

Aiden's Ascension

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Aiden Azureflame leaned back in his palanquin as he finished the last meat skewer from lunch, delightfully content. Life was perfect for the charr. When agents of the Flame Legion had approached him a few months back and begged he become their new leader, Aiden had assumed it was a poorly conceived trap. After all, the Flame Legion was the sworn enemy of the other charr High Legions, and Aiden himself had plenty experience fighting them. However, the agents were insistent, proclaiming him to be the God they'd been searching for, how his incredible feats in battle across Tyria had proven him to have no equal. Flattery had won out in the end, and soon Aiden was Emperor of the Flame Legion, surrounded by worshipers eager and willing to cater to his every whim.

At first Aiden had used his position of power responsibly, discouraging his loyal followers from raiding while encouraging them to focus on his ascension to godhood instead. Not that he knew what such a ritual would actually involve. The shamans who advised him and enforced his will were always so vague about Aiden's ascension, rambling on about sacrifices and prophecies and ancient arcane research. Knowing the Flame Legion, they were likely just going to immolate themselves and hope for the best, nothing Aiden couldn't handle when the time came. Instead he focused on the perks of being "God".

Luxurious furniture, fine wines, unparalleled feasts—oh the feasts! Aiden couldn't believe how incredible the food was. Every meal had seemed larger than the last since becoming Emperor, and the golden charr's cream-colored belly was proof enough of that. His soft gut poured over his lap, a solid dome of blubber large enough to knock down any foe. The charr's weight had ballooned up so dramatically he'd already gone through a half-dozen new sets of clothing, to the point where he'd begun to almost exclusively wear his legendary, shape-changing Envoy armor while not lazing in private. No matter how much he indulged the shimmering plates would stretch and rearrange to accommodate his girth. Being light-weight and easy to remove was an added bonus.

Oddly enough, the devotion of Aiden's followers only seemed to grow along with his waistline. They praised every pound as a sign of his irrefutable power, encouraging his gluttony with a passion Aiden had quickly grown accustomed to. Sure he was now a far bit heftier than the average charr, but he was willing to make such a sacrifice to keep the Flame Legion at bay. Besides, the additional weight was somewhat enjoyable.

Aiden's drifting thoughts were interrupted as the palanquin came to a sudden halt, the voice of the High Shaman coming from outside. "We've arrived, my Lord, your ascension is at hand."

With a bit of effort Aiden slid himself to the palanquin's edge and pushed aside the golden silk curtain, exiting into the fresh air. Aiden's gut wobbled slightly as he left, the charr taking a moment to examine his new surroundings. He was in a rather impressive coliseum, built of stones sculpted from molten rock and decorated with imposing statues of overweight charr, obvious recreations of Aiden. The stands and even the arena floor were packed full of Flame Legion, all chanting his name and yelling out praise.

Basking in the adoration, Aiden gleefully waved to his worshipers as he waddled to a curiously massive throne facing the crowd. The High Shaman humbly followed in Aiden's wake. "We've waited so long for this day to arrive, my Lord, the day when the Flame Legion would finally have a God capable of leading them to absolute victory. I can only hope the sacrifice is to your liking."

Aiden was only barely paying attention to the shaman, far more interested in what was going to be for dinner than whatever bonfire or light show the Flame Legion had planned for him. "Huh? Oh, yes, I'm certain it will be."

"I admit I'm a bit jealous of all the sacrifices blessed enough to be included in your ascension feast," the High Shaman said. "There's no higher honor than literally becoming part of a God."

"Ascension...feast?" Aiden had just sat down on the throne, and the details of the ritual he'd put

so much effort into ignoring were now of great interest to him.

"I know it's not the most elegant title for such a grand event, but the name sort of stuck," the High Shaman apologized profusely. "Though it does make sense, considering you'll be personally consuming the sacrifices."

Aiden's adventure in godhood had suddenly taken a very unexpected turn. "Y-you know what, I think I might have eaten one too many skewers on the ride over, surprisingly filling! Let's just reschedule the feast till later."

For a moment the High Shaman stood silent, until finally letting out a polite chuckle. "My Lord, your humor is a delight as always. We should begin soon, though, since eating the few hundred who've gathered here will take quite some time."

"H-hundreds?" Aiden's eyes went wide. The number simply wasn't possible, no charr could consume so many at once, even him. "T-too many, way too many..."

Aiden tried to stand up and flee, but his excess girth slowed him down long enough for ghastly golden chains to be sprout from the throne and wrap around his limbs, securing him in place.

"My Lord, I understand your doubts of sacrificing such a large number of your devout, but they've all eagerly volunteered to aid in your ascension." The High Shaman was obviously somewhat nervous about binding his God. "Once you've gorged on a few all will be clear."

The High Shaman turned to the overflowing coliseum of sacrifices and smiled. "Your gluttony inspired them, my Lord. They've been dedicated to nothing but eating the last few months, stuffing themselves and others practically non-stop. We emptied every prisoner in our cells into the bellies of the faithful, along with all who dared doubt your rightful status as God."

With a few gestures the first sacrifices dutifully approached the throne. They were dressed in nothing but loincloths, and Aiden doubted anything else could fit them. Each were incredibly obese, sporting bellies that dwarfed his own, sacred runes painted on their expansive, jiggling canvases. None looked even remotely afraid of their fate. Any individual sacrifice would have been filling enough to sate Aiden's hunger for a couple days, yet he was expected to gulp down hundreds.

"We originally feared it could take a year or two to properly fatten up the necessary sacrifices, but while our scouts were retrieving provisions for one of your many feasts they learned of some very curious chefs," the High Shaman continued. "The Gut Warband. A very apt name, as their food was both irresistible and preposterously high in calories. We nearly drained the coffers ensuring our mess halls overflowed with their meals, but the results were worth it!"

Aiden had barely noticed now that the Flame Legion soldiers within his citadel had gotten recently, shrugging the strange occurrence off as a side-effect of reducing patrols and combat situations. He'd been surrounded by waddling warnings of his impending fate for months and hadn't heeded them at all. The first sacrifice finally arrived in front of Aiden, his round cheeks extra apparent as he grinned in anticipation. With the High Shaman's blessing he offered a short bout of praise to his God before forcing his paws into the very unwilling Aiden's mouth. Aiden had just enough time to gag as the sacrifice's paws pushed their way into his throat, forcing him to swallow on instinct and pull them in further.

Aiden could feel his gullet stretching with ease, welcoming his massive meal as if it were any normal course. He had no choice but to swallow now, and soon the sacrifice's head was sliding past his lips along with his broad shoulders. Two guards moved in and lifted the sacrifice off his feet, guiding him down Aiden's throat with a mix of awe and envy. The plates of Aiden's armor clattered lightly as they shifted and expanded to handle his ballooning belly. Inch-by-inch the blubbery sacrifice's gut was gulped down, Aiden's middle continuing to swell as he struggled against the chains. Eventually he'd reduced his meal to a pair of legs and a swatting tail, then just paws, and finally nothing at all.

The gluttonous charr's belly bounced and swayed as the first sacrifice emptied into it completely, only faintly recognizable beneath Aiden's existing flab and armor. A raucous uproar erupted from the onlookers. Aiden looked upon his bulging gut with conflicting emotions, concerned with how

massive just one sacrifice had made him yet admittedly impressed with how easily he'd consumed the exceptional meal. He could see his middle wobbling as the sacrifice shifted into a comfortable position within him, never letting out a single complaint or struggle; to think there were still hundreds more eager to join him.

“Ahh, to think we'd wasted so much time attempting to empower ourselves with simple effigies, when the true method was pure consumption all along,” the High Shaman mused, watching Aiden's belly with nothing short of admiration. “The Elder Dragons were the key, gorging on magic to gain unparalleled strength! You'll dwarf them once the ritual is complete, my Lord, in quite a few ways.”

Aiden was stunned by the logic; he was going to be stuffed full of followers based on a silly hope he'd absorb their power? What would they do if his ascension only resulted in a mountain-sized charr and not a God? Then again, what if the plan actually worked...

Unfortunately there was plenty of time for him to ponder as the second sacrifice arrived, just as hefty and happy as the first. Aiden continued resisting, wincing as another set of arms pushed through his mouth and down his throat. Gulping the new meal down was even easier now. His sizable belly swelled once more, still safely contained behind his ever-expanding armor that shown brightly in the sunlight, a beacon for the devout. As he finished swallowing his meal he realized with dismay he'd become far too heavy to flee on his own. Aiden was completely at the mercy of his fanatical followers.

“Soon, my Lord, soon the runes your sacrifices wear will help convert them into the pudge that will build your godly form, and all their power will be added to your own.” The High Shaman was intent on calming any perceived worries his God had.

One-by-one the fattened sacrifices dutifully marched up to Aiden and wiggled down his gullet to join their brethren. Rather quickly they were forced to physically crawl atop the charr's immense belly just to reach his mouth, causing him to squirm slightly as the multiplying contents of his crammed stomach shifted in response. No matter how many he ate, he never felt full, his gut expanding with an eagerness that matched his meals.

In between sacrifices his eyes would dart from left to right, Aiden still astonished by how huge he was becoming. The larger his belly got the more enthusiastic his worshipers seemed to be, each one staring up at his imposing, shimmering form. Aiden slowly let their devotion get to his head. While initially horrified at the prospect of gluttony on an entire arena of charr, he was now beginning to see the ordeal in a new, self-centered light. His charisma and power were so incredible, hundreds were perfectly willing to make a one-way trip into his stomach. He doubted any other leader—past or present—could claim the same. Perhaps the ritual really *was* a blessing, a well-deserved reward for his endless list of heroics, his rightful ascension to the top. Suddenly Aiden was grinning again.

“More!” Aiden bellowed after swallowing his latest sacrifice. “Your God demands it!”

The High Shaman was ecstatic about Aiden finally embracing the ritual, releasing the immense charr from his chains. With a few brief commands Aiden was carefully rolled onto his towering belly to ease future expansion, his mouth never *not* filled with a plump sacrifice. Aiden could feel a light surge pulsing throughout his body, centered on his stomach, which he guessed was the work of the runes his meals were covered in. The small hints of exhaustion he'd been experiencing faded while his hunger rose. The High Shaman was right, eating his followers truly was increasing his power.

The fervor amongst the devoted was at its peak. Aiden's gold-clad belly swelled in all directions as he feasted on his bounty of sacrifices, sometimes two-at-a-time if he were gluttonous enough. Triumphant chants echoed both within the coliseum and Aiden's stomach. As the feeding frenzy continued Aiden diligently worked to justify his now-willing role, though his excuses were increasingly questionable. He was simply containing the Flame Legion threat—fairly literally—and being larger would increase his control over them. The rest of Tyria should be showering him with praise for making such a grand sacrifice at the expense of his waistline, or a least offering gifts.

A third of the way through the ritual feast, Aiden's mountainous middle was becoming a force to be reckoned with. His armored sides pressed hard against the stands and pillars, toppling statues and

ensuring the sacrifices were constantly on their toes to avoid being engulfed. The inner walls of the coliseum struggled to contain the onslaught, gradually cracking and crumbling as Aiden tested its capacity like never before. Inevitably every inch of the arena was covered in golden charr. Aiden's belly squished through the arches of the much sturdier outer walls, but his new "throne" managed to contain him. As another delicious morsel slid past Aiden's lips he eagerly held his maw open for more, though nothing came; the ritual was complete.

Secretly disappointed his historic meal was over, Aiden nonetheless smiled as he admired his astounding girth. While he could feel the faintest wobbles deep within his mass, the bulk of the charr was solid, imposing flab. His cheeks were spheres and his necks many, and Aiden was convinced his pudgy was even more impenetrable than his armor, which could finally rest again. He bet an Elder Dragon would struggle against him now. Soon the High Shaman crawled into view, slow to adjust to the wobbly surface of his God.

"My Lord, your ascension was a resounding success!" He declared. "The other Legions will be unable to refute your godhood, and will fall into line under your glorious reign. The Flame Legion will take its rightful place of dominance once more!"

While before Aiden had been content with simple adoration and pampering, the idea of being the God of all charr was swiftly growing on him. "Yes, yes, in due time. But of greater importance is the matter of my next feast."

"O-of course my Lord! Getting more volunteers will be easy, especially now, but fattening them up to your liking will take some time," the High Shaman almost cowered, fearful of disappointing his God.

"My followers were tasty—I mean empowering, but I've got something much grander in mind," Aiden grinned at the High Shaman. "An Elder Dragon would make a suitable meal for a God, don't you think?"

The High Shaman's eyes widened, but then he soon gained a grin to match Aiden's. "Absolutely! You're truly about to lead the charr into a new golden age my Lord!"

Aiden's mouth was already watering at the thought of gorging on an Elder Dragon, of how much more powerful he'd become. Once he'd safely stuffed them in his belly perhaps he could move on to the Human Gods, and then the Mists itself. All of Tyria would worship him one day, or fuel his voracious appetite. Both, preferably...