

# The Seraphian Senate

Irbisgreif

for Goldeneye

## Description

TELL me, did you think that there was only *one* person whose head I could work and *force* my talons into and pull the levers needed to make a story happen? Or did you think that I was some figment of a person's imagination, nothing but a literary conceit? If you did, I am terribly sorry, as I am very, very real, and very hungry. Fortunately for you, I am not eating you; at least not today. You will get your turn though,\* no worries about that, morsel.

No, today I thought I would share a bit of history for this story. I have heard that some people are curious about how, precisely, I ended up ruling an empire. After all, who would serve one whose claim to power is literally "I will eat all who you love, and you, and it will be agony, no matter what you do."

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\*You are going to burn so wonderfully perfect and nicely and I simply struggle to not force you down again and yes again I have eaten you several times I can bring people back remember and I can make sure you never remember that I do so each time is your delicious first *you scream so well for me do it more*. Ah, sorry. Sometimes I simply lose myself in my hungers.

Well, curious little morsel, I have reached into the mind of yet another morsel so that you can learn that exact story, as follows.

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CREATURES that are composed of the diffuse bits of spirits of others, what one might call shard creatures, are not prone to feeling hunger in the same way as normal, mortal sapient life; nevertheless, it is a sensation that most such creatures can feel. And yet, the way it is perceived and felt varies, quite wildly, from creature to creature.

Therefore, let us say the gryphon looking over the senate was hungered, in that 'hunger' is perhaps the closest description that exists in our language for the feelings in the mind of the gryphon.

Hunger, yes. However, it could be described as tainted with something akin to lust, but not the simple lust that fuels mating and coupling rituals and behaviours in sapient and non-sapient alike. Rather, the lust that tainted, or perhaps *flavoured* the gryphon's hunger was a lust for power, for dominance, for control. It was a lust for the

perfect meal—screaming and begging in his stomach.

Fortunately, there were thirty-six meals staring at the gryphon now as he stood on the dais of the senate chamber. True, each was thinking of themselves as “a senator” and not “a piece of nutrition”, but those who travelled into the gryphon often started out with very *wrong* ideas of who they were.

Strictly speaking, the gryphon did not actually require even one single molecule of protein, but that did not change the lust and hunger the gryphon felt for devouring others.

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**M**ONTHS ago, Goldeneye had appeared on this world, and his sole plan had been to see what the whole “existing” thing was on about. It was a novel departure from the strange, chaotic realm that had previously been home. It involved strange new concepts, such as a form (gryphon did nicely) and gender (male works). It also meant strange new sensations. Heat and cold were interesting, as were pain and pleasure.

However, there was one sensation that the gryphon found far more interesting. Gryphons are creatures of strong hungers, and Goldeneye was now a gryphon. His new-found hunger meant that he hoped to devour, one-by-one, every soul on the planet. Indeed, he had gotten a good start. A village of foxes unfortunate enough to live where he had made his entry to this reality had gone down nicely.

However, there was something Goldeneye had not expected. A little quirk that had made the gryphon rethink his plans. Eating a village of people was a start, but fully half the fun was in the raw, unstoppable, intense *terror* the foxes felt. Yes, once they were inside they felt terror as they were slowly digested, but it was indescribable to feel how the fear started before the eating, that it only grew as the impersonal, undeserved hell of a stomach grew closer. The fear was just as delicious as the three days of agony the village underwent!

And so one fox was patted on the head, forced to listen to his village mates screaming a bit through thick musculature, and told to go and herald the end of the world to the city of Seraphia. To be fair, it was a dramatic, even “over the top” act, but Goldeneye assumed it would be amusing to send the herald off into the city before he wandered over to it.

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**G**OLDENEYE’S herald had finished yelling about the gryphon’s arrival when the gryphon ate him in the city square. That was two weeks ago, and Goldeneye caressed his stomach as he looked out at the thirty-six senators. The poor herald had ended up changing the calculus of the situation, which meant his suffering was needed to keep the gryphon fully entertained, though none realized he was still alive inside there.

You see, Goldeneye had expected the fox to be ignored, to incite a panic, or perhaps

a bit of both. What he had not expected was for the fox to go to a priest of a small but influential religion that had a world-devouring gryphon as the chief deity. Very unexpected, that faith.

Thus, when Goldeneye dropped from the sky into some kind of religious inquisition, ate his herald, and then struck a pose of power, he had not expected to do something like “end the great debates”. As powerful as he was, Goldeneye was also vain. Inscrutable as shard creatures are, they are also very flexible. So when several hundred people bowed down in worship of the new God Emperor?

Well, Goldeneye became exactly what they wanted. It had taken less than a week for everyone to organize around the new order of things. The three other religions were gone, abandoned totally in the face of an actual deity. The often rancorous public debates about the nature of justice and ethics had changed to simply asking the God Emperor what he thought. After all, a God Emperor’s whim is law.

It was delightful, the wonderful things the people were willing to bestow upon him. Goldeneye loved it, these people were so eager and ready for a ruler, a God to control them, an emperor to master them. They wanted it badly and Goldeneye could not help but oblige, that much raw belief was not something that the gryphon could deny. His hunger hunger was still there, but in the meantime, the herald could be kept alive for a quite an agonizing bit.

Goldeneye had all the time in the world to eat it, and if he owned it in the meantime?

That would be absolutely, utterly, and beautifully delicious.

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**B**ACKGROUND aside, Goldeneye now stood on the central dais of the Seraphian Senate, and what had once been the center of a thriving republic was now a slight incongruity. Already, the soldiers of the new empire were marching for the god-gryphon, not the Senate and People of Seraphia. Already, the courts had been changed, Wreathed Judges installed to carry out the order of the god-gryphon, not the order of the Senate’s Laws. Already, provincial governors sent their reports directly to the god-gryphon, not to the senate offices.

“You see, my senators.” Yes, my senators. All were his now, some just did not realize it yet, there would not be any stopping him as he demanded everything. “I am now the Emperor, I am your God. I simply have no need of any of you. While a God with an Empire can use generals, judges, and governors to maintain it, it does not need senators. Advice is overrated, and consent?” The gryphon shuddered as he let the rhetorical question stew, just as each senator soon would. “Consent is irrelevant.”

Thirty-six people shuffled in fear of the immensely powerful creature before them.

Goldeneye beamed playfully at them all, “So yes, senators, you are superfluous.”

Thirty-six people began to realize that they would not be leaving the room.

The gryphon lay out on the dais. “And delicious.”

Thirty-six people began to realize that they could leave the room only if wrapped in gryphon hide.

Ah, there it was, the herald finally died, a mercy to not exist after that hell. “And I am ravenous. My herald is all I have eaten lately, you know.”

Thirty-six people looked to each other, each determining, one by one, that they would be tortured, executed, cremated, and entombed by the gryphon’s natural processes.

After it had sunk in for a few moments, Goldeneye waved to his feast. “Tomorrow is my coronation, let us feast! Me upon you.”

Thirty-six people inched towards the doors, though they were locked and would not be opened.

Another few moments, “Yes yes, you are going to be eaten. Every last one of you.”

One senator, a wolf, spoke up. “How can you do this?”

“Oh, that part is easy. One-by-one, into my crop, until I have eaten six. Then send those six to the stomach to digest, then fill the crop with another six, after a bit, the stomach moves to the intestines, the crop to the stomach, and I eat another six! It is simple, really.”

Another, this one a cat, shook his head “That is not what he meant, we’re asking you why?”

“Also easy. I want to, and I can. You cannot stop me.” The gryphon pointed a claw out at the room, straight at the wolf. “You first. Come here.”

Thirty-six meals broke out into sheer pandemonium, which is the typical start of

a mass eating. Screaming, demands for help from guards(none came), pleading, crying, begging, running, and all the other behaviours of panic, all filling the room while the gryphon watched.

«Shut. Up.»

That was better. Telepathy did tend to make a point. The thirty-six all shuffled slowly into position, lining themselves up for consumption. It was a wretched walk, clearly against the will of each of the chosen, but there was nothing that any of them could do to avoid stepping into line.

It is one thing to know that a predator was going to eat you and delight in your suffering. It is another to know that a predator can outrun and capture you. It is an entirely different universe of fear when you realize that your predator is going to make you *walk to your fate*.

The gryphon pointed another claw out at the wolf in front of the line. “You. Come here. Now.”

Thirty-five pairs of eyes watched as a crying wolf walked to the dais, was lifted without ceremony by a powerful, enormous gryphon, and lowered into the gryphon’s beak. The other senators were left with little choice but to watch their future—the tasting, the toying, the slow and methodical swallowing, as the wolf vanished head-first into the gullet of the monster that now ruled their homeland.

A wolf tail vanished, “Now, the cat. And yes, I *am* a monster. Is it not glorious?”

Stern stuff, that cat. He actually fled and forced Goldeneye to chase him down. The wolf was bouncing in the gryphon’s crop by

the time the cat was being pulled down to join him by his feet.

Thirty-four eyes looked at the squirming pair in Goldeneye's crop, wondering how it was, and realizing that they soon would intimately know.

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**W**ITHIN the crop, the cat and wolf were forced to press into each other very closely. Each motion from one sent them both tumbling, and the pair were coated in saliva and mucus, making for a wet, loud, and very warm time as they bounced. After a few minutes of this, a pair of legs from a stoat joined them in the chamber, followed shortly after by the remainder of a wet, squirming stoat.

Bouncing about, the wolf was the first to speak, "We— we have to get out of here!"

He was followed by the stoat, "How? We are in a stomach!"

The cat, "I don't think this is his stomach."

A fox tail announced the next occupant, followed by a screaming fox head, begging for his mother or some god to come save him.

«Oh, nobody is going to come save you. Certainly not a god. No god wants to go through what you are about to. I should know, I have made them go through it.»

The stoat pushed out against the walls, causing a bump that could be seen outside the gryphon, eliciting gasps (inaudible inside) and screams (quite audible, albeit muffled). This was followed by a powerful muscular contraction that jumbled and jostled

the five wet, slimy furs about one another, which was how they noticed the catatonic secretary bird that had joined them.

It was the wolf who remembered the promised counts, "No, nono, he said six and then..."

The head of a goat pressed into the chamber, whimpering that they wanted to die any way but this.

The gryphon cut him—and further speculation—off, «Oh, but *this* is how you die. What you want does not matter, I can do whatever I feel like.»

The gryphon shook his head, making those outside wonder just *what* was happening. «Well, that is not true. What you want matters, in that I want to utterly override it.»

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**T**HANKFULLY the chamber of the Seraphian senate had become far more orderly. It was always interesting how, once they were truly confronted and made aware of just how irresistible the gryphon was, those that were meals tended to become far more compliant. The former senators had even been so kind as to form a somewhat orderly queue when ordered (and maybe a little bit mind controlled) to do so.

The last six in line, the six smaller-than-Mathraxian gryphons that all represented the most alpine districts, were called forward, hushed, and forced to lay beneath the squirming gut of the couchant Goldeneye. Goldeneye then looked at the twenty-four

waiting in line, mostly sobbing. “It occurred to me that you may all be curious how this is going to go.”

He shifted a bit, forcing the heads of the six gryphons against his gut. “They are in my crop now, and it is perfectly safe there.” He then fluttered his wings, and the mass shifted in his body. “And that is how fast it is, they are in my stomach now. Needless to say, digestion is not safe. Tell me, fellow gryphons, what do you hear?”

The question proved unneeded. Starved of fresh, squirming, unprepared meals, the gryphon’s furnace of a stomach was eager to get started. While the gryphons heard it first, soon all thirty-one people in the room who were not being digested could hear as those being digested began to scream. The six inside could hear as well, presumably, but judging from how shrill the screaming seemed to be, they had other matters to attend to.

Goldeneye looked down at his belly and then out to the waiting line, motioning for the first to come forward. Even with mind control compelling compliance, the deer was slow to step. There is a difference in the screams of terror and screams of agony, and the sounds coming from inside the gryphon’s squirming stomach were *blatantly* the latter.

Regardless, Goldeneye was not to be denied. While the buck was terribly slow, the process was also inexorable. The deer could no more stop himself from marching his way into Goldeneye’s reach and his eventual demise than any of the six currently piercing the silence of the room with scream-

ing could stop feeling like they were being burned alive.

There was only a moment of consideration for his antlers, which seemed only to require that he go down foot first. Despite their size, they provided no resistance in that direction, and the gryphon was able to gulp down the deer without issue. Soon, the sobbing face was staring out at the cheetah that would follow him shortly. Goldeneye snapped his beak shut, breaking off that rack of antlers before swallowing down and sending the deer to his crop.

The gulp filled the room, louder even than the screaming coming from the writhing gryphon belly. Peristalsis had claimed another of their number, and each of the waiting line shuffled forward, moaning about their fate and helpless against the gryphon’s power.

Standing in front of the gryphon, the cheetah forced himself to his knees. “P-p-please god. Please sir. My emperor. Please do not eat me. I will give you *anything I can.*”

“But what I want,” whispered Goldeneye, “is for you to slip inside my stomach and *scream* as I slowly end you.”

A luxurious beak descended slowly down over the cheetah, encompassing his head and lifting him rapidly into the air, where he could dart the poor feline down. It was a definitively feral action, head moving back slowly and forward quickly, each time forcing ever more of the wriggling cheetah forward into the gryphon’s gullet.

With the spotted one gone, the gryphon motioned for the next spotted one, a hyena, to come forward for his own consumption.

Having seen how useless it was to fight, the hyena took on a defiant stance, fighting every single step towards Goldeneye and his stomach of horrors. At one point, it even seemed that the hyena might avoid his fate, as he was refusing to take the last step. The air itself seemed to stand still for a minute as the Hyena refused to budge.

However, Goldeneye rolled onto his side, forcing the six gryphons mashed against his belly to shift with a series of squawks, all of which were promptly drowned out by redoubled screaming from his struggling stomach.

If beaks could smile, Goldeneye's did. The Hyena was shaken by the quite audible begging and took the final, self-damning step towards the gryphon. As his writhing body vanished like all those before him, everyone could hear that the stomach's screaming had changed—where once the cat, wolf, fox, stoat, and goat had been begging to be let out, they were now begging for something else entirely. The six in the stomach clearly wanted to die, if it would only end the extraordinary agony the gryphon was subjecting them to via chemical cremation.

The fennec behind the hyena shook with fear as he was forced forward. His constitution was far, far weaker, but while he closed the distance to the gryphon faster, the gryphon took much longer to swallow him, seeming to savor just how soft and well-kept the fennec's fur was.

«Oh, is that *lilac*? Whatever you condition your fur with is simply scrumptious! You must tell me what it is so I can have others use it before I eat them. No-no, not right now, do it later while you are screaming. I

can just rip the memory out of you while you stew.»

If there was any reply, it was not audible as the gryphon swallowed the fennec down like all the others.

“Oh, yes yes yes. I am loving this. Are you all loving this?”

The dolphin stepping forward, covered in tears, did not seem to be loving it.

Goldeneye reached out, hooking a claw around the dolphin and pulling him close. The avian eyes lidded for a moment, and the screaming in his stomach actually seemed to fade slightly. “I can control it, you know. It could be completely painless.”

The shrieks filled the air again suddenly, as shrill as ever, “But I want them to suffer. I want *you* to suffer.”<sup>†</sup>

The dolphin sobbed, shaking his head and gibbering “nonono” as Goldeneye lifted him up and swallowed him down, foot first. It was fast, the cetacean gone in almost an instant, unhelped by his slick hide in any hope he may have had for resisting his fate.

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**B**LOOD was rushing to the region to help digest the mass of prey, and the five cropped prey could feel each wave of heat as it swept over them. They could smell the acrid scents from the next chamber, meat being slowly churned into chyme and mush. Most horribly of all, they could hear the screaming and the wet, sloshing sounds of digestion taking place.

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<sup>†</sup>Yes, dear reader, I want *you* to suffer as well.

Outside, they had heard only muffled yelling, but here they could pick out each voice, voices that had engaged in spirited debates just days prior.

The cat, often a leader in debates, was just yowling out repeatedly, "Make-it-stop! Make-it-stop! Make-it-stop!" His debate with the gryphon's stomach did not seem to be going well.

The voice of the goat was also distinct, bleating out a long, unbroken train of thought. "How can it keep going gods save me please let it end I want to die and it doesn't stop it just burns and my eyes gods my eyes are melting in my skull gods make it stop."

The hyena tried his best to speak to his crop-mates, especially as they were joined by the lizard, next in line. "Listen to me. Listen. He wants us to scream like that, he's toying with us. We will resist and fight him. We will not be conquered. Just hold on to each other and fight the urge to scream.

The wolf, as if to reply, simply howled "Let me die, please!"

A few seconds later, the sounds were all suddenly muffled. The six in the crop clenched one-another's hands, realizing that soon they would be pushed forward. Each mentally committed to the hyena's plan.

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**S**CREAMING erupted from the gryphon's stomach within *seconds* of the second batch being pushed in, and the gryphon smiled, pressing some of his gryphon attendants against his lower belly

to hear the screams in his intestines, and a few others against his stomach to hear those screams.

"They tried to resist, you know. They really did. So brave."

A shift in his stomach led to a yelp from one of the gryphons held against it, "H-how horrible."

Goldeneye motioned to his next prey-thing, nodding, "Almost beyond describing. You cannot resist it, the agony seeps into your mind, your soul, and simply obliterates anything you were thinking of doing other than suffering and screaming.

A piercing scream escaped the gryphon's lower gut, followed by silence. Goldeneye was picking up a mouse and dropping him down his gullet like a grape. Stifling a belch afterwards he sighed softly. "Those lucky fellows, dead within just a few minutes really. Sometimes I have tortured people in there for weeks, even a month, before letting them die." The look the gryphons got from the larger, hungrier gryphon as he said that made their knees feel weak.

He reached for an otter and stuffed them in his beak face-first. A few swallows later, a rudder tail was sliding from view as the gryphon purred. "Salty. Tears I think?"

He looked over a hyena that was struggling not to step forward to his death, and chuckled softly. "Ah, yes, tears. I do believe *all* of you are crying now, yes?" The gryphon laughed and picked up the hyena and started cramming his feet into his waiting beak.

«Crying is nice, you know. It is like the foreplay to the screaming and sobbing you



will do while you digest. So often people just jump straight to the digestion when they write—»

“C-can we go together?” Interrupted a rabbit with tear stained cheeks. Another rabbit, smaller but with an identical fur pattern stood behind him, also shuddering and sobbing.

Goldeneye swallowed the last of the hyena and tilted his head, “Brothers? Lovers?” He paused, staring at the two and narrowing his eyes a bit, scrutinizing them as they shook with fear.

A loud, wet sound, something between a “glorp” and a “squelch” came from the gryphon’s gut, followed by a freshly shrill level of screaming as the four who were in his crop were stuffed into half-digested screaming remains of the previous six.

The gryphon shuffled a bit, feathers fluffing to show his glee at the unexpected treat in the middle of his gluttony, “No, do not tell me. It will not make any difference anyway. I will find out quickly when I start to melt you both.”

He reached out, pulling them both close, letting them hear as he paused his eating just for them, stewing the other ten and finishing them off with speed and without mercy. “I am going to treat you both quite special, actually. I think you are just so precious that you deserve something every so *slightly* different.”

“And no, my lovely suffersluts, that is not a good thing, but you’ll get what you asked for, you can go together!”

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Two rabbits, arms wrapped about one-another, slid into the sticky, wet, and tight space that the gryphon called a crop and began to ‘enjoy’ the sounds of their former friends and co-workers screaming in extended agony.

«You know, you should be happy, you die for a noble cause. My pleasure. The only cause, really.»

The voice of the otter was the first after that wave of psychic energy. Oddly coherent, given the situation, a lengthy prayer to one of the other deities from one of the other, less practised faiths.

«Oh, you silly river creature, that one in particular is useless to you. I digested poor little Josh...»

Screaming continued, unabated.

«Apologies, but it can be appreciated even more with context.»

Enormous ears on a pair of terrified rabbits heard as the screaming group ahead of them were yanked forward to new horrors without ceremony. The smaller of the pair whimpered, and then froze in sudden realization that whatever hell was on the other side of the fleshy wall they were being pushed towards was a hell they would soon be entering.

He gripped the other rabbit close, whimpering and sobbing uncontrollably in both fear and despair, and his face smashed into the sphincter that separated the antechamber from the torture chamber. The larger rabbit instinctively pulled on the other, hoping to protect them from the horrors that waited, but everything seemed to stop for a moment.

Milliseconds ticked by as the full gryphon's empty stomach waited to receive the next occupants, nothing at all seemed to happen and the waiting in the fleshy space was intense in how drawn out it seemed to be.

«Let us try this.»

A single pulse of peristalsis, only a head entered the space beyond, and a larger rabbit was soon being kicked and punched as a smaller one learned just how horrible having acids and enzymes splattered across the soft tissues of ones eyes, nose, and lips could be.

Screaming erupted from the stomach—agony. Screaming erupted from the crop—despair. The sound from the gryphon's voice box was something else, a pleased sigh that competed with the most satisfied of men and women at the peak of sexual bliss.

Everything was kept as it was, slowly digesting the face and head of the smaller rabbit. Letting the larger struggle uselessly to save the smaller from the horror they felt.

In a sense, it was the perfect little microcosm. Suffering people, people who wanted to help but could not, and surrounding everyone, the system that was ensuring that everyone would suffer in the end. Something quite poetic about the whole thing, but it was a moment, an idea, a temporary state. All things about Goldeneye were temporary states as far as those who were suffering was concerned.<sup>‡</sup> Another wave of peristalsis came, pressing more rabbit into

the boiler. Pain intensified as it spread over more of the body and with that, screaming also increased.

Just a few more waves to finish serving the execution warrants on a bit of hassenpfeffer—and then another wave to bring a German shepherd into the crop to await his own turn at being stewed alive. It had the nice effect of giving the two screamers an audience as their screams and pleas mixed in the same way that their bodies would mix as they were broken down. More poetry in the world.

The German shepherd struggled to push himself away from the screaming; unceremoniously using the faces of the rabbits as something for his feet to push against. Unfortunately for him, the rabbits may have been trapped, but they were not still. The dog slid back and received the tail-end of a raccoon in his face for his trouble.

«Can't stop. Won't stop. Devouring you all.»

Another generic red fox, along with a fennec fox, soon joined the dog and raccoon in awaiting their fate. The four were squirming, pushed around by the two wailing rabbits, when ten crying sounds washed over everyone before abruptly ending. It was not hard for the waiting four to figure that the ones who had gone on ahead of the rabbits were gone now. The bunnies were concerned with something else entirely.

Even the poignancy of ten lives ending was not enough to stop the gluttony. A small horse, followed by a boar, soon joined the other four in the crop, preparing another batch of condemned who would soon be ex-

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<sup>‡</sup>Oh, I'll have to show the author how *utterly wrong* that particular statement is.

ploring the inner workings of their new god and emperor.

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«**Y**OU know I am genuinely surprised. I was not expecting you to be lovers and brothers both. Rather appropriate that I digest you both together, you know. Any other deity on this world would likely have sent you to *some* kind of hell.»

Two rabbits screamed and thrashed against the walls, the furnace of a stomach was giving them no respite, no chance to even consider the words of the gryphon. Instead of a response, the smaller of the two was simply clawing at their face, trying to remove the burning acid—succeeding only in removing more of the softened flesh. The larger, on the other hand, was trying to clench their eyes shut, protecting them from the stinging.

It is a common misconception that things that are eaten are dissolved in concentrated acid, like a chicken bone in sulphuric acid in a YouTube video. In reality, the acid serves mostly as a catalyst for the real digestion. ‘Stomach acid’ is about the same strength as lemon juice. Protonation of the meal is secondary to the action of various enzymes, chief amongst them pepsin, that seep into the food to break down proteins.

Fats and carbohydrates are not generally broken down much in the stomach. Indeed, they are not like proteins at all in that sense. This means that the fate of the poor bunnies was less “bubbling away into the acid” and much more “slowly softening and falling apart as acid soaked into them.”

Despite these differences, the sensation is about what one would expect. Both of the rabbits felt like they were on fire, a deep fire that was burning into their insides. Both of the rabbits were helpless to stop the pain or digestion, even slightly. One could rub the thick mucus off their face, but a good portion of face was coming along with it, exposing more to digestion. One could clench their eyelids shut to protect their sensitive eyes, but digestive substances would simply soak right through the lid and liquefy the eye beneath anyway.

That liquid, of course, is where the concept of ‘chyme’ comes in. As fur, muscles, skin, and soft parts like eyes start to fall apart, the action of the gryphonic stomach walls fully enters the field. Grinding acidic goo along the bunnies, sloughing off huge parts of their shape, and accumulating it all at the end of the stomach to be filtered slowly into the intestines.

In a regular stomach, lack of air and damage to the body would have killed the rabbits long ago. At the very least, the steady destruction of nerve endings would have eliminated the sensations of burning and pain. This was not a regular stomach.

«Surprised that you’re still alive, my little buns? I’m not going to let any of you morsels go that easily.»

Unlike a normal stomach, which would indiscriminately destroy and process, the current stomach had extra features. The teasing psychic voice was the most noticeable, but more important for the rabbits was what the stomach was not digesting.

Despite the damage, each bunny still seemed to be covered in fur—Goldeneye was digesting the body, but leaving the nervous system completely undamaged. Instead of slowly losing their sensations and fading off into death, the pair were having more and more of their sensation exposed to the furnace and hell that Goldeneye had sent them to. It was enough to break even the strongest of minds.<sup>§</sup>

Only when there was nothing left but the screaming brains and nerve endings of the pair of rabbits, floating in a thick goo that had once been their bodies, were the pair whisked off with all the other gunk to the next stage of digestion.

Outside the stomach, everyone heard the screams. The six waiting in the crop, wondering if it was as bad as it sounded in the next chamber, heard them best. The six gryphons, serving the now-sagging gut of their new god, heard them second best. The five waiting to be consumed, standing in the same psychically enforced line they had once been at the end of, barely heard it. Yet everyone heard.

For about a half-second, the stomach was empty.

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**P**IERCING avian eyes surveyed the remaining group, and hot avian breath washed out over the remaining senators. The story inside was different. The gryphon diety's stomach was empty for the

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<sup>§</sup>Even myself, dear reader, could not handle it, but I don't have to try. You do.

first moments since the gluttonous murder of the senate had begun, and the powerful build up of acids inside was eager to accept the next cluster of unfortunate victims.

Deeper still, the final remnants of two rabbits were dissolving and being absorbed into the gryphon's bloodstream, and it almost seemed that the Seraphian senate might receive a momentary reprieve.

«How is it that the young ones say it, little gutsluts? Ah, I recall. This stomach empty, yeet!»

Goldeneye chuckled as his eyes lidded for a moment in enjoyment, referencing a 'meme' that none of the senators—digested or not—would comprehend.

What a particular group of six *did* comprehend, was that they had gone from a sticky, tight, and warm place to a sticky, tight, and *hot* place. A particular group of six was quickly finding that this was a space that could be simultaneously as wet as an ocean and as hot as a blast furnace. Skin and fur practically boiled off the unfortunate, screaming victims.

For each of the squirming senators, slowly turning to mush as they slid around one another within Goldeneye's belly, it was hard to pick the worst horror. Naturally, the extraordinary pain of being digested alive was certainly bad; nevertheless, this understates the extreme pressure that is needed to compress six people into a space 'meant'<sup>¶</sup> to be occupied by two.

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<sup>¶</sup>Flexible? Yes. Always too small for what is in it? Very yes.

There are also psychological factors to consider. For example, the horror of realizing that those you have spent your life working with are either being digested the exact same way, were digested the exact same way, or were about to be digested the exact same way.

By this point, each of the gelatinous, dissolving morsels could feel as more bodies began to pile up in the crop, awaiting a turn in the mobile furnace that was Goldeneye's stomach. A lizard, another cat, a falcon... so many meals.

Swallowing the ultimate non-gryphonic victim, a delicious little Aardwolf, Goldeneye sighed. "This is quite the gluttonous experience. I'm having to just about force myself at this point."

He looked down at the gryphons below him, each shuddering as they heard the screams and gurgles of yet another group of fellow senators digested into goo for the enjoyment of the harsh diet that shared all of the wonderful physical traits of their species and shared not a single bit of the compassion they felt towards others.

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**S**OUND effects like 'splorch', 'glorp', 'glrrn', 'blort', etcetera. these are the ways that textual documents try to convey the complex, reverberating, wet, and sliding sounds of a digestive system in operation. Two such sounds followed in short succession.

The first sound was several—mostly-liquid—senators moved from the stomach

to the intestines and learning that heat, pressure, and pain could increase even as the strict potential for Hydrogen was reduced in the duodenum.

Fortunately for the senators, the jejunum was the last stop for their conscious minds. Unfortunately, the jejunum was the last stop for their unconscious minds as well. Terms like *soul* and *spirit* and even *shard* are not quite accurate and carry unusual baggage about metaphysics, but the simple fact of the matter is thus: There are places other than what you might call "the living world" that many minds explore when they are outside of life. The senators who were taking a trip into Goldeneye were learning, in final bursts of horror, pain, and absorption by millions of tiny villi that they would quite assuredly *not* be doing any such exploring.

The destruction of a so-called soul is a quiet affair. No moment of non-existence, just a slow drain of memory, personality, emotion, and finally, the slow extinguishing of thought itself.

The second sound of the aforementioned pair was the penultimate group of food being introduced to their execution chamber. The process that ended for one group there began anew, slow processing of living, breathing, and ostensibly *happy* bodies that were not GoldenEye into more material that *was* Goldeneye.

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**P**USHING that group into the intestine for their ultimate end brought a smile to Goldeneye's face. He had

enjoyed the feast so far, and it was time for the dessert.

One-by-one, Goldeneye swallowed the remaining six senators, the ones blessed and cursed to share the wonderful hybrid species of his body. Only once the six were compressed tight together into his gullet did he finally stray from the dias in the senate chamber. Teleportation was well within his grasp, but letting a full, fat belly drag slowly across the floor as he strolled out of the chamber and to a nearby balcony was a pleasure of its own.

Standing out in the sun, the gryphon thought of the thirty senators who would never feel it again—as well as the six who felt it only as an increase in the temperature of the crop they were in. He looked over the crowds in his new capital.

“Ahem.”

No response came to the small cough.

«Ahem.»

A few hundred faces turned immediately to look where they had been psychically commanded to.

«That’s better.»

Six gryphons passed into a stomach, their home for the next few months as Goldeneye set his new empire in order.

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#### **Public Law 01-01**

WHEREAS the greatness of Goldeneye, first and greatest of his name, is undeniable.

WHEREAS the need for senatorial advice and consent in a theocracy headed by a diety is moot.

WHEREAS the senate of Seraphia is delicious.

WHEREAS Goldeneye enjoys the act.

WHEREAS a new government will be required that will be structured for the good of Goldeneye.

RESOLVED BY GOLDENEYE, That the Senate of Seraphia be *dissolved* immediately, and Goldeneye take the title, mantle, and duties of Emperor.

IMPERATORI CVSTVLISQVE SERAFIANVS

