owe me something?”

“Hell no!” Natsu cried as he leapt from his seat and tried to get some distance from the energy thief. His rump had barely left the wooden chair when Romeo pushed it out of the way and grabbed the smaller Natsu by his white scarf.

“Don’t be a sore loser, Natsu! My stomach could really use your help!” the teenage fire user exclaimed as he dragged the fleeing Natsu closer to him and wrapped his sleeveless arm around him. The shorter male struggled with desperation as he was pinned between his fellow Wizard’s muscled limb and his plump body.

“H-help?! What in Earth Land are you talking about, Romeo?!”

Instead of giving Natsu a clear, verbal answer, Romeo grabbed the back of his head with his hand and shoved the Salamander face-first against his paunch. His handsome face pressed against Romeo’s lightly sweaty flesh, Natsu’s ears were almost immediately assaulted by a sonorous, resounding borborygmus that made his teeth chatter. Loud, organic noises filled Natsu’s head as the belly they originated from gently flexed and pulsed.

“Do you hear that, Natsu-nii? My stomach’s really working hard to digest all that grub!” explained Romeo, seeming pleased with himself as his hand kept Natsu’s face firmly pressed against his abdominals. As if to remind his rosy-haired friend that it was not excess fat he was pinned against, Romeo leisurely rubbed the man’s face against his hard six-pack. Those six bricks of solid muscle had been pushed outward by his expanded stomach; not hidden under a layer of fat like a standard potbelly. “At this rate, though, it’s gonna take at least a day! Think you can give it a boost~?”

Natsu didn’t understand what Romeo meant until the boy’s body lit up with a white glow. Specifically, the arm that was holding him in place and the flesh Natsu had his nose pressed against radiated brightly. The frantic Dragon Slayer cried out in protest, but all his words were muffled with his mouth pressed firmly against the slightly clammy skin of Romeo’s noisy gut. He struggled and struggled, but the younger man barely budged from his position. The fruits of his efforts only diminished further when Romeo started sapping his plentiful energy. Bit by bit, the dark-haired child pushed against his shrinking elder with more and more force. Weaker and stronger, weaker and stronger…steadily the disparity between the two Fairy Tail men became as clear as night and day.

“Woo-hoo! Listen to it go, Natsu-nii!” Romeo hollered boisterously while giving Natsu a face full of his flank. Natsu listened to the bulging stomach groan and gurgle with reverberating volume. Natsu’s own energy and power was jumpstarting the digestion process; strengthening Romeo’s inner workings like an upgrade to factory hardware. The young boy’s distended abdomen flexed as the contents of Romeo’s stomach were churned and squeezed into submission; bathed in highly potent enzymes and acids. Natsu was dumbfounded as he witnessed this; right before his eyes, all that food the younger male had consumed was being broken down into a soupy chyme and pumped into Romeo’s small intestines. Slowly the teen’s bloated stomach shrank down until Romeo’s lean physique had returned to normal. Only a little bit of pudge remained hanging over the waistline of the Mage’s shorts. Pizza, chicken, rice, sandwiches, bread…all of it barely chewed when it arrived in Romeo’s gut...most if it had been processed by the boy’s supercharged body and was on its way to the next stage of digestion. Romeo exhaled through pursed lips and flexed the robust arm that wasn’t slung over Natsu. “Man, I feel energized now! Thanks for that, Natsu!”

Romeo looked down at the smaller Wizard he was holding underneath his armpit. Natsu the Salamander was visibly shaking. Being that close to his stomach; listening and feeling pounds upon pounds of hearty meals just disappear into nothing—Romeo didn’t blame the older teen for being startled. “What’s wrong? Are you picturing what it’d be like to be in there?” Romeo chuckled as he used his free hand to massage that plump pudge on his lower belly while his other arm readjusted to get a better grip on the shrunken pinknette. Natsu snapped out of his trance when he suddenly realized his feet weren’t touching the floor anymore. Looking straight down, Natsu discovered Romeo was carrying him under his arm like a damn package!

“L-let me go, bastard!” vociferated Natsu as he squirmed like a little boy trying to escape the arms of his father.

“I will…when we’re in my room!” Romeo replied slyly as he headed out of the kitchen and up the stairs to the second floor. The trip to his bedroom was short, but seemed three-times longer for Natsu. The black-eyed flame spitter looked deathly sick by the time they arrived and was actually overjoyed when Romeo roughly threw him onto his floor. As he struggled to pick himself up, the fire Wizard groaned and clasped a hand over his greenish mouth. He felt like he was about to throw up everything he had just eaten! Romeo raised a thin eyebrow while putting his hands against his hips. “You got motion sickness from me carrying you up a few stairs? That’s pretty lame, Natsu-nii!” Romeo followed his insult with rowdy laughter. Getting annoyed, Natsu wiped his mouth of foam and bolted to his black-shod feet. He intended to get all up in Romeo’s face and express his irritation, but as soon as he stood up…

“You look like you got something you wanna say.” Romeo stated as he looked smugly down at Natsu. The young man’s face held a mixture of anger and shock as he started blankly into Romeo’s hard, rock-solid abs—for that’s what his face was presently leveled with. Craning his head back, Natsu stared up at his taller colleague as a droplet of sweat rolled down the side of his head. So tall…Romeo seemed so much taller than Elfman or anyone else in that category of size. He seemed almost like…like a giant! Natsu didn’t feel lightheaded anymore, but nor did he feel like shouting at the junior Wizard. Just so he could examine something besides this young behemoth, Natsu turned his gaze away from Romeo to get a look at his surroundings. The young Conbolt’s bedroom wasn’t really anything special; it was a pretty basic pad. Hardwood floor, walls decorated with a flame-like pattern, necessary furniture such as a white bed, dresser, closet, and writing desk. Numerous posters were hanging from the wall, including a few Fairy Tail posters cut out of Sorcerer Magazine and some pictures based off Fire Magic and its uses. What stood out the most in Romeo’s room was one corner dedicated to exercise. A small, blue mat was laid out on the wooden floor and nearby was a shelf holding several dumbbells and barbells. Natsu assumed Romeo had spent many hours in that corner to perfect his current build.

“You like?” asked Romeo after he noticed Natsu surveying his bedroom. “Lucy-nee told me your house is a pigsty! She praised me when I told her I keep my room nice and tidy~” The livid-haired teenager grinned toothily as he scratched under his nose with his index finger. “You better be careful, Natsu-nii! At that size, you might get lost in all your trash back home!”

“W-what are you saying, Romeo?! You’ve had your fun, so return me to normal! I don’t want Happy to see me like this!”

“Hmmm…well, about that…” Romeo crossed both arms behind his head and smirked mischievously down at his guildmate. “That eating contest was a whole lot of fun! I really enjoyed beat-I mean-competing with you! So, I was thinking, why not have some more fun?! We’ll turn your little condition into a game!”

“I’m not going to like this, am I?” questioned the older Mage, Romeo’s words disconcerting him.

“It’s simple! I challenge you to some contests and the wagers are always the same! If you win, I give you back all your power and size,” Romeo paused and wagged his finger at the rosy-haired dwarf below him. “But every time you lose, I get to reach in and take back a little more of the Pure Flame; along with another chunk of your strength and size! You game, Natsu-nii?” The Fire Dragon Slayer didn’t answer immediately. He could not help but look down at his feet and imagine himself losing again. How much smaller could he get? How long could Romeo shrink him and steal his power? Would it not stop until there was nothing left of him? Could Romeo keep on draining him until he just blinked out of existence? The thought terrified Natsu and he bit his lip with almost enough strength to draw blood. “Of course, if you’re too chicken, you can refuse.” Romeo quietly uttered as he eyed his ceiling. “Just don’t expect me to give up this awesome power any time soon!”

Natsu’s mouth twitched for a couple seconds as he contemplated what to do. Eventually he settled on smirking up at the boy that dwarfed him by almost two feet. “Do you even need to ask, Romeo?! You should know me by now; when have I ever run away from a challenge?!”

“That’s what I wanted to hear!” Romeo joyfully said as he slammed his fist into his open palm. He then returned his hands to his hip region and inspected his bedroom. “What should we do next, though? Hmmm…” Romeo’s large, blue orbs eventually landed on his workout area and the hint of a smirk graced his lips. “After that big eating contest, let’s try out something a little easier!” Natsu followed the loftier male to the other side of the bedroom where all his workout equipment was arranged. There, Romeo reviewed his weight rack before grabbing one of the barbells near the bottom. It was slightly smaller than the one left outside, but Romeo was still grinning ear-to-ear when he realized how effortlessly he could lift the bar of metal. “Let’s have a simple weight-lifting contest! The first one to pump iron ten times wins!” As he faced Natsu and spoke, the young teen idly curled the arm that was holding the barbell so the iron weights were raised to his chest. He absentmindedly lifted that heavy weight like it was a mere dumbbell! “You could use the exercise, Natsu-nii”

The Dragon Slayer scoffed as he glanced down at his round abdominals. Unlike Superboy over there, his digestion system was still hard at work breaking down his filling dinner. “Just give me a damn weight, Romeo!”

“Here, catch!” shouted Romeo before he passed his chubbier friend the barbell he was holding with an underhand toss. He tossed it a little too high, so Natsu calmly raised his arm above his head to catch it as it passed over him.

\*thunk\*

It was like Natsu’s hand hadn’t even been there. The pole of solid metal seemed to ignore Natsu completely as it continued on after smacking into the pink-haired man’s palm. With a surprised squeal the Fairy Tail member was pulled backwards by the heavy equipment and landed hard on his back. He laid there, hand above his head and gripping the barbell, astonished and just blinking as he attempted to figure out what had just occurred. Tilting his head back, Natsu looked at the barbell resting on the wooden floor above him. He tried to stand up and bring the weight with him, but it was as if the barbell was nailed to the ground! “What the…?” Bolted down objects he desired never deterring him before, Natsu temporarily let go of the metallic pole so he could leap to his feet and try again while standing over the piece of exercise equipment. This time he gripped the metallic bar with both hands and pulled while in a squat. A hiss escaped the muscular man’s clenched canines, blood vessels popped in his forehead, and thick veins filled with blood jutted out from beneath the skin of Natsu’s arms. In exchange for his efforts, the barbell was raised a few inches off the floor before Natsu had to release it in fear of his arms tearing off. “Jeez…how much does this weigh, Romeo?” Natsu asked while wiping some sweat off his nose.

“That one?” Romeo queried after glancing back at Natsu while snatching another, similarly-sized free weight and tossing it up and down in his hand as if it were made of plastic. “About 30 pounds. Why? You having some trouble~?”

“N-no!” Natsu lied, making sure he was facing away from Romeo when his expression became horrifyingly distraught. Thirty pounds? That was it?! In past he had juggled 30-pound weights! He had tossed them to Gajeel to catch in his mouth like they were popcorn kernels!

“That’s good! It’d be really pathetic if you were!” Romeo laughed, his words stinging Natsu a bit. “Regardless, how about I give myself a handicap? Just to make things more interesting!” Inquisitive, Natsu watched his younger guildmate put down the barbell he had chosen. He then proceeded to grab numerous other, donut-shaped weights and apply them to his barbell. In a few short moments the iron shaft had gone from holding 30 pounds to 300. The purple-haired Conbolt stood over the hefty weight, spat on both his palms, rubbed them together, and then bent down. His small hands gripped the chrome pole so his knuckles pointed to the floor and with a grunt he pulled. Even after absorbing all that power and becoming so much more than he was an hour ago, lifting three-hundred pounds of pure iron was no meager task. Unlike a certain pink shrimp, however, Romeo was actually succeeding in his daunting task. He growled through his gritting teeth, his face turned red, and his sleeveless arms exploded with pumped muscle and blood vessels. Straightening out his legs and arms, Romeo’s straining face grinned as he held the bulky free weight under his stomach. Keeping this chunk of metal off the floor was a chore, but just the fact that he was able to pick it up in the first place was making him swell with pride. Just yesterday he had attempted this very feat and it ended with his arms feeling like jello; the barbell never left the floor either. “Let’s go, Natsu-nii! We’re gonna do some basic barbell curls! On your mark…get set…!”

“W-wait!” Natsu voiced, but too quietly for Romeo to hear him. He was crouched low again and trying once more to raise his 30 pound barbell more than four inches off the floor. With a desperate grunt he was able to add another inch to that distance. “Hah! Making…progress!” Natsu exclaimed through his excruciating pain.

“Go!” Romeo roared, blue eyes wide with zeal as he curled his arms and lifted the heavy bar and its attached weights up above his chest area. His biceps bulged with raw strength they were never meant to contain as thin droplets of sweat formed on them. Romeo’s strained breathing turned into a giggle as he completed the first curl. “O-one!” Letting the barbell drop back down, Romeo immediately lifted it up again and watched with fascination as his baseball-sized biceps enlarged. He was doing it—he was lifting three-hundred pounds like a pro! “Two!”

“Fuck dammit fuck!” Natsu chanted over and over again while his face turned bright like a tomato. Sweat was pouring down his arms and face like numberless, leaky faucets and dampening the wood around his feet. All this strenuous exertion and Natsu was just now straightening out his legs after getting his barbell leveled with his navel.

“Three…four…five…!”

Knowing his opponent was already halfway to victory made the black-eyed teenager roar in distress. An unceasing string of curses spewed from Natsu’s lips and echoed in his head. He cursed himself, he cursed Romeo, and he cursed this entire nightmarish affair! He couldn’t allow it to continue; he would stop it here! Natsu snarled like a feral beast as he called upon tomorrow strength and the next day’s! The muscles in his arms audibly stretched to the point of tearing as he hauled the mass of iron up to his haggard face.

“Six and seven and EIGHT!” Romeo started laughing out the numbers; the workout suddenly getting a lot easier as his body adjusted to its substantial upgrade.

Bellowing a crazed scream, Natsu gave one last push and took his shaky fists above his spike-topped head. As veins popped all across his neck and Natsu shook violently like an unstable structure, the son of the Fire Dragon howled with exhilaration. “I did it! I fucking did i—“

“Ten!” Natsu heard Romeo proclaim; apparently having missed pump #9. “What a rush!” Romeo breathed steadily as he let his arms hang in front of him. He turned to Natsu and saw the older Mage with his arms held high over his head. The two of them locked eyes for a moment in silence; Romeo with puzzlement in his gaze while Natsu’s held a sense of impending dread. “Um…didn’t you hear me, Natsu-nii? I said we were doing barbell curls, not raises!”

“I…uhh…” Natsu was speechless as he wobbled unsteadily. He had been so focused on proving his strength that he had lifted the barbell wrong! All he could do was mouth would-be excuses while staring up at the 30lb weight above him.

“Hmmm…did I say it too quietly? I don’t remember…” Romeo tried to think back, but ultimately rolled his shoulders in an act of indifference. “Ah well! We’ll just do it again! Ready?” Without waiting for a response, Romeo looked to the floor and started pumping another set of ten. “And a one and a two and a three…!”

The three-foot Dragon Slayer was slow to react. Discovering that he had pushed himself beyond his limits in vain hit him hard. His expression was frozen in one of befuddlement. “I…I have to do this. I…I have to beat Romeo…!” Carefully, Natsu attempted to lower the barbell, but the free weight had other plans. His arms, simply too sore and weary, felt like they weren’t even there. Gravity brought the metallic rod and its round weights to the floor with a loud THWACK. Once again, Natsu was hunched over and pulling at a grounded barbell that simply wouldn’t budge.

“And a four and a five and a six! Haha, I could do this all day! Seven!”

“C’mon arms…MOVE!” Natsu screamed at the floor; his tender palms squeezing the bar’s cold metal. He pulled and he pulled, but all he got in return were his own cries of pain. His arms, as strong and muscular as they appeared, felt like twigs! He couldn’t lift anything with twigs! “Goddammit!”

“Eight! Nine! And that’s ten!” The athletic young man with plum-colored hair gave a long exhale as he carefully placed the 300lbs of metal onto the floor in front of his bare feet. Fresh sweat dripped down the tips of his bangs and turned his yellow scarf a dark, ugly color. Romeo placed his hands on his hips, panted like a dog in heat, and looked to Natsu one more time. The pink-haired teen was hanging his head; glowering at the barbell he had failed to lift correctly. He looked up at Romeo through some sweat-drenched, dampened spikes and their eyes met. Natsu’s black orbs were still filled with foreboding dread, but the confusion in Romeo’s cerulean ones had been replaced with something else. Natsu squeezed his eyes shut in shame; Romeo didn’t even need to say what he was thinking…

Pathetic.

“Guess I won that one too, eh Natsu-nii?” inquired Romeo as the sweaty kid started walking toward his living, breathing source of power.

“O-one more time…!” Natsu blurted out, almost in plea. “I-I’ll definitely lift it this time!”

“I’ll be taking my reward now~” The flame Wizard, ignoring Natsu’s appeal, stopped in front of him and placed his right hand on the older boy’s shoulder. Grabbing his shirt, Romeo lifted Natsu up straight and forced him to let go of the barbell. Natsu kept his head low in defeat and simply tightened his reddened fists as Romeo’s hand began to glow. Right on cue Natsu’s height and overall general size commenced reduction and Romeo’s attempt to suppress a moan failed miserably as an intoxicating flow of Magic Power, physical energy, and more passed into his larger figure. The victim of his energy drain didn’t bother trying to resist; he knew it would be useless. Romeo was stronger than him and getting stronger by the second; subduing the Dragon Slayer if he tried to run away would be child’s play. So Natsu just stood there with his fists clenched and took it until his form had dwindled down another several inches. He kept watching the floor; not wanting to look up and see what part of Romeo was in his face this time. Perhaps that was a wise thing to do—looking into another man’s crotch was the last thing Natsu needed right now.

“How weird...” Natsu listened to Romeo mumble above him. The purple-headed Wizard of Fairy Tail was rotating his shoulders and twisting his body around. “Is it just me, or do these clothes feel a little…tighter?” Out of the corner of his eye, Natsu watched Romeo use his right hand to pull at the white sash tied around his waist; testing to see if it was snugger than when he had put it on this morning. Getting a glimpse of that lithe waist above his eye level made Natsu sink his incisors into his bottom lip morosely. The loss of pride was only beginning, however. Romeo ended up tugging that light piece of clothing a tad too hard and the whole thing unraveled from his hips. The Fire Mage sighed as his sash flittered to the floor and he must have said “fuck it” to the rest of his close-fitting clothing, because the next thing Natsu knew, Romeo’s yellow scarf was falling after it. With these two garments out of the way, it was easy for Romeo to peel his dark jacket off his perspiring flesh. “Whoa! I’ve gotten bigger!”

These words struck Natsu like a dagger through the heart. No! No fucking way! He’s growing too?! Natsu couldn’t help but imagine Romeo outgrowing his house while he shrank into a bug. Wasn’t the inequality he was feeling right now more than enough?! Praying that Romeo was mistaken, Natsu finally gathered the self-esteem needed to pick his head up and look straight up at the source of all his misfortune. With his coat gone, every juicy detail of Romeo’s bare torso was there for him to see. Natsu’s black eyes first fell upon the teen’s cobblestone abs; sweat trickling through each crossroad cut into his belly. Above that were his prominent pectoralis major muscles—two well-rounded, hills of power that his scarf did a good job of concealing. Next, the shorter man’s eyes drifted to the same thing Romeo was currently ogling: his right bicep flexed to a peak. Puberty had certainly given Romeo Conbolt one hell of a ripped bod, but was it bigger than Natsu last remembered? At first Natsu was going to answer “No”, but his perceptive sense of sight discovered subtle changes in Romeo’s muscle mass. It was only a minor improvement; naturally only Romeo himself would notice it, but the kid had definitely gained an ounce or two of muscly weight. Where had it come from? Natsu once again observed his young guildmate’s smooth abdominals and noticed the pudge from earlier was completely gone. Romeo’s metabolism must have used that last serving of Natsu’s energy to speed up and complete the absorption and assimilation of all that sustenance from the eating contest. Boatloads of protein and other helpful nutrients had flooded into Romeo’s body and reinforced it with some extra muscle. Anything that would have become fat, on the other hand, was burned away instantly.

“Bam and bam!” Romeo shouted as he gave his other arm a hearty flex as well and bounced his tensed arm muscles with grinning elation. “Look at me, Natsu-nii! I’m huge!” Romeo looked down at the older male and his expression suddenly took a smug, dominate turn. He curled his arms a few more times, loving the way Natsu seemed to look at them with reluctant envy. Yes…posing above the Fire Dragon Slayer and having him make such a pitiful face—it was oddly invigorating. “You, on the other hand, have gotten really puny~! You’re almost like an infant!”

Natsu kept his mouth shut and tried not to produce any sound. After all, if something were to come out of his mouth, it would probably be a whimper. He was glad Romeo wasn’t growing into a giant after all, but that revelation was like a small twinkle of light in an endless abyss. It did not change the fact that Romeo, in his towering, topless, and buff glory, was the superior one here. This very sight—Romeo staring down at him with eyes so confident; his immaculate chest and six-pack expanding and contracting with his humble breathing—it was emasculating him thoroughly! Natsu squeezed his eyes shut and returned to looking at the floor. If he continued to stare at this larger boy, he would eventually be forced to admit that…that…

“Hey, hey!” came Romeo’s voice all of a sudden. Before Natsu knew what was happening, the larger male grabbed the back of his head and pushed him forward. His black orbs turned wide like golf balls as his nose was buried into Romeo’s warm, green-clad crotch. “Eyes up here, pipsqueak!”

As if compelled to obey, Natsu found his gaze pulled upward so he was looking up the valley of Romeo’s bare torso. Now that his view of the muscular boy was so steep, Natsu could see every tiny hair protruding out of the teen’s fair skin. Past the road of his chiseled abs, slightly concealed behind the veritable hills of his pecs, was Romeo’s boyish face beaming down at him. For several seconds the two flame Mages just stared at each other; Natsu’s pupils trembling in his sockets while he breathed in the musky scent of Romeo’s groin region. He attempted to pull away, for getting a face full of another man’s privates wasn’t something he particularly enjoyed, but Romeo’s firm hand made sure that didn’t happen. As if things weren’t humiliating enough, Natsu sensed a glow behind him as Romeo began drawing out the Pure Flame through his hand. Dwindling again, Natsu shouted confused protests into Romeo’s lap while increasing the force of his struggling.

“Shhh.” Romeo hushed the shrinking teenager with a purse of his lips while squeezing Natsu’s cranium in his hand. “I just want a little more! Just…teeny bit more~!” Natsu couldn’t hold back his whimper this time, though he was thankful his sign of weakness was muffled by Romeo’s green pants. The violet-haired boy’s face—chin touching the center of his stiff chest—seemed to get farther away as Natsu’s height went down. Just before Igneel’s son shrank past Romeo’s pants-clad manhood, he swore he felt something jerk against his nose like a snake. Was Romeo…was he finding this situation arousing?! Did dominating him like this give Romeo that much pleasure?

“Fuck…me.” Natsu mumbled under his breath as he persisted in gawking up at the young Adonis above him. With each passing second the strapping young man seemed to get taller and wider; almost as if he was growing before the pinknette’s own eyes. Natsu got so short that Romeo couldn’t even keep his hand on him anymore, yet he still shrunk thanks to the foot Romeo had begun pressing down on his toes. The pain of having his toes crushed was nothing compared to the inner turmoil Natsu was in, however. Seeing Romeo’s sweaty, pumped form looming over him was fracturing his ego, yet the rosy-haired teen couldn’t look away. It was like his fellow Wizard was a sight so grand and dazzling that looking away would be a crime; someone like Romeo needed to be looked at and marveled. Natsu elected instead to remind himself that he wasn’t inferior to the raven-haired kid. He reached down and touched his own, exposed abdominals. His fingers glided over the deeply cut muscles he had spent years building. His abs were more developed; they were stronger and harder! He was older and more matured! Romeo was just a boy, while he was a man!

Just when it seemed like Natsu’s confidence was returning…just when it seemed like that signature grin of his would grace his face…Romeo felt the need to give his pecs a quick bounce. This ostentatious display of masculinity was made all the worse due to Natsu’s viewpoint; far beneath those contracting muscles, Romeo’s pecs seemed so huge and packed to the brim with power. Noticing a change in the shrinking man’s expression, Romeo locked eyes with Natsu and made a face that screamed “What do you think? They look good from way down there?”

Natsu could no longer deny it. As he stared up at the superior male, his bottom lip quivered and tears welled up under his eyes. It was simply too obvious—Romeo, as of right now, was more of a man than him! This 13-year-old was the alpha male! Natsu tearfully acquiesced to this.

“Oops! Looks like I shrank you more than I wanted!” Romeo noted as he took his foot off the older Mage’s foot once he had reached a mere foot in height; Natsu Dragneel was now below Romeo’s knees! “Sorry about that! I guess it’s gotten much easier to absorb your strength!” As Romeo grinned and loomed over the smaller man, he suddenly titled his head with confusion. “…are you crying, Natsu-nii?”

“N-no!” Natsu denied as he quickly dragged his sleeve across his face. Just as his tears were wiped away, so did Natsu’s poor attitude. How did all these demeaning thoughts make it into his head?! Him a weakling? Romeo a real man?! He must have been so caught up in the moment that his size hadn’t been the only thing that shrunk. Natsu scolded himself mentally; screaming at himself not to fall into despair and abandon his manhood. The spiky-haired teen clenched his fists hard enough for veins to pop in them before glaring up at the bare-chested Romeo, not with envy or self-abasing, but fury.

“You totally were! That’s pretty pitiful, Natsu!” Romeo laughed mockingly, seemingly unaffected by Natsu’s “scary” glare. “I don’t blame you, though! I must look a lot different to you now! I mean…look at how small you are!” Romeo crouched down so to bring his big, handsome face closer to the 12-inch man. “You can’t even be called a human anymore! You’re…nothing but a toy~”

Romeo’s cheeky grin only made Natsu madder, but the Dragon Slayer couldn’t help but take a shaky step back from the towering youth. If Natsu was no longer human, than the same could be said of Romeo! At least to him, Romeo was more of a giant now! “What’d you just call me?! A toy?! Well watch out, because this toy’s been known to cause serious injury!”

“Oooh? Them's fighting words.” replied Romeo with a fake accent as he straightened out his body again. His blue eyes looked intently down at the teenage Wizard; hands against his bare hips. “In that case, how about I grant you that rematch you were begging me for? That’ll be the next contest!”

“…pardon?” the smaller male raised an eyebrow. He must have misheard the blue-eyed behemoth.

“Problem with your ears, little man?” Romeo cracked a smile as his words stuck one of Natsu’s nerves. The kid could never get away with calling Natsu such things in the past, but now? Now there wasn’t a damn thing the fire spitter could do about it! “We’re gonna have ourselves another match! Right here, right now!” Natsu’s eyes went wide with unease as Romeo cracked his knuckles; almost as if the sound mimicked what the giant of a boy was going to do to his bones. “Unless…you don’t think you can win~”

Natsu felt a warm droplet of sweat trail down his temple. Fight Romeo…at this sad excuse for a size?! There was just no way! He’d be swatted away like a mosquito! Not to mention all the power Romeo had stolen from it; the kid had to be crazy strong now! He would definitely, most certainly lo—No! He couldn’t let thoughts like these overrun his head again! Accepting his inevitable loss was the same as forfeiting! “I’ll definitely win this time! You won our last fight by a fluke; this time I’m gonna kick your ass!”

“Ha! Well, in that case, let’s not waste any time! You can go first this time, Natsu-nii.” The athletic giant spread his arms wide; not planning to dodge or block whatever attack his small guildmate came up with. “Gimme your best shot, shorty!”

“It’ll be my pleasure!” Natsu shouted back as he stamped the ground, held his fists at his side, and roared a war cry. A bright aura of flames engulfed Natsu’s shrunken body and produced enough heat to blur the air around him. To Romeo, however, it simply looked like someone had left a candle burning. I know I can’t take him out with a single blow; it’s beyond me. Natsu confessed in his head as he studied Romeo’s body—the kid looked like a two story house! “So…I’ll do it in two!” Upon saying this, Natsu’s hot flames were suddenly mixed with fierce bolts of lightning.

“Lightning Flame Dragon Mode, eh?” Romeo mumbled after a short, rapt whistle. The young boy remained calm, even after Natsu leaped high off the floor and lunged toward him; left fist engulfed with swirling flames and lightning. “You still have that much Magic Power? Heh, you could probably beat me!” Romeo was still smiling as Natsu’s Magic-charged fist made contact with his abdomen. “…if I was still six years old!”

Natsu growled through barred fangs; his pearly whites reflecting the bright light emanating off his fist. He pushed as hard as he could against one of Romeo’s six ab muscles and felt the teen’s thick flesh squish beneath his knuckles. The raging flames and crackling electricity scorched and zapped the rest of Romeo’s stomach respectively. After several seconds of hitting Romeo with a punch that, normally, would have knocked out Sting the White Dragon Slayer, Natsu withdrew his hand, but wasn’t finished yet. Before he allowed gravity to interfere with his assault, the musclebound Mage wrapped his right leg in fire and lightning and delivered another bone-shattering strike. The expanse of Romeo’s belly was bathed in a sea of smoking, lightning-charged fire when Natsu finally allowed himself to fall. Reaching his hand out, the grinning young man hooked onto the giant’s navel and snorted up at his larger opponent.

“How’dya like that?!” Natsu shouted as he watched the giant’s bare abs burn in his lightning-cloaked flames. No doubt the kid’s flesh was being charred through and he’d be riding the giant down to the floor any second now! When, instead, Romeo used a hand to fan away Natsu’s flames and expose the flawless, unharmed skin beneath, Natsu honestly shouldn’t have been surprised.

“Hey, that kind of tickled!” Romeo revealed as he frivolously scratched his six-pack abs while keeping eye contact with the cherry-blossom-haired midget hanging just below them. He was trying to remain strong, but Romeo could tell by the older teen’s quivering eyeballs that his confidence had been shaken. “Well, there goes your free hit. Now it’s my turn!” Consequent to saying this, the hand Romeo had been using to scratch his abdominals moved to grab Natsu. Not yearning to be grabbed and manhandled by the giant, Natsu let go of Romeo’s navel and dropped down to his feet. No sooner had he touched the floor that one of Romeo’s large, unadorned stompers lifted off it. Natsu gaped up from a knelt position as the dark-haired boy hovered his foot over him and prepared to stomp him like a cockroach!

“Holy crap!” Natsu shouted on impulse as he dove out of the way, just before Romeo stomped where he was standing with a loud BOOM. Natsu only had a few seconds to scramble back to his feet and dive again to avoid a second stomp from Romeo’s other foot. With hardly any time to rest between footfalls, Natsu had to keep on moving to avoid getting flattened. The gigantic, adolescent Fairy Tail Wizard laughed cheerfully as he seemed to perform an odd dance above the panicking Natsu; each step coming down with the intent to squash!

“Stay still, Natsu-nii! It’s not like you’re small enough to get crushed with one stomp!” boomed Romeo; Natsu having dodged seven more of the child’s powerful stamps during the course of those words. Knowing how much of his strength was now contained in that youthful body of Romeo’s, Natsu wasn’t ecstatic in finding out how harmful it would be to end up under one those flat, formidable feet.

“Damn it! I’ve gotta find an opening and attack!” Natsu growled as his fiery, electrified form sidestepped another thooming step. Looking out between the younger flame Mage’s legs, Natsu saw the expanse of Romeo’s room behind him and quickly got the bright idea to get behind the giant! Romeo would have to turn around and that would give him a couple seconds to actually fight back! When next Romeo’s foot came down, Natsu threw himself out from under the youth’s heel and landed behind the towering male. Unfortunately, Romeo had been waiting for his elder to do just this. The pink-haired Salamander was in the middle of picking himself off his stomach when he noticed the area around him darken in shadow. “What the-AAARH!” Natsu got cut off when a humungous, heavy mass came crashing down on his body; pinning everything below his upper torso beneath its bulk. Natsu didn’t have time to avoid it—he didn’t even see it coming. Hissing through his teeth, the teenager twisted his neck and looked up at Romeo…smirking down at him…while sitting on him!

“Gotcha now!” exclaimed Romeo as he gently rubbed his green-clad butt against Natsu and made him grunt with pain each time his firm butt cheeks rolled over his head and mashed it into the wooden floorboards. Natsu struggled and squirmed, but he was completely and utterly stuck. There was nothing he could do to lift Romeo off him; the purple-haired kid may as well have been Earth Land itself!

“Damn it, Romeo, what are you doing?!” asked one pissed off Natsu. “We’re supposed to be fighting, not-mmmph!” The smaller man found it impossible to continue as his head was once again buried beneath Romeo’s muscular ass, though the 13-year-old caught the gist of what the older man had been whining about.

“Come on, Natsu-nii, you were taught the basics of combat, weren’t you?” Romeo questioned as he watched Natsu’s tiny legs stick out from beneath his crotch and senselessly kick about. “You gotta mix up your fighting style depending on the strengths and weaknesses of your opponent. In your case, you’re so small and weak…” Romeo dragged his pants-covered rump off Natsu’s face and looked down his shoulder to sneer at him. While Natsu was weakly glaring back, Romeo raised his ass off the 12-inch Mage and slammed it back down before he noticed it was gone. Natsu squealed in pain and writhed underneath the heavy, young boy. “…that my butt’s a useable weapon!”

His face twisted with pain and resentment, Natsu opened his mouth to retort, but instead found himself silenced by the giant’s rump slamming down upon the back of his head. Romeo hummed with content as he swiveled his ass cheeks into the hardwood flooring; grinding poor Natsu’s head beneath his sizeable glutes. He dragged his behind over the length of Natsu’s form; bulldozing his legs flat against the ground. As he sat there comfortably and listened to Natsu huff and puff, he felt some weak tapping underneath him as the shrunken Dragon Slayer did his best to kick at the weight on top of him.

“Would you look at that—you really are kicking my ass!” chuckled Romeo before he began bouncing on Natsu’s legs. A short, sharp cry of pain came from Natsu each time Romeo brought his tush down; he sounded like a squeaky toy! For the next few minutes Romeo bounced, dragged, and swiveled his green-clothed buttocks against Natsu. His spiky-haired victim could do nothing to stop the abuse; his cloak of fire and lightning was having zero effect on Romeo. In fact, by the time the purple-headed kid had had enough and picked himself off the bruised flame Mage, the mighty aura of Dragon Slayer Magic had been snuffed out.

“F-finally…” muttered a wobbly, hurt Natsu as he slowly lifted himself off the floor with his hands and knees. With an extended groan he stood up and spent a few seconds ensuring his unsteady form didn’t fall back down. “Damn…that was worse than a train ride!” Natsu held his aching head and looked up at Romeo, whom had returned to his feet long before his smaller guildmate. Natsu was aghast to see the huge youth squatting over him; face beaming like a child who had just received a new plaything. That hand that had failed to grab him before returned for a second try; all five fingers extended to catch their prey. Thanks to his quickness, Natsu managed to sprint out of Romeo’s reach in the nick of time…but that wasn’t enough. With his thumb and index finger, the giant caught one end of Natsu’s fluttering, white scarf and brought the retreating man to a sudden halt. Natsu gasped as his scarf tightened around his neck; hands clawing at it as he was plucked off the bedroom floor.

“You’re not getting away! This fight’s only just begun, Natsu-nii!” Romeo declared as he danged the gasping man before his cute and handsome mug. The young, shirtless behemoth didn’t seem bothered at all by the fact Natsu was choking in front of him; his face slowly turning blue as he was strangled by his own scarf. Not wanting Natsu to pass out on him, Romeo used a finger from his opposite had to give the checkered muffler a tug so it came undone. The piece of white fabric no longer acting like a noose, Natsu was finally able to breathe and happily did so. He fell a short distance, but was snatched out of the air by Romeo’s hand and returned to the larger boy’s eyes. Natsu wasn’t quite small enough for Romeo to completely coil his hand around, but he was sure the small teen wouldn’t be escaping his grasp anytime soon.

“P-put me down!” demanded Natsu as he thrashed and fidgeted in Romeo’s grasp, but with his arms pinned to his sides there was little he could do but scream empty threats. “I’m warning you, Romeo! Let go of me or I’m gonna knock you senseless!”

“Oh you will, will you? You and what army?” Romeo countered, laughing in Natsu’s face and blowing the man’s hair back with his breath. Natsu cringed and turned away as he caught a whiff of that foul air.

“Ugh, your breath stinks!”

“Huh? It does?” Romeo turned away briefly and exhaled into his palm. Natsu clicked his tongue when he saw his dad’s memento looped around the boy’s pointer finger and getting soiled by that atrocious breath. “Pee-yew! You’re right! Must be from all the meat I ate!” When Romeo turned back to face Natsu, he stared at him for a few moments before smiling slyly. “You know…” The giant Wizard’s other hand came up and joined the first in holding Natsu. The rosy-haired man’s anxiety grew as his waist was squeezed by both of Romeo’s large, strong hands. “You’re about the same size as that last ham sandwich I ate!”

“I’m…I’m a…a wha—?” Natsu wasn’t quite sure how to react upon being compared to a sandwich, but Romeo sure did. When the enormous fire Mage licked his lips as if he was looking straight at another delicious, ham sandwich, Natsu knew he wasn’t going to like what was coming.

The 12-inch Fairy Tail member struggled with newfound vigor as he was slowly raised at an incline toward Romeo’s mouth. His eyes were shaking and filled with fear as Romeo slowly opened his mouth with an exaggerated “awwwww”. The inside of the teenager’s maw was moist and dark; countless ropes of dribble connected his juicy, dripping tongue with the roof of his mouth. His pearly whites gleamed with a thin layer of spit. This was the last sight those sandwiches had seen…had they been created with eyes.

“H-hey! Romeo, s-stop!” Natsu cried out as he got closer and closer to the widely opened orifice. The muscular tongue flexed with anticipation; eager to taste Natsu’s skin. Igneel’ son couldn’t stop his teeth from chattering as he imagined himself a spicy chunk of meat between two slices of bread; topped with crunchy lettuce and ripe tomato. He pictured Romeo stuffing half his torso into his hungry cavity and…

\*CHOMP\*

Natsu squeezed his eyes shut, but as soon as he noticed the lack of agony that came with getting bitten in half he cracked his eyes open. He was met with his own harrowing reflection, courtesy of Romeo’s clenched teeth. The wall of rock-hard structures was less than an inch from Natsu’s nose.

“Hahaha! You actually thought I was doing to eat you! Look at your face!” As Romeo broke out into booming laughter, he mercifully took Natsu away from his mouth so the poor shrinkiee didn’t get another face full of bad breath and saliva. Romeo was still cackling full-force when Natsu tried to yell his retaliation over it.

“I-I did not!” he said, not even trying to make the lie seem believable. “J-just put me down already!”

“Oh, sure, I’ll get right on that,” Romeo replied once his laughing fit had calmed down enough. Just as the last chuckles were making their way out of his mouth, Romeo strengthened his grip on Natsu and pressed his thumbs painfully into his chest to make him squirm. “Is what I would say if we weren’t in the middle of a fight! I’ll put you down when I’m good and ready! First and foremost…” Romeo just couldn’t give Natsu a break. When the First Generation Dragon Slayer saw the blinding illumination he knew what was happening.

“Wait! What the hell are you doing?!” vociferated Natsu as he flailed around in Romeo’s hands; those appendages quickly seeming to expand as Natsu rapidly shrank within them. Even Romeo was surprised by the rate of Natsu’s reduction; in mere seconds he went from having one foot to his name to becoming a three-inch mini-person. Romeo was now capable of holding Natsu with a single hand; that hand completely concealing everything below the man’s chest. Natsu felt apprehensive as he looked down at Romeo’s gargantuan fist and compared it to his new size. “W-why?! I haven’t lost yet!”

“How many times are you going to have to be reminded?” Romeo spat as he curled his lip at Natsu and squeezed him in his hand. The squeaky yelp the smaller Mage made as Romeo’s muscular digits compressed his shape brought a smile back to the boy’s lips. Natsu Dragneel, the personification of a natural disaster, was so outmatched! “We’re having a battle! Any Magic I have at my disposal is fair game! That includes turning little toys like you…” Romeo opened his fingers wide and dropped the freshly diminished Natsu. The black-eyed teen plummeted like he was just shoved off the side of a building; Romeo’s passing, young bod being that building. At around the giant’s knee level, Natsu managed to gain control over his descent and score a landing on his feet. A perfect, dignified landing was not meant to be, however, as with a firm plant of his foot, Romeo shook the floor under Natsu and made the older boy fall onto his butt. Natsu took in the huge foot that had come down next to him before craning his neck back and gaping up at Romeo’s hulking, monolithic form. “…into nothing but bugs!”

“I…I am not a bug!” Natsu bellowed as he sprang to he feet, but was quickly returned to his rump when Romeo picked his foot up and hovered it over the bug-sized Dragon Slayer. Natsu shook with obvious fright as Romeo chuckled under his breath and wiggled his sweaty toes above the senior member of his guild.

“Aren’t you? Only a bug would recoil in fear when a foot passes over them.” Romeo lowered his damp, wrinkled sole closer to Natsu. The tiny Wizard shook in his sandals as he raised a hand in a half-hearted attempt to push the massive appendage away. “Are you afraid of getting squished, little buggy Natsu~” When the damp bottom of Romeo’s foot met Natsu’s hand, it effortlessly continued on its path. Natsu was visibly shocked at how useless he was; he didn’t even bother raising his other hand, as even a numskull like him knew that two zeroes still equaled nothing. At a snail’s pace the foot got closer and closer to Natsu’s face; its baking warmth tickling his skin.

“D-don’t…wait…I-I’m not…”

Romeo snorted with amusement and took his shoeless stomper away to give Natsu back the unobstructed view of his colossal figure. It took the shivering Natsu a few moments to realize the foot was gone and that he could put his arm down. “You’re so much fun to tease, Natsu-nii! Remember when you used to pick on me for being so small? Well look at you now! You’re so tiny! You used to be…” The raven-haired teen took his left hand and raised it high over his head. “…this tall! Can you believe it?”

Natsu could not. Had he really been so much taller than the youthful titan? Looking up at this giant of a child now, Natsu had a difficult time picturing it. Why was that?! He remembered walking among Romeo every day; looking down at him as he joked with the younger Fairy. He knew this wasn’t how he should be viewing the world: from the viewpoint of a beetle! Why then…why did his memories of being an average sized human seem so distant and…unreal?

As Romeo lowered his left arm down, he noticed something clinging to his hand. Examining it, the young fire-user identified Natsu’s scale-patterned scarf wrapped around his finger and stuck to it via sweat. Natsu watched from far below as Romeo peeled the white muffler off his skin and dangled it before his cute face.

“Hey! Gimme my scarf back!” Natsu commanded as he raised both his arms to catch it. Romeo glanced at the expecting man and then the piece of fabric pinched between his fingers. One look at the devious smirk he made was enough for Natsu to discern that he wouldn't just hand the scarf back.

“Why? I think it’s a bit too big for you now!” Romeo proclaimed as he pinched both ends of the thin piece of clothing and stretched out its foot-long length. His blue eyes looked past it to compare the scarf to Natsu’s three-inch form. “Though, it’s a bit too small for me…” The larger Mage brought the shrunken clothing to his own neck and made a note that it could just barely pass for some type of necklace. Getting a bright idea, Romeo proceeded to tie the piece of cloth around his left bicep. Once it was wrapped around the muscle nice and tight, the grinning boy flexed jauntily and listened to the checkered fabric audibly strain against his constricted muscle.

“What do you think you’re doing?! That’s not an armband, Romeo! Take it off!” Natsu shouted, but Romeo didn’t look like he was listening to the little fire-breather. He continued to taunt him by flexing again; this time positioning his arm in front of his shirtless chest. Natsu could hear the fabric of his scarf stretch from down there on the floor—it sounded like it was crying out in pain! “I’m serious, Romeo! Take. It. Off.”

“If you’re so serious…” Romeo stopped showing off and situated his hands to his hips. Even this action, however, flexed Romeo’s arms in a display of causal strength and Igneel’s gift did its best to constrict the slightly protruding muscle. “…then come and take it from me, hot shot!”

Natsu’s fists clenched at his sides. Embarrassing him was one thing, but disrespecting the only thing he had to remember his old man by?! Romeo had finally gone too far! Roaring in frustration, Natsu charged toward the giant’s left foot. In response to his guildmate’s hostility, Romeo took that foot and reared it backwards. Natsu watched as the boy’s stomper was cloaked in Purple Flare before he thrust it toward him with the intent of kicking him like a football! The battle-hardened Wizard, with flawless timing, leaped over the flaming foot. He landed perfectly on top of it; the dark flames swirling around him feeling like a light breeze. Romeo kept his foot off the floor and stared suspiciously at it; unable to see Natsu’s small form within his dark flames…until he came bursting out of them and started dashing up his outstretched leg. The mini-Mage had his mouth open and was sucking in the last bit of purple fire he had been consuming while concealed by Romeo’s Magic. Energized by his meal, Natsu grinned and rushed forward toward Romeo’s midsection with even greater speed.

“Nice going, Natsu-nii! Now eat some of this!” Continuing to stand on one foot, Romeo held up his left fist and used Purple Flare to cover it in a deep, dark orb of flames. He then sent the fist flying toward the incoming Natsu. The Fire Dragon Slayer, who had been focused mainly on his uphill dash, didn’t notice Romeo’s attack until it was in his face. Due to the giant teen’s hand being hidden within the blue core of the Purple Flare, Natsu was unaware he was on a collision course with a giant fist and simply thought it was a thrown sphere of fire.

“Ha! Fire won’t work, Romeo, no matter how much there is!” Natsu barked as he opened his maw wide to receive the revitalizing, fiery fuel. It was quite a shock when, instead, Natsu felt like he had crashed into a steam locomotive! A disorganized groan was all the fire Mage could utter as his body was splayed out across Romeo’s knuckles. The only reason Natsu’s teeth and bones were still in an unbroken state was because Romeo had held back. What had been the equivalent of a speeding train to Natsu wasn’t even a true punch; it was more of a quick, weak jab. Taking advantage of Romeo’s restraint, the pink-haired pyromancer was able to grab hold of Romeo’s fist before it launched his tiny form through the air. While clinging to it, Natsu started chowing down on Romeo’s Fire Magic; the energy from the flames healing any damage his body might have suffered from the colossal fist. As soon as he was rejuvenated, Natsu shrugged off getting punched by a fist twice his size and hopped upon the back of Romeo’s hand.

“I’m fired up!” hollered the miniscule man as he darted up Romeo’s bandage-wrapped forearm. With the help of a burst of fire from his soles, Natsu narrowly avoided the giant boy’s right hand as it slapped down behind him. Romeo tsked at his miss and watched the little man clear his forearm and make it to his new armband. Natsu grinned triumphantly as he took the scarf into both of his hands and pulled…and pulled…and pulled some more.

“…haha! Looks like someone didn’t think this through!” came Romeo’s loud, rumbling voice as he raised his arm up to his eyes and watched the older male try and fail to pry the white neck-wrap off his bicep. No matter how hard he tugged, no matter how red his straining face turned, his scarf was simply tied too tight. Romeo watched the laughable show for a bit before pinching the back of Natsu’s shirt and yanking him away from Igneel’s scarf. “And now I got you! So much for that!” The enormous Romeo laughed at Natsu’s wasted efforts while dangling him like a caught rat before his childish mug.

“Let me go! I want my damn scarf back, you hear?!” pestered the little Salamander as his four limbs struck at empty air without purpose. Romeo watched him helplessly flail as his mind hatched another menacing plot.

“Why do you even want your scarf so bad? You cold, Natsu-nii? Well in that case…let’s warm you up!” Natsu didn’t have much time to ponder the meaning behind his captor’s words as Romeo maneuvered him back to his left bicep. The shrunken Mage’s desperate squirming got him nowhere as the powerful, young giant neatly tucked him underneath his scarf. When he was done, Natsu found his entire torso hidden beneath the scale-pattered-cloth; only his head and legs poking out. He grunted and fought against the binding; hoping to at least free his arms.

“W-what is this?! Get me out of h-AAAAGHHH!!” Natsu cut himself off with his screams of agony. Romeo, not caring about whatever Natsu had to whine about, began flexing the arm he was tied to. Everything beneath the tight scarf—all the bones, muscles, and organs within Natsu’s torso—was all compressed into the giant’s swollen bicep. The louder Natsu screeched, the harder Romeo flexed and the wider his grin became.

“Wow, this scarf of yours is really something! How much can it take before it snaps?” The huge teenager put another dose of effort into his flex; veins popping into existence all over the round muscle. One of these blood vessels bulged right against Natsu’s face. The Fairy Tail Mage could hear what seemed to him like gallons of blood being pumped through Romeo’s bicep. The lifeblood ensured the muscle Natsu was pressed flat against could continue swelling with maximum power. It ensured Natsu kept screaming like a wounded, ensnared animal. He kicked his small feet against the firm bicep in a feeble attempt to escape the crushing pressure, but his blows just bounced off in vain. “Or…how much before you snap?”

A few seconds later, Romeo relaxed his arm and gave Natsu a much-needed breather. It lasted all of three seconds before Romeo crossed his arm across his toned chest and flexed again. Instantaneously the teen’s bicep multiplied in size and Natsu’s scarf struggled to prevent it from reaching its peak height. In addition, the scarf painfully pushed down on its tiny master; crushing his muscular torso flat against Romeo’s sweaty bicep. Romeo’s large, blue eyes watched everything from the background; hovering over his tearful and hollering guildmate like the observing eyes of God. Natsu’s primal bawling was like a prayer of mercy to his gigantic comrade—prayers that Romeo flat-out ignored.

“Dad did say my muscles would make someone squeal one day.” joked the healthy young boy as his arm unflexed and fell to his side. Natsu panted and twitched as his body adhered to the moist wall of Romeo’s relaxed bicep. The larger male gave Natsu a few moments of peace; watching as fresh sweat dripped down from his crimson guild stamp and saturated both the tiny Mage and his former neck-warmer. Natsu barely had a reaction as a trail of warm sweat rolled under the scarf and curved to splash him in the face. He was simply too weak to complain. Branding Natsu good and humiliated, Romeo snatched one of his legs and removed him from his arm as if he was peeling a scab. He dangled Natsu upside-down before his humungous, attractive face and smiled. “You alright? Wanna surrender?”

“I-I’m…fine!” Natsu lied through a sharp pain that was probably a fractured rib. “You’re the one who should surrender! Now I’m gonna get serious!”

“Hahaha! You’re hilarious, Natsu-nii!” Romeo laughed with gusto as he lowered the flailing remnant of a once proud, mighty Mage of Fairy Tail to his chest level. There he released Natsu; sending the shrunken young man on a freefall toward the floor. Natsu watched Romeo’s washboard abs sail past him like a mountainside before his drop was abruptly cut short. The huge teenager had raised his right foot and caught the shrunken Wizard upon the side of his heel. With Natsu spread out over the wedge of his foot, the superior, Magic-gifted human lowered him the remainder of the way before pronating his foot so Natsu tumbled off.

Upon hitting the bedroom floor, Natsu mumbled some curses under his breath as he sat up. Craning his neck, the Dragon Slayer saw Romeo’s bare foot still hovering over him like a wyvern waiting to strike. Both men were silent as the larger of the two provocatively wiggled his five toes before taking the largest one and pointing it down at the seated Salamander. Natsu prepped his arms as Romeo dangled his hallux over him, but once again they proved useless as one tap from that muscular digit pushed Natsu flat onto his back. As the back of Natsu’s head slammed against the wooden floor, a blinding light filled his vision and vanished as soon as the towering teenager removed the rough pad of his toe from Natsu’s form. At first the pinknette thought he had just seen stars, but then he realized he was even shorter than before! With a single, brief tap of his toe Romeo had shaved off another inch from his idol’s height.

“So easy!” Romeo boomed as he placed his foot down and leered down at the smaller Mage; chin touching his shirtless chest. “It’s like your power is moisture and I can just suck it up without trying!”

“It pisses me off how much you’re enjoying this!” Natsu shouted as he stood up and tried to remain tall and calm before the much larger male. “You’ll regret this, Romeo! Shrink me anymore and I’ll climb into your ear and pummel your brain!”

“It’s tempting…but I think I’ll wait until I win this thing before I shrink you any further.” What Romeo did next conflicted with this statement. The young boy bent his knees, bringing his titanic form closer to Natsu, and allowed his feet to fall out from beneath him. When Romeo’s green-clad rump hit the floor, a reverberating quake shook his bedroom floor. Needless to say, this rumble threw Natsu forward and he kissed the dirty floor. When Natsu picked himself up onto his knees and rubbed the tip of his bruised nose, he craned his neck backwards and witnessed Romeo grinning down at him; both of his long legs on either side of the two-inch Mage like the walls of a fortress. It took Natsu a moment to figure out why the kid looked so overly amused. Mumbling a swear, the fire Mage hastily returned to his feet.

“Aww, why’d you stop? It looked cute the way you were kneeling before me like I was some sort of god!”

“A god? Don’t make me laugh, Romeo!” Natsu exclaimed as he pointed a finger up at the bare-chested titan. “You might be as strong as I used to be, but are you forgetting Gramps and Gildarts?! They were both way stronger than I was, which means they’re stronger than you are right now!”

“You’re right! But…” as Romeo spoke, he shifted his legs until they were in a butterfly position. Natsu quickly discovered the two green walls of Romeo’s pants-dressed legs replaced by two peach-colored walls. They were the slightly sweaty soles of the giant’s boy feet…and they were much too close for comfort. “…right now…to you alone…I must seem even greater than both of them combined. Heck, I probably seem stronger than Zeref or Acnologia! To you, at least, I’m a god!”

All ten of the powerful kid’s toes flexed and wiggled with suspense. Knowing what was coming and knowing he wouldn’t be able to escape, Natsu rooted his feet to the floor and charged his fists with magical fire. Romeo swiftly brought his two enormous stompers together and licked his lips when he saw tiny Natsu disappear between them; the heat of his fiery fists extinguished instantly. The raven-haired boy let a soft moan escape his jaws; he could feel Natsu pitifully squirm between his feet. The older man was so completely and utterly dominated by them; he could do nothing to stop them as they began rubbing against each other.

Down beneath Romeo cruel gaze, Natsu was surrounded by moist foot flesh. His entire world was his younger guildmate’s feet; every inch of him getting rubbed down by wrinkly, strong-smelling skin. His ears rang with the loud squeaks of Romeo’s soles as their clammy surfaces rubbed against one another. The once mighty teenager fought as hard as he could, but it was futile. He was a fly who had accepted a bear’s challenge. With an anguish wail he stopped struggling and conserved his energy instead. If he couldn’t endure this torture, he’d lose again! As he was painfully rubbed between the two musky walls of Romeo’s feet, barely any space surrounding him that wasn’t occupied by spongy foot flesh, he wondered if it was even worth it.

“Ready to give up?” asked Romeo as he stopped grinding his soles together. After a few seconds the gigantic youth of Fairy Tail felt something moving between his feet and soon Natsu was forcing his head and one arm out from between the united, fragrant structures of skin, muscle, and bone. Romeo had taken the ceasing of struggles as a sign of surrender, but it looked to him like Natsu still had some fight left in him.

“In…your…dreams…!” Natsu replied between much-needed pants. He had to stay strong! He couldn’t fight Romeo’s feet, but he could tolerate them! Eventually the kid Wizard would grow bored and stop; that’s when he would strike! He would bring Romeo down…somehow!

“Good! I wasn’t ready to stop!” Romeo gave a quick cackle as he shuffled his feet and tucked Natsu’s shrunken body back between them. Once again enveloped in sweltering, hot foot flesh, Natsu screamed when Romeo started pressing his feet together. One could gauge the amount of pressure Romeo was applying by the way the teenage boy bit his lip as he forced his flat soles together. Then the fire Mage returned to rubbing them together, but even harder this time! Natsu’s prone form was dragged up and down the length of both feet; overpowered in every sense of the word. Getting creative, Romeo pulled away one of his feet, only to bring it back a second later. This time it was the back of the heel that pressed against Natsu; the spiky-haired shrinkiee couldn’t hide his suffering as the crisp skin of Romeo’s heel rubbed, twisted, and kneaded him into submission.

For the next several minutes Romeo tormented his fellow Fairy with nothing but his feet. No Magic, no hands, no battle strategy—just his own, two, active feet. Romeo twisted each of his toes into Natsu’s body; even his smallest toe made the Dragon Slayer wince. He pressed Natsu beneath the ball of his foot and rolled him around the surface of his opposite foot. He scraped the weak fire-user against the floor, and then stamped him underfoot before he had a chance to crawl away. He would follow-up by dragging his foot back harshly against the hard wood; Natsu’s arms poked out from under his toes and his nails scratched at the ground in a useless attempt to put an end to the maltreatment. It almost seemed like a joke how out of his league Natsu was, the poor man had no chance. Nevertheless, Natsu refused to surrender. He was like a sturdy pebble that simply wouldn’t crack no matter how much force Romeo used. As the minutes passed, bullying Natsu with his young feet started losing its charm. As it so happens, it was around this time that Natsu’s “never say die” attitude started withering away.

“Now do you surrender?” Romeo asked with a slightly irritable voice. He held his foot off the floor, a limp Natsu hanging from his toes; his puny head quashed firmly between a pair. Natsu weakly said something, but it reached Romeo’s ears a muffled, undecipherable noise. The larger of the two Mages scoffed and opened wide his thick toes; dropping the trounced shrinkiee a short distance to the floor. “Say that again.”

“Y-y-yes.” Natsu repeated himself, choking back sobs as he felt the prick of tears under his eyes again. He lay flat on his back; body spread out like a star and damp with Romeo’s foot secretion.

“Geez, you’re a tough nut to crack, Natsu-nii!” said Romeo as he twisted his index finger into his ear. “Don’t make me knock you out again! I don’t wanna wait another hour for you to—“ The blue-eyed giant stopped and gazed down at the defeated Dragon Slayer. “Wait…really?”

“I-I give up, okay?! It’s my loss! J-just…no more! Keep your freakin’ feet away from me!” Natsu squeezed his eyes shut, but that didn’t stop two trails of tears from wetting his cheeks. If Romeo didn’t know any better, it almost seemed like he had given Natsu a foot phobia!

“Aw yeah! I won again!” Romeo boomed loudly as he leaped to his feet; a massive THOOM shaking his entire bedroom and causing Natsu’s body to spring an inch into the air. He laughed exuberantly while pumping up his biceps; his joy seeming to grow with his muscles.

Natsu said nothing and just turned his head in disgrace. The losers had no right to say anything—Romeo deserved to boast and pat himself on the back all he wanted. When the reveling finally came to an end and Natsu faced Romeo once more, his eyes widened and his mouth fell open in a silent scream.

“Time for my prize~” Romeo singsonged while holding his left foot over the unmoving Natsu. The miniaturized teen tried to scream up a plea to Romeo, but the giant of a boy brought his foot down with a thump before half of it was uttered. Romeo purred as he elevated his heel off the floor and pressed Natsu down beneath the ball of his foot. Stepping on a person…no, stepping on Natsu Dragneel was such a rousing experience. Having the physically fit, monster of Fairy Tail underfoot like this…entirely at his mercy…it really made Romeo feel like something higher than a mortal being. All he had to do was apply the same amount of weight it would take to flatten a cockroach and Natsu would be nothing but pulp. That, however, was not what Romeo wanted…

With barely a thought, the young colossus summoned a faint glow beneath his foot and right away detected a drop in resistance. Lifting that foot up and bending the knee backwards, Romeo supinated the appendage behind him and peered at the revealed sole. There, plastered to his muggy foot and sunk into the supple flesh, was little, one-inch Natsu.

“Like a bug.” Romeo commented as he jerked his toes to stimulate some movement from the Mage-turned-insect. It was somewhat disappointing how simple it now was to reduce the older male’s size. Moreover, Romeo barely got any power out of it anymore; it was like adding a cup of water to an ocean. Still, seeing the former badass in such an ignoble state was all the compensation Romeo needed. “You’re stuck on there pretty good, aren’t you, bug boy~?” Romeo laughed derisively as he wagged the foot back and forth. Once he proved Natsu was pasted thoroughly to it, the blue-eyed youth reached behind him and slapped his hand down upon the shrunken Mage. He dragged his palm down the heated, sweaty sole before moving it to his face. Natsu was now glued to his ring finger and looking awfully dazed like he didn’t know where he was anymore. Admittedly, anyone would be in such a condition if they were stepped on and whacked by a giant. “Wow, my sweat’s like adhesive! Who knew it was this strong?” Romeo’s enormous form shook with mirth as he made scissor motions with his fingers. The back-and-forth motions made Natsu even woozier and the urge to vomit was clear in his complexion. “I bet my sweat alone could beat you, Natsu-nii! …actually, that doesn’t sound like a bad idea!”

A plan for their next competition forming in his head, Romeo stopped swaying his fingers (much to Natsu’s gratitude) and let his hand drop down to his side. The titanic child didn’t make the effort to even ask Natsu if he was prepared for another contest—it just slipped his mind. Needing to comb his room for some materials, the puny ant of a person stuck to his finger wasn’t really on his mind at the moment. In fact, his presence on the digit was going to be a nuisance; what if he accidently squished the tiny man during his search? Stashing the paperclip-sized teen into his pocket would be ideal…but Romeo considered his senior even less than a paperclip. Therefore, the giant absentmindedly wiped his hand against his bare-skinned torso. The helpless Fire Dragon Slayer was transferred from Romeo’s ring finger to his flank and fixated there via perspiration. Just like some spilt BBQ sauce, Natsu was a negligible eyesore on Romeo’s otherwise unblemished body.

While Natsu squirmed to no avail to separate himself from the hot, stagnant wall of Romeo’s side, the living mountain began his search. He started by approaching his dresser and rummaging through some folded shirts. It didn’t take very long at all before Romeo was smiling and holding a thin piece of dark string between his fingers. “This’ll be perfect!” said Romeo as he tugged on both ends of the string just to be sure it was stable enough. As it would turn out, the next object Romeo required wasn’t as simple to find. He had no clue where it could be, so he diligently looked through numerous drawers, within the confines of his closet, and over every inch of his wooden floor. “Come on, where did I put that thing?” An irritated Romeo groused while placing his hands on his hips. Unbeknownst to the athletic youth, Natsu had been slowly sliding down his slippery torso this entire time. Before he could slip off completely, one of the giant’s hands rested upon the man’s one-inch form and squished the sniveling insect into the trace amounts of soft fat he had around his waist.

As his eyes scanned his bedroom, they fell upon his bed itself and Romeo curled his lip in suspicion. Approaching it, the raven-haired kid lowered himself onto all fours and pressed his body close to his clean, polished floor to peer under his mattress. The space beneath his bed too dark to make anything out, Romeo was about to use some Magic to light things up when he stopped himself. He had become incredibly strong…too strong, actually. His new level of Magic Power was difficult to control and whenever he used Purple Flare against Natsu, he noticed more flames come out than what he willed. Not wanting to accidently light the place he slept on fire, Romeo chose a safer method. On his way back up to his feet, Romeo slipped his fingers under his bedframe and singlehandedly lifted it diagonally. Not breaking a sweat, the teenage Fairy kept his mattress held over his head while scanning the revealed floor below. His blue eyes lit up upon spotting exactly what he was searching for.

“Found it!” Romeo exclaimed to no one in particular as he hunched his back and reached with his free hand to grab a small, golden ring off the floor. With the metallic band safely tucked into his fist, Romeo turned away from his bed while carefully lowering it back down. He opened his hand and studied his find—a simple, ring of gold his father had given him a few weeks back. It was a reward from some job, but Romeo’s bracelets were enough jewelry for him, so the kid had dropped the ring somewhere and forgotten about it. Somehow it must have fallen on the floor and got kicked under his bed. “All set, Natsu-nii!” announced Romeo as he pinched the back of the young Dragon Slayer’s shirt and peeled him off his hip like a sticker.

Being the giant adolescent’s unwilling passenger had left Natsu green in the face and incredibly woozy. Taking advantage of the teeny-tiny teen’s disorderly state, Romeo carefully manipulated the shrinkiee and the string with his fingers. Sticking his tongue out the corner of his mouth in concentration, the dark-haired boy gently tied the piece of fabric around Natsu’s very tiny ankle. He made the knot nice and tight so Natsu couldn’t simply pull it off, and in doing so alerted the smaller man.

“Ow! W-what the…?” The painful constricting around his ankle snapped Natsu out of his bilious stupor and made him look down at the dark rope squeezing into his skin. “What are you doing now, Romeo?! Turning me into a yo-yo?!”

“Ha! No!” responded the youthful titan as he cracked a smirk at imagining big, bad Natsu the Dragon Slayer of fire being used as a yo-yo. “I’m giving you a ball and chain!”

“A ball and wha-AAAAA!” Romeo released his hold on Natsu’s shirt while the Fairy Tail member was still in mid-speech. Instead of another dizzying plummet to Romeo’s hardwood floor, Natsu’s drop was cut short thanks to the larger male holding the other end of the string. The shrunken Dragon Slayer now hung upside-down by his ankle; his vision dominated by Romeo’s hillock-like pecs. He looked past them and watched Romeo use both hands to work with the opposite end of the string. Just as the hanging fire spitter was about to demand some answers, Romeo tugged on his end of the thread and yanked Natsu up to catch him like a coin. He then opened his hand and peered down at Natsu sitting in the center of his palm. The sakura-haired teenager glared up at Romeo’s looming, boyish mug, but his attention was swiftly directed to his bound ankle. Something was pulling at him; something on the other end of the fibril that hung over Romeo’s hand. Natsu grunted and tried to pull his leg closer to his chest, but whatever was connected to the dark string weighed more than he did and slowly the black-eyed man was inched closer to the edge of his superior guildmate’s palm. “Is this your…ball and chain?!” Natsu inquired as he dug his fingernails into the thick skin of Romeo’s palm in a poor attempt to stop his tiny self from being pulled over the edge.

“Well…more like ring and chain.” answered the junior Wizard as lifted the other end of Natsu’s “chain” into view; revealing it to be tightly bound to the golden ring he had found beneath his bedding. He placed the ring on his palm next to Natsu so it would no longer try and drag him over the edge. Natsu stared solemnly at the ring, which was about as big as he was, and wondered if Romeo was making him his prisoner. All he needed now was a dungeon…

“And? Why’d you attach that thing to me?!” shouted Salamander as he kicked his foot at Romeo’s humungous face; the rope-like string making the skin under it burn and itch.

“It’s all for our next competition!” Romeo enlightened. Natsu wanted to ask just what type of contest Romeo had in store for him, but the colossal kid had no desire to stand there and answer Natsu’s stupid questions. All would be made clear eventually! As soon as Romeo started walking again, Natsu fell over with motion sickness. Only a few strides were taken, but that’s all that was needed to give Natsu an upset stomach and a pale hue. Romeo stopped in front of his writing desk and eyed something that stuck out on an otherwise neat and well-organized desk—an empty drinking glass. Romeo had noticed it while hunting down the other two items and knew it would be perfect for his plans. Natsu’s gurgling gut was just settling down when Romeo held his open hand over the glass and tilted it. The diminished dragon child yelped and tried to grab onto the flesh of Romeo’s palm, but the heavy gold ring ensured he was dragged down into the glass. The ring hit the glass bottom first, producing a loud clang sound that made the entire glassware vibrate. Natsu followed soon after; his forehead smacking right into the golden ring like it was a rock at the bottom of a cliff. He hollered in pain and grabbed his forehead while rolling back and forth next to the piece of metal jewelry.

“You okay down there?” asked Romeo as he picked up the glass container and looked inside. He watch as the tiny Dragon Slayer stood up and craned his neck to scowl at him. His hands left his forehead to reveal a visible and nasty bump.

“Dammit, you brat! Tell me what you’re up to!”

“So impatient…” Romeo muttered as he carried Natsu and his new, glass prison away from the desk. “Competing against a bug is a challenge in itself, but I think I’ve thought up a fun little game we could play!” The Fire Magic user placed the cup on the floor next to his blue exercise mat. He then stood tall and full of pride over the miniscule Natsu; his shirtless body seeming to stretch up hundreds of miles. Natsu’s eye twitched from way down there inside the drinking glass; he loathed this view so much! “Listen up, Natsu-nii! For this next contest I’m gonna be slowly filling this glass up! It’ll be your job to keep your head above the surface. If the glass fills to the brim, you win! However, if you surrender, then I win! Sounds simple, right?”

“That’s…that’s it? All I have to do is swim?” Natsu cracked a smile and flexed both of his arms with enthusiasm. “Sounds easy! I definitely won’t give up, so I’ve got this in the bag!”

“One more thing!” Romeo held up a finger as he continued. “Not just any old surrender will cut it! No ‘I give up!’ or ‘You win!’ or even ‘Uncle! Uncle!’.” Romeo folded his toned arms across his chest and stuck his chin up while keeping eye contact with Natsu. “If you want the contest to end, you gotta say ‘Please save me, Romeo-sama!’. Understand?”

“No way.” Natsu replied, plain and simple and with a narrow of his black orbs.

“Suit yourself. Try not to drown!” Romeo rolled his shoulders and sauntered toward his blue mat. Right away, some alarm bells were set off inside Natsu’s head. He had assumed the young Goliath was planning to fill his glass prison with water, but he wasn’t heading to the kitchen to grab any! Instead, the juvenile lowered himself down onto all fours and started doing push-ups! The glass walls around Natsu were so crystal-clear that Natsu’s view of the distant, exercising titan was not blurred at all.

“Five! Six! Seven! Eight!” Natsu listened to Romeo chant; the push-ups so unchallenging that the teen smiled while doing them.

“Hey! The hell are you doing?!” yelled the imprisoned Dragon Slayer, but Romeo either couldn’t hear him or straight-out disregarded his outcries. Growing frustrated and confused, Natsu resumed yelling while banging his fists against the transparent wall separating him from the rest of the world. Romeo didn’t even make the effort to glance in his direction; nothing short of the glassware exploding into thousands of pieces would distract him.

“28! 29! 30!”

Natsu attempted this, of course, but such a feat was impossible for a weak creature like himself. “Grrrr! I don’t get it!” Natsu shouted as he gave the thick barrier of glass a strong kick before turning his back to it and folding his arms in impatience. Did Romeo perhaps develop a bad habit like Gray’s? Was he compelled to start working out randomly? Or was the kid just planning on leaving him in here until he was good and ready for the contest? A displeased Natsu scanned his empty, boring prison and concluded things could have been worse. At least it was a clean cup he had been dropped into.

“49! 50!” Upon completing a set of fifty push-ups, Romeo pushed himself off the exercise mat and leaped straight to his feet; his young form still bustling with energy ready to spend. When Natsu felt the crystal tumbler about him start to vibrate violently, he turned around to see Romeo stomping back towards him. Within seconds his tall, intimidating self was looming over the smaller male again. The giant boy was quiet and breathing normally. Previously, 50 rapid press-ups would have gotten Romeo’s heart racing. The only difference Natsu could make out was all the sweat the youth’s exercise had created; his well-built body was covered in fresh, briny dew.

“Crud, I knew I was forgetting something! The sweat rag!” said Romeo as he looked over his bedroom for something he could use. He considered grabbing one of his spare jackets, but another possibility dawned on him. Peeling his sticky arm away from his equally sticky torso, Romeo examined Natsu’s scarf still wrapped around his left bicep. Pulling at it gently, the knot he had made came undone immediately and soon the foot-long piece of clothing was dangling in front of his face. “Way too small…but what if…?” The dark-haired teenager clenched the scarf in his fist and focused. Instead of absorbing the Pure Flame, the flame Wizard tried to reverse the process and imbue Natsu’s neck-wrap with a bit of energy. As soon as a snippet of Romeo’s power was injected into the muffler, it instantly grew back to its original size and draped over Romeo’s hands. Romeo wasn’t very surprised—it’s not like inanimate objects required that much power.

“Alright! Perfect!” the Fairy Tail member uttered merrily just before he buried his face into the scale-pattered-scarf and started rubbing it down. Natsu’s eyes went wide with shock before they narrowed into a glare directed at the towering titan.

“Hey! That’s not a facecloth, Romeo! Stop that right…” he trailed off and reached all new levels of disgust when his guildmate started using his scarf to clean his sweaty, bare torso. He casually dragged the Salamander’s precious memento across his abs and pecs, down his arms and shoulders, and even wiped his feet down. Every new place Romeo shoved his scarf added a new wrinkle to Natsu’s furious, reddened brow. “Stop fucking using Igneel’s scarf like a damned sweat rag! Do you hear me, Romeo?!”

To confirm that he could indeed hear the miniscule Natsu, Romeo lowered his gaze down to him. He locked eyes with the older man for a few seconds before cracking an impish smirk and pushing the tiny man’s signature piece of cloth deep into his armpit. The muscles in Natsu’s jaws stopped working and he gaped in repulsion. Romeo was really getting into each of his heavily-sweating pits; twisting that scarf into them good to absorb every last droplet of sweat. All the while he leered down at Natsu with an expression that said “Whatcha gonna do about it?” Snarling with contempt, Natsu threw himself against his glass confinement and tried to climb, but while his body could stick to the smooth wall briefly, his attempts to scramble up the side failed miserably. During the last of these attempts, his ten fingers scratching desperately at the wall to grab an indentation that didn’t exist, Natsu watched Romeo hold his damp scarf high above him. He grinned naughtily and twisted the white fabric; squeezing out a small waterfall of warm sweat that descended upon Natsu’s tiny form. The Fire Dragon Slayer had his mouth open at the time, giving him a nice mouthful of the teenage boy’s bodily fluid. Natsu slipped off the glass wall and landed at the bottom of his prison; arms poorly shielding him as he was doused in salty liquid. Eventually the shower turned into a short drizzle as Romeo squeezed out the last few drops of sweat Natsu’s scarf had so kindly absorbed. The pink-headed dragon’s son sat there in a small pool of warm water; curling his nose at the tangy odor that now polluted his surroundings. It was Romeo’s sweat…Romeo was going to fill the glass, not with plain water, but with his own secretion!

“A-are you insane?!” Natsu cried out as he stood up; everything below his knees completely submerged in the foul-smelling moisture. “You’re pouring your gross sweat on me?!” Romeo did not answer the insignificant bug man; he merely whistled to himself while throwing Natsu’s used scarf over his shoulder. Afterwards, he stomped back to his weights and picked up the heavy barbell from the weightlifting contest, which he proceeded to raise over his head like it was made of feathers. Natsu observed the young hunk pump iron for a minute or two; a new layer of fresh, musky sweat already leaking out of his countless sweat glands. “No way…I’m not gonna swim through his nasty sweat! Forget it!” Rejecting this joke of a competition, the spiky-haired man reached into Romeo’s bodily liquid and pulled up the string connected to his ankle He tried burning right through the fiber, but all he could do with his current level of Magic Power was produce a tiny bit of heat; not nearly enough to burn the sweat-soaked thread. “Shit! I’m practically running on empty here!” Natsu hesitantly looked back at the distant mountain that was Romeo and saw him lifting with even greater speed. He must have done at least three dozen pumps already! This wasn’t something that was supposed to be impressive…Laxus, Gajeel, Erza, Elfman, himself…it was something all of them could do! Yet, when Natsu watched this hale and hearty thirteen-year-old lift so much metal like it was nothing…he just seemed like the strongest man in the world! “G-gotta get out of here!” Thrown into a desperate panic, the young Dragon Slayer wadded through the saline mixture until he could ram himself against the highball glass. No matter how many times he attacked the thick barrier, as stated earlier, itty-bitty Natsu simply didn’t have to strength needed to make even a crack in the drinking glass. Soon the shrunken Fairy heard the heavy thumps of Romeo’s footfalls drawing near and all he had to show for his efforts was a sore shoulder.

Both of Romeo’s large and imposing feet stamped down on either side of Natsu’s prison; disturbing the moisture inside. Stretching his neck back, Natsu eyeballed Romeo’s sculpted abs as the boy colossus finished wiping up the sweat that trickled through the crisscrossing paths. The rest of the shirtless teen’s body was already dry, so one could only assume he had started wiping himself down the moment he finished weightlifting. Natsu raised his arms, but didn’t have the chance to utter a plea before Romeo squeezed his scarf between his hands and showered the tiny Dragon Slayer with more hot, steamy sudor. By the end of it Natsu was dripping wet with sweat; his normally spiky hair padded down like he had just come from the bath. Unlike the bath, he did not feel squeaky and clean—he felt squeaky and dirty. He felt dirtier than he’d ever felt in his entire life!

“This is nuts…” mumbled the dumbfounded pyromancer as he looked down at the pool of fragrant, colorless liquid around his waist. He scooped up a handful of Romeo’s perspiration and watched it filter through his fingers. “A person shouldn’t go for a dip in someone else’s sweat! It’s…just so wrong!” Natsu pushed his body through some tangy liquid and pressed himself up against his transparent prison. He screamed Romeo’s name, but the titanic child had already walked away and was now starting some pull-ups using a metal bar attached to his ceiling. While the blue-eyed boy displayed amazing upper body strength, Natsu struck the drinking glass with his fist and screamed. “Let me out of here, Romeo! This isn’t a contest, it’s degradation! Let’s try something else—anything else!” The more Romeo ignored his wet little prisoner, the louder Natsu yelled. He just wouldn’t stop; he was like a spoiled child who thought he could get what he wanted if he asked long enough. Being the mature youth that he was, Romeo paid no heed to his guildmate’s whining.

A grunt of fulfillment escaped Romeo’s lips as he hoisted his pumped, glistening pecs above the bar. Natsu’s distant begging was nothing but background noise to him. Who was the man in the room right now? Was it the tiny baby who couldn’t handle a little sweat? Or was it the half-naked stud with abs of steel and a chest of iron? The answer was as clear a cloudless, morning sky.

After fifty perfectly executed pull-ups, Romeo dropped back to his floor and pulled Natsu’s scarf off his shoulder. As he rigorously dried his face off, he took a peek at the glass tumbler from the corner of his eye. Did that shrill voice coming from the cylinder really belong to Natsu Dragneel, the idol he always used to look up to? Oh how the mighty have fallen—from a powerhouse to a little bitch. Romeo’s narrowed eyes locked onto his tiny comrade and he started making his way back to him. Natsu, pressed up against the glass like a puppy waiting for his owner, smiled up at the larger male who was finally acknowledging him. When he saw Romeo’s expression, however, his own countenance darkened and he nervously stepped back. Romeo loomed high above the smaller Wizard; staring him down like a displeased parent. No…it wasn’t even that. This was a look Romeo only used on things that truly sickened him; moldy food, bird droppings, annoying pests, etc.

“You done? Romeo asked in an annoyed tone of voice while he dried the back of his wetted neck. Natsu said nothing; he merely trembled under the superior male’s probing eyes. How easy would it be for this young behemoth to completely destroy him? All he had to do was pick him up into his gargantuan hand, begin shrinking him, and eventually the worthless Dragon Slayer would just pop beneath casual force—the same amount of force it took someone to hold an object in their hand. “If you wanna give up so soon, you know what you gotta say.” Romeo placed his hands against his moist, glossy hips and practically stared into his guildmate’s soul. “So…you conceding defeat again?”

“I-I…n-no…!” Natsu responded, though not without a strong disinclination. He wanted to be out of this smelly, abashing position…but he didn’t want to lose again! Romeo would make him even smaller! Things would only get worse! He needed to put an end to this little game and win one of Romeo’s challenges! “No! Not this time!” Natsu demonstrated his determination by angrily swinging his arm through the giant’s tangy sweat and making a large splash.

“Good! You still have some fight in you after all!” Romeo’s joyful smile returned to his face…in the same moment that he extracted another serving of body sweat from his unexpectedly effective sweat rag. Natsu merely closed his eyes and let the shower of warm, steamy fluid envelop him. In the blink of an eye the boyish giant’s perspiration swallowed Natsu’s lower torso completely. Afterwards, Romeo slung the scarf—smudged with dark-yellow stains—back onto his bare shoulder with a wet slap and trekked off toward the blue mat for some sit-ups. Natsu remained silent and waited while his entire body festered in the putrid oils, fats, and bacteria swimming around him.

The next hour or so was pretty much more of the same. Romeo did a random workout (jumping jacks, dumbbell curls, shadowboxing, etc.) for a handful of minutes before stomping over to Natsu and donating to the sweat bank. The next few milliliters raised the level of liquid to Natsu’s chest and only the Mage’s head stuck out of the surface. With the next dosage, Natsu could no longer stand on the bottom of the glass and was forced to begin pedaling his feet. More and more heavy sweat was poured onto the shrunken man’s face and every completed exercise seemed to produce more secretion than the last. The longer and harder the huge, athletic youth trained, the more moisture oozed out of his countless pores. Natsu didn’t necessarily see this as a bad thing—it just meant this demeaning contest would end sooner! All he had to do was keep afloat, ignore the rancid odor burning his nostrils, and the drinking cup would eventually fill up and earn him back his size! He couldn’t shake the feeling, however, that he was forgetting something vital…

As the level of accumulated sweat increased another few millimeters, Natsu was spontaneously pulled downward by something; leaving him, once again, as just a head trying to remain above the salty, liquid musk. “W-what the…?!” Natsu tried to look down to see what was pulling on his leg, but he couldn’t get an accurate line of sight. Wait…pulling on his leg? …oh crud! “Dammit, the fucking ring! That’s why he tied it to me!” The pink-headed fire Mage grunted between curses as he used all the strength in his muscular leg to try and lift the golden ring that lay at the bottom of his prison. The damned thing was heavy like an anchor! “Okay…okay, calm down. I’ll just reach down, grab the string, and pull it—“ As Natsu formulated a plan with himself, he got distracted by a certain towering kid above him. His soaked face already facing skyward, Natsu’s black eyes took in Romeo’s magnificent form in thunderstruck bewilderment. Why was he there, mopping up sweat from his pectoral muscles while staring blankly in the distance? He should have already left to do more exercises! Weren’t there chin-ups and crunches to do?! It occurred on Natsu that Romeo’s developing, burly body was saturated with so much salty, sticky moisture that it would take more than one wipe down to clear it all up! Natsu’s heart skipped a beat when he saw the shirtless titan hover that sodden piece of cloth over him and squeeze. This time, as the miniature Fairy was fully submerged in reeking exudate, he struggled to put himself back above it. No matter how many times he thrust his arms forward and swam toward air, the weighty ring attached to his leg ensured he went nowhere. The harder Natsu pushed himself through what seemed to him like gallons of sweat, the faster he used up the oxygen in his lungs. His need for air quickly becoming desperate, adrenaline gave the young man the burst of strength he needed to pull the gold ring up enough so his head could emerge from the pungent fluid.

Natsu had just a few seconds of time to breathe before the hefty chunk of chemical element forced him under again. A second later his head remerged for another sharp breath and then disappeared again. Up and down the Fire Dragon Slayer bobbed; his inadequate strength allowing for nothing better. For the next several minutes it was all Natsu could do to not drown. Sick and tired of this predicament, the frantic man broke through the surface and used every ounce of power he could muster to keep himself there. His pearly whites clenched and thick veins bulged in his neck from strain, but from all this Natsu only gained a few extra seconds above the fetid waters. These precious seconds, however, allowed him to discover something missing from the vast world around him.

“Where’s…Romeo…?” he managed to utter before what seemed like an encumbrance of several tons dragged him back into the depths of a giant’s warm, musky sweat. The sullied, teenage male went back to fighting for every breath and splashing his arms around like a small boy who had lost his float tube. Did he just...leave me here to die?! Natsu mentally wondered, having not caught a glimpse of the mountainous boy anywhere in the bedroom. He couldn’t hear him either; usually the loud huffs he made as he worked out masked Natsu’s own wheezes. H-he wouldn’t do that…he just left to grab a glass of water! All this sweating had to have dehydrated him, Natsu thought. However, as the couple minutes it took to pour some water turned into ten…and then twenty…doubts were had. Before long, Natsu had fought off death for nearly forty-five minutes and still there was no sign of his giant keeper. Natsu, his face beat-red, was so tired and weak…he couldn’t keep this up much longer! The time he spent underwater was getting longer and soon he would be unable to even get his nose to break the surface! I can’t believe it…I’m gonna drown. I’m gonna drown in a lake of sweat! He wondered what Romeo would say when he found his lifeless corpse. “Oops, forgot all about you!”? Was Natsu’s existence so trifling now that the boy really forgot about him? Or would it be Macao, attracted to his son’s room by the strange stench? What would he think when he saw his tiny, discolored body floating in the tumbler like the product of a bored child’s cruel playtime with an insect? Not…not like…this…

Just as the flame-eater was about to give into eternal bliss, the strong-smelling liquid around him pulsated slightly. Through exhausted eyes, the submerged Dragon Slayer looked through the glass and watched as the young Conbolt stomped back into the room. He couldn’t hear the thooms of his damp feet slapping against the wooden floor, but he sure as hell felt them as the giant’s entry shook his prison with each stride. Hope renewed, Natsu did what he was best at and conjured up some additional strength to pull himself up once more. Romeo, busy wiping down his tomato-red mug, heard the gasp Natsu made and looked down at see him struggling within the partially filled, glass container.

“Hey, little guy! Miss me?” asked Romeo as he knelt in front of the crystal cylinder. Natsu gawked up at the lofty monolith of skin and muscle. Romeo’s torso was unbelievably sweaty; new dewdrops forming and sliding down its sinewy frame every other second. His firm, gleaming chest gradually expanded and deflated with each steady, audible breath. The Fairy Tail Mage’s body was emitting so much heat that Natsu could feel it against his face!

“Where were you?!” spat Natsu angrily.

“Huh? Didn’t I tell you?” Romeo replied with a puzzled look on his face as he rubbed Natsu’s scarf back and forth along his six-pack. The formerly clean, white scarf looked like a shadow of its former self; darkened gray and tainted with yellow stains. At first, Natsu didn’t even recognize his father’s gift! “Nature called! All that food I ate during the contest was ready to come out—there was a lot. I think dad might need to fix the toilet, hehe.”

“Y-you spent all this time poo-OORRGLLE!” Natsu’s criticism was interrupted by his head being pulled under again; saline finding its way into his orifice. When he came back up again, he started spluttering and coughing and sticking his tongue out in absolute repugnance.

“No! After that I decided to go for a run through town! The cool, night air felt so good against my skin~ Some people were staring too~” The dark-haired teenager giggled to himself before having a realization and continuing, “Oh! I forgot to tell you that part, didn’t I? My bad!” Romeo laughed his mistake off, either not seeming to know he almost killed Natsu or not troubled by it. “Well, anyway, got a present for you, Natsu-nii!” As Romeo held the water-logged muffler above the drinking glass, the shrunken young man within screamed for him to stop, but it was too late. Another twist, another cascade of pure perspiration; Natsu garbled on it and was yanked down into an even fuller cup of the foul liquid. This time, when Natsu swam for the surface, he was just barely able to surface his face and nothing else. No matter how much harder his bound leg pulled, the teenage Dragon Slayer couldn’t even get his ears out of the water!

“There’s more where that came from, runt!” Romeo boomed as he tucked his sweat rag into his left underarm and soaked up the sweat building up under there.

“N-no! I-I can’t do this!” the drained Wizard confessed as tears dripped from his eyes and mingled with the copious amount of sweat. Romeo’s sweat glands had gone into overdrive; they’d probably keep exuding fluid until the highball glass was full…which based on its half-empty status, wouldn’t be happening anytime soon! “Stop! Please stop!”

“Hmm?” Romeo stopped mopping up his pit sweat and glanced down at Natsu just in time to see the puny male sink into his oily sweat. With the hand that wasn’t buried into his armpit, the huge boy reached his thumb and forefinger into the glass of warm sweat and plucked his fellow Mage out. Natsu rasped as his inch-sized body was dangled in front of Romeo’s boyish face. “Giving up?”

Natsu feebly nodded.

“What are the magic words?”

Natsu looked confusingly into the younger boy’s monumental face at first, but quickly remembered what he was talking about. Biting his lip, not wanting to speak the words, Natsu uttered, “Come on, Romeo! I give up! Shrink me again, just don’t—“

Unsatisfied with his little guildmate’s answer, Romeo parted his fingers and dropped Natsu and the ring back into the sweat with an unexceptional plop. As Natsu hastily swam up toward him, the gigantic fire Mage dipped those same fingers into his own bodily fluid and used them to push down on the panicking Salamander. Bubbles formed on the sweat’s surface as Natsu fruitlessly tried pushing away Romeo’s digits while simultaneously pulling against the golden burden tied to his foot. Just as the pocket-sized man’s struggles got slower and weaker, Romeo pinched his head and pulled him back up to his face.

“Wanna try again?” Romeo asked as he squished Natsu’s little, berry-like face between the pads of his two fingers.

Natsu coughed and groaned in discomfort; his neck feeling like it was being stretched thanks to the small, gold band weighing down his body. When he failed to say anything, Romeo pressed his cheeks together a little more and forced him to make a comical kissy face. He held the little man’s face mere inches from his own, frowning one; waiting impatiently for the correct words of surrender. Finally, the worn-out and thoroughly soaked insect of a man whispered, “P-please…h-help me, Romeo-sama…”

“It’s ‘save me, Romeo-sama’.” the bigger flame caster corrected, making the fearful and hurting boy between his fingers whine in grief. However, after a short pause, a large smile decorated the younger’s image. “Eh, close enough! Good job, Natsu-nii!” With this said, Romeo tossed aside the ruined scarf and used the index finger of his newly freed-up hand to flick the string hanging from Natsu’s limb. A small amount of Rainbow Fire Magic was channeled into the thin thread and it instantly burnt up in a blaze of dark, violet flames. Even though he still had his head awkwardly clamped between the giant’s fingers, Natsu couldn’t help but sigh in sweet liberation when that weighty mass dropped harmlessly to the floor. One could only wonder when Romeo would remember he had it again. “Well…except not really; you did just lose.”

Romeo rose off the floor and back to his full height before dropping the bug-sized loser into the palm of his left hand. The massive kid grinned toothily as he scrutinized the lesser man’s dripping, soggy form. “So, how does it feel to lose against my sweat, Natsu-nii? You definitely look the part; those clothes you’re wearing are trashed!” Natsu didn’t have the energy to argue with Romeo; he merely stared back into that humungous, dwarfing face. Soon it would get even bigger…even more godlike. All of a sudden, Romeo brought his middle finger to his palm and gently laid it upon Natsu’s body; pinning him flat against his sweaty palm. When the giant peeled his finger away, Natsu was firmly adhered to the long digit and defenseless as Romeo positioned him just below his gargantuan, cute nose. “I wonder if you smell as bad as you look.”

The shrunken son of a dragon cringed and turned his head away when Romeo started sniffing him. Air was funneled into those two gaping nostrils; pulled inside by a sonorous inhalation. Natsu felt like he was caught in a surging tempest; the vacuum was so strong! A few sniffs were even strong enough to lift up the back of his skull from Romeo’s finger. Turning his head upright again, the pint-sized Dragon Slayer saw deep into Romeo’s gaping nostrils through squinted orbs. He saw tiny nose hairs flapping around chaotically. As he got closer and closer, he could make out the dark, prickly hairs in more detail. Wait…why was he getting closer?

“Mmmm…not bad!” Romeo voiced as he pressed his finger, and the attached Natsu, right up against his nose’s twin holes. He breathed in deep, sucking up some sweat clean off Natsu’s skin, clothes, and hair; the substance tickling the roof of his nose. It smelled absolutely horrendous, but it was a horrendous odor that belonged to him. Natsu may never carry his own scent again; he smelled entirely like Romeo now. “Oh man, I don’t think even an hour-long bath is gonna get this smell out!” As the teenage giant rubbed Natsu under his nose, breathing in every inch of him, he unknowingly slipped the poor man’s head into his right nostril. “You’re gonna smell like me for—“

\*SNRRK!\*

Romeo cut off his sentence when something lodged itself into his right nostril and made the boy grimace with discomfort. He crossed his eyes and looked down at his nose to spot Natsu partially stuck to his finger…while he squirmed desperately to pry his noggin free from his tight nares! At first Romeo was dumbfounded and just blinked in silence, but slowly the reality of the situation sunk in and it made him smile with amusement. He had just snorted Natsu’s head into his nose!

“Eww, I got a bug stuck in my nose!” Romeo remarked, his young voice seeming slightly congested. He pulled away his middle finger, leaving the man-turned-insect to dangle hopelessly from the nostril constricted around his head. “I know just how to take care of that!” Sadly for everyone’s favorite Fire Dragon Slayer, Romeo’s strategy did not involve simply plucking Natsu out like a loose nose hair. The violet-haired pyromancer focused his Magic while simultaneously inhaling through his nose. The miniscule, struggling man rapidly shrank even smaller than he already was. As he shrank, more and more of his body was sucked up Romeo’s seemingly enlarging, cave-like orifice. Gone was his chest, then his arms, followed by his entire torso. Soon there was nothing but a pair of kicking legs poking out of the giant’s perfect, unblemished nose. Romeo proceeded to dwindle Natsu down to a speck-like size before snorting all that he was into the cavern of his widening nostril. The bloodcurdling scream Natsu made as his body vanished up Romeo’s sinuses went unheard.

“There we go.” muttered Romeo as he sniffed one last time and twinkled his nose. He used a finger to rub the top of his hooter; just barely able to feel an itching sensation deep within. “Now I just got a germ in there~” Romeo could hardly believe what he had just done. He had snorted Natsu Dragneel up into his nose like just a particle of dust. The puny pinknette was even punier now; so extraordinarily tiny that he was now tangled in his nose hairs or wedged into a mound of snot somewhere. “Well, guess I should get him out of there before he suffocates. We wouldn’t want that!” Contrary to what he had just said, Romeo didn’t look to be in any real rush to rescue Natsu from his mucous fate. The black-eyed boy calmly approached his writing desk and grabbed a tissue from a conveniently placed tissue box. He covered his nose with the white paper, took a deep breath, and then blew his nose noisily. He exhaled a second time to make sure he got all the mucus out of the deepest regions of his sinuses. When he was done, he casually wiped his nose clean and almost instinctively crumpled the facial tissue up before remembering there was something of slightly more importance stuck to it besides his nasal mucus. He opened the thin piece of paper up and curled his lip at the gross sight of his blobby, liquidly snot. He scanned the yellowish slime carefully until he spotted something black and small convulsing slightly within the sticky, slippery fluid.

Natsu felt broken. As if getting swept up someone’s nose wasn’t demoralizing enough, he had now been expelled into a tissue and entombed within gallons of filthy, ugly snot. He could barely move; Romeo’s mucus glued him in place like molasses. He could see the hazy visage of something titanic moving beyond his tomb of nasal discharge. It was Romeo, and ever so carefully he used one finger to scoop his speck of a body out of the tissue. Glued to Romeo’s fingertip, Natsu tried to wiggle free of the snot still bonded with him, but the younger male just locked his thumb together with his finger and sealed him between the two digits without any hassle. He was so microscopic now…nothing he did affected the world around him. He may as well have been an inanimate object—his actions were comparable to what a pebble could accomplish in its lifetime.

Once Natsu was safe and secure between his fingers, Romeo had no further use for the snot-ridden, paper handkerchief and incinerated it with some fire. Afterwards, he brought his thumb and index finger close to his watchful eyes and slowly parted them. Connecting his two rough finger pads were random strings of mucus arranged similarly to a cobweb. Fused with these strings, entangled in them, was itty-bitty Natsu. Romeo chuckled gleefully at the sight of his ensnared form and boomed, louder than ever before, “Look at you, Natsu-nii! You’re just a speck stuck in my boogers!”

Natsu didn’t say anything; he just stared at the vast structure stretched out before him—the face of God, as far as he was concerned. All powerful was he; Natsu’s future was entirely in his hands. All he could do was pray and plea for an end to this torment. He didn’t want to win anymore. That was akin to a beggar wishing to become King of Fiore—an impossible dream.

“I don’t mean to underestimate you, Natsu, but how can you win against me now?” questioned Romeo as he idly flexed his fingers and watched Natsu bobble up and down in his icky binds. “I just don’t see a microbe like you having much of a chance! What do you think? Wanna end this little game? I promise I’ll turn you back to normal…in about a week~”

“Y-yes! Yes!” answered the tiny Mage to the deep, booming voice of the raven-haired deity. “No more! I can’t do this anymore! Please…please just let me wash up! I-I’ll bathe in a freakin’ paper cup if I have to!” The pink-haired victim fidgeted as he pleaded. He felt so mucky and unclean! His entire body was caked in sweat and mucus, his hair was crusty with drying snot, and his clothes were almost fused with his skin. This wasn’t how a respectable, modern human being should feel! Then again…he could hardly be called a human anymore.

There was an uncomfortably long pause as Romeo just stared at the little, pink-haired termite between his fingers. His expression hadn’t changed at all; not even the smirk Natsu was expecting after all the pitiful begging he had done. Eventually, Romeo tilted his head and said, “Did you say something just now, little bug? I couldn’t really make it out...”

The smallest of all Fairy Tail members was utterly flabbergasted. Had he gotten so infinitesimal that Romeo couldn’t understand him anymore?! Was simple communication beyond his capabilities as well?! “I said I don’t want to do this anymore! I don’t wanna shrink any smaller, do you understand?! Please hear me!”

“Hmmm…squeak squeak squeak?” was Romeo’s response before his mouth warped into a big smile and he brought his two fingers closer to his mouth. “Squeak squeak squeak! Hahaha!” The colossal youth made Natsu’s entire physique tremble with his thundering voice. Mocking the lesser man’s attempt at speech was so entertaining! “Oh well! Since it’s you, Natsu-nii, I’m sure you wouldn’t give up no matter how big the odds stacked against you were!” Romeo was ignorant of Natsu’s hysterical screams of “NO” as he compressed the teensy-weensy teenager between his fingers again; a piffling fraction of his strength all that was necessary to overpower him. “They’re pretty damn big, by the way~”

Witnessing Natsu get dominated by his sweat and boogers compelled Romeo to speculate what other secretion could be used for identically humiliating results. He looked to his childhood memories for inspiration. He recalled one time he had gotten lost in East Forest while searching for Natsu and Happy’s house. After drinking a lot of water from a river, Romeo needed to pee and did his business on a nearby tree. It was only after the fact that he noticed he had flooded an entire ant hill! As for whether he felt bad for the poor, hard-working insects or not…well…let’s just say Natsu was lucky Romeo didn’t have anything in his bladder right now. It was an entirely different incident that sparked the Mage’s imagination; namely, the time he had waited next to his window for his father to come home. He was angry that his dad was late from a job again and decided to take his aggravation out on an innocent little spider under the windowsill. He had spat on the tiny arachnid; burying it in his drool and laughing as it went rigid and drowned.

Romeo returned to Natsu’s favorite piece of glassware and picked it up off the floor. With an impetuous flick of his wrist, Romeo threw out the collected sweat within the glass and marked a section of his floor with the fragrant substance. It wasn’t a huge deal; his hardwood floor was already dotted with little sweat stains and more would form with every bead of perspiration that dripped off his shirtless body. With the container emptied, Romeo held his other hand over it and slowly separated his thumb from his pointer finger. When Natsu’s entangled form was unveiled, the superior male parted his fingers even more to stretch out the gooey ropes that held the tiny man in place. Eventually, gravity kicked in and the snot-covered flea plopped into the glass with an ignoble splat.

Natsu made a sound that was somewhere between a groan and a whimper as he forced himself to stand; drying snot trying to keep him glued to the tumbler’s transparent bottom. The dirtied man did his best to wipe sweat and mucus out of his eyes as he surveyed his surroundings. It was even more extensive than it was a few minutes ago, but this was definitely the same highball glass he had been trapped in before. The pond-worth of body sweat was gone now, but its strong odor still lingered and it made the fire-eating-insect contort his face in disgust. “Damn it all! Why am I here again?! Romeo! Why—?” Natsu craned his neck back to he was looking straight up into the air. What he saw, hovering over the glass’s circular opening, was Romeo’s handsome, boyish face with his lips pursed. Natsu’s black eyes went wide with horror when he saw spit bubble out from between those puckered chops. “Seriously?!”

Just as the cruel, god of a boy let a pearl of soppy saliva leak out of his mouth, Natsu gave a panicked scream and took off running; throwing himself out of the way just as the glob of spit hit where he was previously standing. It went off like a bomb behind him; spraying his back with dribble and pushing him forward and onto his face. When the rosy-haired teen looked back, his eyes were met with the sudden appearance of a bubbly hill! A millisecond too late and he would have been inhumed under all that!

“Nice one, Natsu-nii! Keep trying to dodge them like that!” thundered the heavenly face in the sky as he gave his lips a wetting and started loading his mouth up with spit. “I land a direct hit, though, and you fail!” With that said, Romeo blew bubbles with his mouth until another fresh gob of dribble was ready to bombard Natsu with. It remained connected to the titan’s succulent mouth via a string of sticky liquid until that watery thread snapped without a sound. Natsu once again sprinted out of the way and just narrowly avoided becoming that spider Romeo had killed as a child.

“Wait! Wait a minute!” pleaded Natsu as he gestured up to the playful god, but Romeo wasn’t even planning on letting the speck-sized boy stand back up before he prepared a third “spit bomb” for him. When Natsu saw it begin to sag down toward him, he bit his bottom lip and kicked off into another dash. “How do I even win?!” Natsu’s query was drowned out by the heavy sound of more colorless goop splashing down into his prison; not that Romeo would have heard him anyway. It would seem the giant’s latest competition lacked a scenario where Natsu actually won. It was no longer a game between the two men; Romeo just wanted an excuse to spit on his elder’s dignity before he shrank him again. “Why are you doing this to me?!” cried the debilitated young man as he shuffled his feet through the thick spit building up at the bottom of the drinking glass. As Romeo primed another shot, Natsu tried to run out of the way, but ended up tripping and landing face-first in Romeo’s slobber. He wailed tearfully as he picked his face out of the gunk. “No! I don’t wanna get smaller!” On his hands and knees, the former vessel of city-raising power looked up into the merciless face of a true monster. “P-please…s-save me, Ro—“

\*SPLUNK\*

“Bull’s-eye!” exclaimed the violet-haired kid as he snickered through a grin while wiping his mouth off with his sleeveless arm. “Could only dodge three, eh? Mediocre at best!” Looking closely into the glass cup, Romeo saw the little black speck that was Natsu. He was unmoving in a sluggishly diffusing lump of saliva. Certainly he couldn’t be dead; that spider from seven years ago had survived a good minute or two! “Hey! You better not be dead, Natsu! I’ll tell everyone you drowned in spit!” Romeo tilted the glass so its contents slowly flowed onto his awaiting palm. When his hand held a small, thin puddle of spittle, the bare-chested teenager put down the glass and delicately used a finger to tap his guildmate’s motionless form. Natsu promptly stuck to the tip of the larger being’s finger and Romeo wiped his damp hand against his light-green shorts while holding his finger up to his analyzing eyes. “Well…I know one way to find out if you’re still alive!”

Natsu coughed up some spit that didn’t belong to him as he pushed himself up into a sitting position; the back of his top peeling off of whatever he was on top of. The Dragon Slayer of fire grumbled and ran his fingers through his darkened, water-logged hair. As he pulled his hand away, he was appalled to see little ropes of syrupy saliva bonding it to his cranium. He frowned with distress and tried to shake the sticky fluid off. As he did his best to wipe the various, tacky substances off him, the Fairy Tail Wizard tried to think back on what had happened. He remembered a heavy, building worth of drool landing on top of him; bubbly, foamy matter all around him. The rest was all a blur...

“Where…am I?” Natsu got a hint to his question when he looked forward and into his own reflection staring back at him from a black void. He remained still, mouth hanging open stupidly, and tried to come up with some explanation for what he was seeing. A big, black, reflective orb…surrounded by a bright, blue iris and eternal white in every direction. Natsu blinked in mystification…and then Romeo blinked back. “Oh…my…god…” Natsu quivered in obvious terror as the young Conbolt moved his impossibly huge head back with a resounding rumble; filling his teensy, fellow Mage’s vision with the rest of his cosmic face. Romeo must have shrunken him again…shrunken him into less than a speck on his fingertip. The cherry-blossom-haired man tried to wobble to his feet, but it was like the presence before him was exerting an invisible, flooring pressure that forced to older male to his knees. “R-Romeo…?”

As if in reply, the godly creature opened his mouth and spoke. What came out were not words, however, but thunder of the highest caliber. Romeo’s lips, tongue, and teeth moved in such a way that he was definitely forming words, but all Natsu could make out were booming, reverberating noises. Natsu screamed in pain (though no sound seemed to come out of his own jaws) and clasped his hands over his bleeding ears. Before any permanent damage could be done to his eardrums, Romeo closed his mouth and the world stopped shaking like an approaching doomsday. The shrunken, particle of a human being collapsed onto his stomach; panting desperately. Weakly his black-colored eyes looked up at Romeo again. It wasn’t the Romeo he knew, however. It wasn’t the member of Fairy Tail he had greeted and smiled with every day. What dominated his vision right now was nothing short of a higher life form—a being existing on an entirely different plane. Flecks of dust like Natsu Dragneel were never meant to interact with beings like Romeo Conbolt. He was just too colossal; Natsu could only recognize his expansive, city-sized face! Every other segment of the teenager’s godly, sweaty body was imperceptible!

Whatever Romeo had said, he must have found it funny, because a moment later his mouth curved into a smirk and then opened wide to begin laughing. As if the roaring, explosive volume wasn’t bad enough, gale-force winds of extreme temperature gushed out of his oral cavity like it was the gates to Hell. When they hit the prone flame Mage, it was like a punch to the face—a punch with enough force behind it to flip Natsu into the air and send him spiraling off Romeo’s straightened digit. Before he could soar into some distant part of the teen’s bedroom, Natsu reached out with his sleeved arm and grabbed the edge of Romeo’s fingernail. He grunted through clenched chompers as his cheeks flapped in the wind and the rest of his body was whipped around like a flag left out during a bad storm. It wasn’t just expelled air that Natsu had to worry about; huge gobbets of spit flew past the jeopardized dragon child and each one was as dangerous as a speeding wrecking ball!

There’s gotta be something…something I can do! Natsu mentally screamed as, one by one, his fingers slipped off the nail until only two of his digits were keeping him from being whisked away to highly probable doom. He squeezed his eyes shut and thought harder than ever before, but he couldn’t come up with a single idea! What was he, a microorganism of such little worth, supposed to do?! Then, just when Natsu thought he had reached the nadir of his entire day, Romeo did something all humans did. While he appeared like a supreme being to the pitiful flyspeck, the truth was Romeo was a slightly above average mortal. Like all mortal beings, Romeo needed oxygen to survive, and his laughing fit had emptied his lungs completely. Therefore, the youth’s cachinnating came to an abrupt halt and he started sucking air into his chest. The pause between airflows was essentially nonexistent as Natsu quickly found himself yanked off the titan’s finger and sent head over heels toward his gaping orifice. There was nothing to grab onto this time, no hope of changing his course, not a single thing could be done to save the miniscule Wizard. He spun past his junior’s teeth and gums, past his incredibly large uvula, and eventually smacked into the back of his throat. Romeo perceived none of this and calmly closed his mouth before gulping down some leftover saliva sloshing around atop his tongue. Natsu screamed like a lunatic as he was carried down into Romeo’s gullet by a deluge of viscid froth. “ROMEOOOOOOO!”

“Hehe, anyway,” Romeo mumbled as he gave his mouth a quick wipe with his thumb. “I think I’m gonna need a little more time before...um…” The young Magic user trailed off when he failed to see a little black dot on his finger. At first he thought he was just overlooking the easily overlookable man, but a closer inspection revealed he was indeed missing. “What the…oh crap!” Romeo checked all over his hand and arm, but saw so sign of his hero-turned-plaything. “He must have been sent flying!” The 13-year-old looked to the floor next, diligently scanning every inch of it for a speck of dust out of place. “Natsu-nii! If you can hear me, send up a firework or something!”

As Romeo skimmed his bedroom floor outside, Natsu was swiftly passed through the growing boy’s body until seeping into his spacious stomach. He landed with an undignified plop; once again drenched head-to-toe in drool. The minimized Mage crawled out of the gloopy, effervescent pile and went right to ascertaining his new situation. He cleared some slop out of his eyes, which proceeded to dart around and widen with each movement. A gigantic chamber of rippling flesh, deafening growling sounds out of every corner, small pools of greenish acid dotting the landscape. Yup…this was a stomach alright. It hadn’t been a nightmare—Romeo had swallowed him whole.

“Shit shit shit shit shit!” chanted a disturbed Natsu as he fell to his knees and rummaged his hands through his padded-down hair. He had been eaten…again! Bad memories of a certain owl man were coming back to him, but unlike that time in the Tower of Heaven, this was 100x worse! Romeo’s stomach looked more spacious than the tower itself and it was probably much, much stronger than Fukuro’s. Accidently stepping in one of those puddles of digestive acids might cost him his foot! And this time…this time he had no one to save him. No one knew he was even in here…probably not even Romeo! “I’m…I’m gonna die. Romeo’s gonna digest me like nothing!” Natsu collapsed further onto his hands and knees; visibly shaking while sweat leaked from his forehead. He thought it was because of anxiety, but no…he was sweating because it was hot. The gut of a god was so unimaginably humid that it was making him, the Dragon Slayer who ate white-hot fire, sweat! “I-I’m…I’m n-not even gonna last a minute in here…! G-gotta get out!” Natsu stood up, his eyes opened wide and in a fearful torpor. “Gotta find a way out before I melt!”

Natsu had barely taken the first step in his hopeless quest when his entire world jolted forward. Outside his new home, Romeo had taken a cautious step in his search for his pintsized guildmate. What was a normal, uninteresting action for him turned Natsu’s view of the world upside-down…literally. The momentum of Romeo’s body moving forward lifted Natsu off his feet and sent him hurtling into the stomach wall. He became stuck to the stomach lining via mucus; flipped upside-down during the trip. “Noooo! I gotta escape! I can’t die in here!” Natsu gritted his teeth and struggled with all the strength he still had in his diminished, yet still quite toned, muscles. It looked like he would actually be able to peel himself away from the gluey, organic wall…until the pink flesh around him suddenly folded around him. “What’s going on?! No! Let me out of here! Aaaaah!” Natsu was the farthest thing from an expert on biology, so he had no way of knowing that it was the gastric rugae he had been propelled into—the organic folds that lined the internal surface of Romeo’s stomach. With no food inside the boy’s belly, the stomach contracted and created the ridges that were now compressing the shrunken male. Natsu’s desperate, confused screams were eventually muffled when Romeo’s stomach returned to its original size and the Dragon Slayer was smothered under some thick, fleshy creases.

“Crap, what was that?” Romeo asked out loud after feeling something squish softly beneath his right foot. When he pivoted his foot and checked the sole, he spotted a tiny black smudge decorating his smooth sole. Initially he thought he had accidentally pulverized Natsu underfoot, but he quickly realized this stain belonged to a slightly larger, common ant. As he tsked and scraped his bare foot off, he reminded himself that it was still wholly possible he had already stepped on his shrunken little guildmate. He had finished combing his floor and found no trace of the Dragon Slayer, but if he had failed to notice the ant, that didn’t bode well for the even tinier man. Such a small creature as Natsu probably wouldn’t even have left behind any remains. “This sucks. If I was going to squash him I would have wanted to do it consciously!” Romeo didn’t seem all that troubled by the fact he might have caused the premature demise of one of his fellow Fairy Tail Mages, but who could blame him? Give an insect a name and a long life and in the end it’ll still be a worthless, measly insect.

Romeo was just about to call off his search when a peculiar sensation attracted his attention to his shirtless belly. Resting a hand on his protruding abdominals, Romeo held his breath and fixated on the weird feeling until he grasped what it was: Natsu! It’s the same feeling he got whenever he was in physical contact with the older male—it was how he knew he was linked to the sakura-haired Wizard and absorption of his power was possible. “I swallowed him?! When did that happen?” The teenage boy glided his fingertips over his abs and imagined the dust-sized fire Mage thrashing around within. Honestly, he was more annoyed than amused. He had been playing around with the idea of consuming Natsu ever since the eating contest. Hell, their next competition might have been something like “don’t get ate”! However, it would seem fate knew of his plans and elected to spare the pinknette from any more torture than what was necessary.

Was that all, then? Was their little game finally at an end? Would Romeo leave Natsu to his quick, gurgly finish? At first that seemed like that case; Romeo realized when he focused on his belly that he was famished again. He would just forget about Natsu and head downstairs to feast on the leftover food before Macao got home. However, another idea reared its ugly head within the youth’s mind; a malicious, ingenious idea. Why leave his bedroom to fill his stomach…when he could fill it without even putting anything into his mouth~?

Back behind the boy’s youthful abs, it was becoming increasingly difficult for Natsu to breathe. Hugged all around by the living tissue of the rugae, Natsu couldn’t put up any kind of resistance. Mucus frothed around him; keeping him and the stomach wall around him nice and slippery. He couldn’t do a damn thing but wait for the end. Eventually acid would ooze into the wrinkle he was trapped in and that’d be it. It wouldn’t be like being covered in sweat, snot, or saliva—Natsu would probably be dissolved into his fundamental proteins and starches before he even had the chance to think “gross”. He hoped…prayed it would be a painless demise.

Then, as if it were a holy light from Heaven, the flesh around Natsu shined with a brilliant light. The trapped young man knew this light and scoffed at its appearance. What was the point of shrinking him now? Romeo would gain nothing of significance—not even the pleasure of watching him vanish before his eyes. Was the kid’s plan all along to steal every last bit of his power until he shriveled into nonexistence? As Natsu began to ponder if even his soul would be integrated into the fellow flame Mage, he noticed something was off. He thought the groove he was stuck in would expand into the size of a room, but instead it started getting even tighter around his body. As Natsu grunted and forced his body out of the tight folds of the stomach, tumbling down onto it “floor”, he sat awestruck as he felt his power returning to him. Igneel’s son looked around and watched the fleshy pocket of Romeo’s stomach, seeming like an alien realm until now, shrink until it became small enough that he could reach up and touch the sphincter he had entered from.

“I-I’m growing! I’m growing back to normal!” shouted Natsu as he hunched his back and winced as his body started taking up all the room inside Romeo’s hollow organ. The gastric rugae that had once been sizeable enough to completely encase him now came unfolded as the stomach expanded to accommodate the bulk of its increasing load. Natsu couldn’t help but grin and giggle with happiness as he believed this nightmare to finally be over. Considering Romeo was also grinning broadly as he watched his gut slowly push out against the hand that rested on it, it would seem the games weren’t yet over. Eventually Natsu reached a size of one foot…and then stopped. “H-huh? Why did it stop?! Hey!” The pink-headed teenager started to struggle in his tight, constricting prison; pushing against the elastic walls with his palms and feet. He was glad to have some of his power and size back, but he was still pint-sized! Small enough to fit inside another guy’s gut!

“Haha, aw yeah! What a meal!” Romeo chortled as he used both hands to bobble his new girth. The urge to vomit plagued Natsu as he was shook around as well. “You were real filling, Natsu-nii!

“Romeo?! What are you doing?! Give me back all my size!” Natsu solicited as he banged a fist against the stomach’s interior. Outside, the smaller man’s fist showed up as a slight protrusion on Romeo’s flank and the younger boy wondered if this is what a baby kicking felt like.

“Why? So you can burst out of my gut? No way that’s happening!” Romeo’s body shook with laugher and he jollily patted his swelling stomach.

“T-then throw me up and do it!” Natsu responded, covering his mouth as all the shaking Romeo was doing stimulated his motion sickness.

“I think you’re a bit too big for me to do that now!”

“I…but…why…” Natsu didn’t ask any more questions; he didn’t need to. Romeo slyly smirked while keeping his blue eyes fixated on his protruding belly. Natsu had a pretty good idea why Romeo had done what he did, and Romeo knew by the punier male’s silence that he had figured it out. He had no intention whatsoever of letting Salamander out of his churning cauldron. He was going to make a meal out of the rosy-haired Fairy—digest him slowly like any other big, chunk of meat.

“Listen good, Natsu-nii! This’ll be our last contest; our final battle!” Romeo slapped his bulging abs hard for emphasis. “Don’t get digested! That’s your goal! Whether you do it by escaping from my bowels or surviving the trip all the way through, it doesn’t matter! Win and get back everything I took from you, lose…and there won’t be anything left for me to steal!” Romeo grinned devilishly down at his slightly twitching stomach. “You get all that, my midnight snack~?”

“You’re…you’re just gonna let me die in here? You can’t do that, Romeo! We’re Fairy Tail! We’re friends!”

“Friends? Sorry, Natsu, but I don’t make friends with food! Those kinds of relationships don’t last!” the bigger teen began snickering at his joke, but was cut off by a deep grumble from his abdominals. “Hear that? My stomach’s not gonna wait for you, Natsu-nii! You better do something, or else you’ll become tomorrow’s dump!”

Natsu was without words. He couldn’t accept it…Romeo, whom he had known for so long, had zero qualms about turning him into poop! All that power he had absorbed had changed him for the worse! Gradually, the flame spitter’s look of disbelief turned furious as his brow furrowed. He couldn’t become poop! He had to find Igneel, defeat Erza, and become an S-Class Mage! He had so much to do in his life; none of which could be accomplished as a steaming pile of turds!

“I’m busting out of here, Romeo!” Natsu bellowed as he barred his fangs and ignited his fists with Dragon Slayer Magic. He was still pretty weak compared to the younger Fairy, but he was confident he had enough strength to blow a hole through Romeo’s squishy innards! It would definitely kill the kid, but Romeo only had himself to blame for that. Perhaps this would even ensure that he never regained his full height, but Natsu simply wasn’t worrying about that right now. Living forever as a 12-inch action figure…or not living at all. The choice was easy.

“Good luck with that.” the purple-headed boy answered as he leisurely rubbed his paunch. Romeo felt warmth come from deep in the pit of his stomach and goofily smiled because it felt kinda good. Now was not the time for relaxing, however. It was time teach his meal his rightful place!

“Fire Dragon’s…!” Natsu was about to unleash a piercing attack right through this oversized brat, but something made him stop…something that caused him to scream bloody murder as the already-tight stomach around him rapidly shrank and scrunched his diminished body into an agonizing squeeze. “AAAAAAAHHHHH!”

“While you do that…I feel like doing some crunches!” Romeo informed his little captive…after he had already coiled his fists at his hips and sucked in his gut. The Wizard grunted in discomforting pain and sweated profusely as he forced his muscular abdominals to push in his distended stomach. Those grunts turned into excited roars as he started to hear faint snaps and crunches coming from behind his six-pack abs. They were the sounds of Natsu’s body breaking under pressure; his brittle bones snapping like twigs! “Auuugh…fuck yeah!” Romeo cursed upon exhaling and letting his round tummy hang out again. He panted for a bit while proudly slapping his hand against his sweating abdomen. “That felt awesome!”

Inside the powerful young man’s gut, Natsu’s mind was in disarray. He had never felt such pain…a few of his bones had been snapped right down the middle. He was bleeding, though he wasn’t sure from where. “What…what was that…?” Natsu gritted his teeth and reignited his fists. “Dammit all! Fire Dragon’s…!”

“And again!” Romeo thundered as he laced his toned arms behind his head and scrunched his abs a second time. He grinned toothily as Natsu tried to fight him off, but he could do little against that belly of steel plates as it compressed him into a tight ball. The sound of more bones breaking were like music to his ears and he repeatedly flexed those rippling stomach muscles as Natsu put up less and less resistance against him. “Mmmm…yeah! I’m just getting started, Natsu-nii!”

As Romeo strolled over to his exercise mat, Natsu franticly wriggled around inside his sweltering belly for some means of escaping the intense torture. He was in so much pain and he couldn’t conjure up any more flames. Romeo’s bloated stomach was doing its own squeezing as it pulsed around its charge. Natsu whimpered like an injured dog as digestive enzymes began forming around him; prickling his skin to begin the starting stages of digestion. Moaning desperately as the stomach fumes burned his nostrils, Natsu struggled with even greater tenacity, but Romeo wasn’t fazed at all by the noticeable protuberances popping up all across his pudgy gut.

“Sounds like things have begun!” Romeo noted as he lay down on his blue, padded mat and gave his bulging, groaning belly a toothy smile. “I think it could use some help tenderizing you, though! One…two…three!” At the count of three, Romeo made a strenuous yowling noise as he lifted his upper back off the floor and did a crunch. It felt like there was a big, round obstacle in his way, but he muscled his way through it and licked his lips went he heard a loud crunch come from his swollen abdomen. Each crunch the plum-haired, topless teenager did was easier than the last. Each time he clenched his abdominals, something in the tiny Dragon Slayer broke and he became more malleable. Those solid bricks of muscle crushed, bent, and molded Natsu into perfect submission. In minutes Romeo was performing crunch after crunch; each lift of his body showering the area in front of him in a spray of manly sweat. After about a hundred or so he collapsed from fatigue; panting noisily while his impressive pecs swelled and shrunk.

“I’m pooped!” announced the youth as he sat up and brushed some sweaty strands of hair out of his eyes. He glanced down at his stomach, quiet save for the occasional gurgle. “Hey, you still alive in there?” Romeo poked his distended belly and smiled when he heard a sob come from it. Looking to his window, the seated male noticed the moon outside and promptly yawned as if it had somehow caused his tiredness. “Guess I should head to bed. Give you some time to digest!” Romeo snorted out a quick laugh and slapped his abs as he stood up and made his way to his bed. Instead of tucking himself comfortably under the covers, Romeo simply let himself collapse upon his white bed in a prostrate manner. After a hard day of exerting dominance over another, just this was enough for him to fall asleep in a minute or two.

As Romeo fell upon his bed, he squished his stuffed stomach under his weight, but surprisingly Natsu had no reaction to the increased pressure. The grisly scene within Romeo’s body revealed the reason: Natsu was in too much anguish already. The young pyromancer was barely breathing within that suffocating, muggy organ and all he knew was pain. His eyes were half closed and tears dampened his cheeks in two endless streams. He weakly stared at one of his feet…the back of it pressed right up against his pale mug. His entire body was broken and irreparable—limbs twisted at normally impossible angles and almost all of his bones were in pieces. Natsu Dragneel the Salamander, the First Generation Dragon Slayer of fire, was done for. As he opened his dry mouth, there were so many things he wanted to say. He wanted to scold Romeo for his treachery, he wanted to apologize to his dad for not being able to reunite with him, he wanted to beg the others back at the guild to discover what had happened to him and punish Romeo accordingly. In the end, the pink-haired, humiliated man was too weak to say any of these things. Only a few words passed from his lips before he lost consciousness.

“Romeo…you…asshole…”

The youthful Conbolt sniggered into his pillow before saying, “Asshole am I? Well, guess what you’re coming out of tomorrow~?” Romeo didn’t know his defeated guildmate couldn’t hear him anymore, but at any rate he raised one of his legs off the mattress and let a quick poot escape his butt. He laughed childishly, snuggled his face into his soft pillow, and drifted off into la-la land.

Hours of nighttime passed by and Romeo slept soundly through them. His dreams were not haunted by any sort of guilty consciousness, instead he dreamt of other ways he could have played with the shrunken Natsu had he held onto him for another day or so. Romeo’s stomach was equally as callous, for it was just an organ in Romeo’s digestive tract with no sense of morality. It worked relentlessly and raucously throughout the night; squeezing and churning Natsu’s body and bathing him in gastric acid. The spicy hot Dragon Slayer was no different than the chicken Romeo had devoured earlier: just meat packed with nutrients that needed to be broken down and processed. Despite being expired, Natsu put up a respectful fight against digestion, but Romeo’s machine of a belly was simply too powerful for anything labeled “food” to stand up against. In the middle of the night, Romeo rolled over onto his back to reveal a much smaller paunch. There was nothing but a soupy mixture and wide variety of bones behind those abs now. Borborygmi filled the air of Romeo’s pungent-smelling bedroom as Natsu’s remains were carried into his small intestine for the next stage of the digestion process. The bare-chested boy’s peaceful face suddenly twisted in unease before he opened his mouth wide and let loose an earsplitting belch. So unrestrained was the burp that it woke up everyone in the neighborhood, including Macao downstairs. As he and everyone else rushed outside to check for attacking dragons, Romeo’s eyes fluttered open drowsily. He was only conscious for a brief moment, but in that moment he touched his stomach, discerned that it was back to its normal size, and smirked proudly to himself before falling back into sleep for another two hours.

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“Something’s different about you today, kid. Have you been working out?”

“He’s gotten taller! He’s a man! Man!”

“I think he just got a haircut…”

Everyone in the Fairy Tail guildhall sent compliments Romeo’s way as the 13-year-old sat back at a table. His sleeveless arms were folded behind head and he had his mouth opened as he drew in the flames from a few candlesticks sitting in front of him. Once he got a mouthful of fire, the dark-haired kid made a few chewing motions before swallowing the hot gasses in a single gulp.

“You’re telling me Salamander taught you how to use Dragon Slayer Magic?!” interrogated Gajeel, who sat opposite of Romeo at the wooden table.

“Sure did!” the new Fire Dragon Slayer lied as he remained relaxed with his arms rested behind his head. “He told me I was a natural!” Romeo held out a fist and ignited it with a brilliant, red-hot flame. As the teen woke up in the morning, bathed, and got dressed, he noticed subtle changes in his body. He seemed a couple inches taller and his jacket felt slightly tighter on him. The change that wasn’t so subtle, however, had been Romeo’s new Dragon Slayer abilities! He must have absorbed the very last portions of Natsu’s Magic Power during digestion, which included the gift of the spiky-haired teen’s Lost Magic!

“Well, where is Salamander? I’ve got a few questions I wanna ask him!” the Iron Dragon Slayer inquired as his crimson eyes scanned the Fairy Tail Building for the other fire eater.

“He never came home last night!” announced Happy as he fluttered close to the table Romeo and Gajeel were seated at. “I only realized this morning, though, because I fell asleep after eating too much fish…”

“Well…I think he’s gonna be gone a while on a job!” Romeo told the others as he snacked on some more fire from another candle. ”He told me yesterday. Some traveler from Desierto came to him with an important job request! I’m not sure what it was about, but Natsu-nii mentioned the word ‘dragon’.”

“WHAAAAAAAT?!” almost every soul in the guild yelled at the same time.

“Dragons?!” Gajeel hastily stood to his feet; knocking his wooden chair over in the process.

“That little brat went all the way to Desierto?! …by himself?!” Makarov screamed after he threw aside his mug of ale.

“He didn’t take me along?! I hope he wasn’t angry because I ate his fish…” sniffled Happy as he floated down to the floor; paws coming up to his tearful eyes.

“Erza!” Makarov shot a look toward the red-haired woman and she immediately understood.

“Sir! I’ll go and drag him back right away!” With a nod, the S-Class Mage marched out of the building.

“I’m tagging along! How dare Salamander follow a lead on the dragons without me!” Gajeel angrily scoffed as he followed Erza out the door. Romeo watched the two of them leave from his seat; taking a sip from his cup of juice to avoid anyone seeing him smirk. He probably wouldn’t see the two of them for a while; they’ll be souring the entire country of Desierto in their hopeless search for Natsu Dragneel. When they didn’t find him, they’d most likely assume his pursuit into the disappearance of the dragons had caused him to disappear as well. They wouldn’t think Romeo, who adored Natsu so much, would lie to them~

Shortly after putting down an empty glass of fruit juice, a deep groaning noise emanated from Romeo’s lower belly and the flame Wizard winced in obvious pain. He used his left arm to clutch his belly while hurrying to his feet; knocking his chair back as well. An incredible pressure had suddenly started pushing down on his abdomen! “Uhh…I-I’ll be right back!” Romeo mumbled quickly as he rushed out the guild’s double doors and took a sharp left upon exiting. The teenage Dragon Slayer ran around the large guild’s boundary until he was opposite of where he was before. Here, there was nothing but trees, some trash cans, and vermin—not a single prying eye to be found. Romeo smiled evilly as he approached the middle of the alley while touching his grumbling abs.

“Seems like a fitting resting place!” exclaimed the young man as he tugged down his green shorts and underwear and squatted a few inches above the cold, concrete ground. “Right here behind the guild…with the rest of the trash!”

A short, putrid fart whistled out of Romeo’s little pucker before his anus slowly widened to make way for the tip of a brown, solid log of shit. The young man bit his lip and grunted through his closed mouth as another inch or two of the turd was pushed out of Romeo’s gaping butt hole. It was so big…forcing it out of his rectum was causing more pain than anything he had felt since his fight with Natsu yesterday. With a relieved sigh he pushed out a few more inches before his anus pinched the rope of fecal matter and a fresh log of poop met the ground. Judging by the way Romeo moaned through his teeth, there was more yet to come.

“Damn…I didn’t even feel you go in, but man am I feeling you come out!” Romeo groused as he started pushing out a second log of brownish, moist excrement. Sweat dotted the teen’s handsome mug as he bent his back and watched this lump of feces slip out. It was all so surreal; what he was looking at right now was Natsu Dragneel. This was what he his body had done to the once great Mage: converted his corporal form to dung! Romeo smiled while panting as he noticed some bones sticking out of the filthy excreta. Natsu’s skin, his limbs, his impressive muscles…nothing but shit. The rim of Romeo’s anus pinched the end of this log as well, but it remained stuck to his young butt hole. A few good shakes of his tush and the dropping broke off the join the other one.

“Ugh…there’s still more! Is this your revenge from beyond the grave, Natsu-nii?” Romeo alleviated his ordeal with some humor as he forced a third heap of waste out of his slightly burning pucker. He squeezed his blue orbs shut and hissed as this final one gave him a lot of trouble. It was mostly thanks to this stool containing some of Natsu’s largest bones: his skull, his femurs, and others. With some persistent effort and some huffing and puffing, Romeo managed to eject the last bit of Natsu out of his system. Heaving a thankful sigh, the mighty Mage smoothed out his knees and stood tall over the remains of his prey. It probably would have amused young Romeo had he known the smelly residue at his feet consisted of 90% of Natsu’s entire physical makeup. Just 10% of the well-built Salamander had become a part of him; most of Natsu was useless waste now. Visible all throughout the steaming pile of crap were bones…human bones. If anyone needed any definite proof they belonged to the former Fire Dragon Slayer, it was the strands of rosy pink hair still sticking out of the skull. Said skull was imbedded into one of the warm stools; eye sockets packed full with feces and jaw frozen in a horrifying gape.

“Well, Natsu-nii, I guess this is…” Romeo trailed off and paused for a moment before he dissolved into a fit of mad laughter. “Hahaha, wow! I almost said my farewells to a dump!” Still cracking up, Romeo took his penis in hand and unleashed a stream of urine into the mound of excrement. The consecrated torrent of piss mixed with Natsu’s remains; the hot liquid liquefying all fecal matter is struck. Natsu’s skull happened to be in the line of fire and got dislodged from the wall of poop. It rolled down the other lumps of excreta before coming to rest next to them. Soon Romeo’s piss stream dwindled into a trickle and the last few drops dripped out. It was at this point that the youth realized he had forgotten something vital. “Toilet paper, toilet paper…” Romeo scanned the alley for something he could use to wipe himself, but there weren’t any advisable choices in sight.

“Hmm…well there’s that, I guess…” Romeo muttered under his breath as he looked down at his waist. No one in the guild had noticed it, but he had substituted his white sash for Natsu’s scarf. The sweat had all dried overnight and its white fabric was just a tad tainted. He was planning on keeping it as a trophy, but right now it could fulfill a far more important job. “Oh well. I didn’t really like the scale-pattern anyway.” With a tug, Romeo unraveled the muffler from his waist and proceeded to shove it between his butt cheeks. He smiled with content as he used Natsu’s own, favorite clothing to clean some leftover muck from his sore anus. Once the crevice between his cheeks was as clean as he was going to get it, Romeo coldly tossed the shit-stained scarf on top of its former owner’s remains. He gave his afternoon dump no further attention as he pulled up his pants and headed back to the guild. As the hulking teenager left, a nearby swarm of flies took the opportunity to gather around the heap of turds that had once been a proud, robust member of the Fairy Tail guild. They converged onto it and feasted; when all was said in done, Natsu Dragneel amounted to less than a bug: he was bug food.

“It’s gonna be a good life~” Romeo hummed to himself as he turned the corner and never looked back. He had more important things to do with his day then spend any more time in a dank alley with a pile of feces. For some reason, he had this overwhelming urge to pick a fight with Gray…