

10.

HORNS TRANSIT SHUTTLE, ROW 19, SEAT A

GOUHIN, 8:28 PM

“All passengers, prepare for ascent in one minute. Repeat, all passengers, prepare for ascent in one minute...”

If the world was really ending, then it should have been okay for Gouhin to have one last cigarette. Just one. But no, there above his seating row was that damned *No Smoking* icon, glowing mock-red at him. Its only real function at that moment was giving the panda something to hate, which admittedly did work out in the moment. It beat terror—marginally.

BING

“Insane, this is insane,” a toucan nearby his seat droned, to the point of mindlessness.

“Let me off!” a leopard called out from far in the back. Comically, the shuttle door *whoosed* shut, right after, sealing tight with a pressurized hiss. “Let me off! I...I have to be there! I have to be with the giants!”

“Shut up, over there!” another voice shouted.

“N-no, don’t you get it?” she wailed, panting. “It’s supposed to happen this way! We’re in the presence of gods! W-why are we fleeing? Let me out! I need to be there!”

“Oh, God, stop—”

“I n-need to be on them! Any of them! I...I have to be part of it!”

“Ma’am, I’m not going to ask,” an armed canine began, already putting one shushing hand up. “Sit down, and be quiet.”

“T-this is history,” she moaned, shrugging uselessly. “Doesn’t anyone care!?”

BING

“All passengers, prepare for ascent in thirty seconds. Please make sure your seatbelts are properly fastened, ascent will be high-force...”

“Where will we even go?” the leopard pressed. “What’s the point? We aren’t ready, we could never be ready for living, breathing, enormous gods—”

“Take your weird fetish, lady, pack it up, and sit the hell down,” the guard growled.

Gouhin rubbed his temples, for all the good it did.

“She’s right though,” a lizard muttered, standing up as a tiny alarm bleeped on his seat belt buckle. “Where are we going?”

“Seatbelts, everyone, seatbelts,” another guard barked, motioning at everyone.

“We’re taking a Horns Corp. rocket to a lunar facility, okay?” the other guard huffed. “A mining colony is nearly finished up there, and it can easily take on several cities’ worth of—”

“Need-to-know basis, and there isn’t time to explain,” the other guard snapped. “Belts! Now! Everyone!”

“It’s not right,” the leopard cried, openly, as the shuttle began to rattle awake. “I should be there...I should be with them—”

The toucan was openly shaking, worse than the shuttle.

*“I should be as **big** as them—”*

“BLASTOFF.”

BING

Smoking was suddenly the last thing on Gouhin’s mind, at long, brief last; the force of the takeoff was of such an order that the panda’s vision sank back in his skull, the world seeming to blur as it pulled away, scared off by the roar of many rockets below.

Then, *up*.

Was this how it felt for Legoshi? To grow that violently?

This is what it would take, Gouhin told himself, somehow hearing through the screech of the boosters. *This is what it takes, to be above him now. He got that big.*

Legoshi is that big, now.

No...really. Someone you knew is now—

The thought, the idea, the very word stuck wrong in his brain, and refused to budge.

A god.

Would he still be a whiny, pushy idiot, though?

(bing)

It took a moment for the interior sound to exceed the hum of the rocket as it left the lower atmosphere, shooting up to the heavens at high speed. By God, it was real. Today was real.

“Holy shit, look! Look!”

Gouhin tried. There, beyond the crowded windows on seat H, was a blur of something showing through, something so big that it blurred with the horizon—but the horizon, it was not.

“It’s fur,” someone said, before all hell broke loose. “It’s brown fur...it’s that deer!”

“The one from the news?” a rhino bellowed, nearly smushing a rat as he leaned over him to look. “Oh my God, it is! He...I c-can’t even see all of him, from here...”

“It’s not fair!” the leopard groaned, not even looking. “It should have been *me* that big!”

“You’d die, stupid!” a buzzard replied, coldly.

“They aren’t dead,” she shot back. “I wouldn’t be here...I wouldn’t have been made to be here, if that power was mine. If I was that huge, and completely powerful—”

“Like you carnivores didn’t already have power,” a small pony whimpered.

“Excuse me?” the buzzard suddenly snapped. “We have to walk on eggshells around you, all the time! We never did a thing to bully you, and you still play the victim card?”

“Shut up, back there!” the canine fumed, storming back towards the farther rows.

“See?” the leopard fussed, louder. “What power are *you* talking about? You honestly think that comes close to even a fraction of...that, out there!? You think they’re as small as us and our stupid problems?”

A shockwave of displaced air shoved the craft, shutting everyone up as the entire thing pitched and wobbled, sensors tattling, the interior light dropping low.

“What the hell was that?”

“Out there! Look! They’re fighting!”

Half the shuttle windows were one fuzzy, colossal, sky-filling gray fist, slamming into the deer’s cheek hard. It had taken minutes for a rocket to even come close to reaching the deer’s head, he was so massive.

“Guess they have stupid problems, too, lady,” the rhino laughed, without it being funny.

At that, the small screens embedded into the backs of every seat flashed on, a video happily playing at the height of the arguing. Still, everyone watched.

“Cripes,” Gouhin murmured, as the Horns Corporation logo faded in over a serene deep green background.

“Good evening, everyone,” a tall, thin antelope spoke, dressed as a shuttle stewardess. “On behalf of the Horns Corporation, we’re so excited to have you as our first flight to lunar outpost 0A-1! You’re part of an elite fleet, consisting of our transportation shuttle class, Andromeda 1-10, as well as our precautionary offense craft, the Ares! Our Andromeda sister ships should be close by, per protocol, so give them a wave!”

Another blast of displaced air hit as the enormous bodies on the horizon slammed into the ocean, casting a wave out over the already-ruined coastline below. The shuttle quaked, hard.

“I’m Janine, your host for tonight’s flight. Our runtime will be PENDING hours and PENDING minutes, with full service dinner and snack options. Please, have your credit card or Horns Reward Program Diamond or Platinum cards ready for any dinner orders.”

That gray fur out beyond the shuttle...it was Legoshi’s. It had to have been.

“The pinnacle of space travel, the Andromeda shuttle line will be the standard in travel to and from our new installation on the lunar surface, as well as underneath! The end result of countless years of research and flight data, the shuttle can move up to 4,800 miles per hour with a seat load of over 500 each! You can expect to arrive within under three days on average, but we should have you there much sooner with our patented semi-cycle fuel burst technology! For more about this modern marvel, here’s our president himself, Ogma!”

A hard cut to a well-groomed office stole the screen, forcing Gouhin’s attention.

“Thank you all for placing your faith and investment prospects in the burgeoning Horns’ space industry. Rest assured, you’re in for a comfortable and speedy trip to Lunar Base 0A-1. The mining colony, opening late next year, is expected to boost job growth—”

“We’re up past them! Haha, w-we made it!”

An aardvark was whooping and fussing over by his window seat, thumping the walls.

“They aren’t so tall from here!”

“It’s their planet, though,” the leopard added, chuckling strangely. “It’s their world now!”

“Not if they get nuked, it isn’t!” the buzzard cawed.

“So please,” Ogma continued, safe in the recording, “enjoy your flight, relax, and be well. Remember—and this is a Horns promise—with us, you’re always in good hands.”

“Oh,” the aardvark gasped, before a lemur screamed.

Gouhin’s ears went up.

“Oh, now what?” he began, when—

“What?”

“Th-the Earth. The Earth, the Earth, look!”

“What about—”

“God, look down!”

“Holy—”

Now half the shuttle was screaming, and screaming *hard*.

“It’s breaking up!”

“Something’s—”

“Something’s...God! What is that—”

“WHAT IS THAT—”

Something shot up past the shuttle and kept rising, higher and higher. So much air moved that it simply scooped the shuttle back like a leaf on a river, flinging it off course as every single sensor screamed with them.

The cabin lights died entirely, leaving only orange beads to line the aisles between seats. Something out there not only rose, but...*swelled*. It was the only word. Something was ballooning at such a frantic clip, at such a magnitude of scale that they could all *hear it* growing.

In fact, that surreal rubber roar was only getting bigger. And bigger.

Maybe it was Legoshi. For whatever real good that would do.

Gouhin shut his eyes, let the proverbial chips fall, and fished out a cigarette.

MELON’S LOWER ABDOMEN

OGMA, 8:43 PM

“Hmm.”

The rumble was sharper, deeper, much more so than ever before. The towering stag paused, patting the mountainous ridges of his abdomen, inquisitive despite the mounting sensations. Each internal tremor seemed worse (or better) as the day had gone on, but this...this was different. Angry, even.

Sir Ogma

The stag's vast ear flicked, tickled by something near, a gnat buzz of a sound. Given that ear was 220' across, about as long as an office building was tall, that was saying something. Or trying to, at least.

Ogma began to twist his huge head on reflex, thought better of it, and stopped.

Sir Ogma, please

The ground below that was Melon shifted the slightest bit, pulsing warmly under the deer's feet as he listened closer, before:

Sir Ogma, can you hear me? Is this thing...it's on maximum...hello?

"A loudspeaker," Ogma whisper-boomed, sending vibrations out through his bulky shoulder, rattling the infinitely small helicopter and crew. "Kindly identify yourself."

"Ah, er, hello sir! My name is Mienai, I work for Yahya. While airborne we were flung from the breakage in the crust, and wound up landing in your bulk. There's a doctor here with me from site Alpha--"

"Hah," Ogma rumbled, amused. "Might I hazard a guess?"

"S...sir?"

"That scientist...if you were over the break site a few minutes prior, then you picked him up from the middle of nowhere, meaning he fled site Alpha, meaning...you want another cure."

The stag allowed a heavy pause.

"Yes."

"That's optimistic. Friends, you saw the damage Melon did on his emergence. If you honestly think there's any chance to make more, then you'd need facilities. Ones still, maybe, left intact on the sundered geography, which is surely spread out somewhere here on Melon's body, on account of the gravity well his mass creates. Yes?"

"Correct, sir. We only have so much fuel to spare, and at your great size, your stride and pace would prove far more sensible to that end. All we ask is that you walk us around, please."

"And why would I want a cure, exactly?" Ogma finally asked.

“You see what’s happening without one, sir.”

“True. That’s true, I do see it. More than even you do, in fact.”

“Please assist us, then, sir Ogma. Yahya would be...indebted, deeply.”

A big grin spread out along Ogma’s great muzzle, and a chuckle got loose.

“Fascinating.”

The rumbling blew up within Ogma again, suddenly, making the old male quake as his fur frizzled out eagerly, both upset and thrilled. A low pulse bulged through his muscles as he clenched on instinct, snorted, and grit his teeth. Soon, even they were rattling as his jaw tightened too much, his bulk starting to erupt bigger as his body finally, gloriously, *grew*.

“HNNNH...”

“Ah, Ogma, sir, what...”

“HAAAH...HAH...”

The slight dimple Ogma’s feet made in Melon’s bulk sank deeper as the deer heaved to 2 miles, doubling his size in one mad, plump, burning burst of growth. Vast toes clenched as they dragged over the immense hybrid’s skin, tree-sized strands of fur pulling closer down as Ogma trembled and blew up to 3 miles, then 4, then 7.

“Y...YEEE-HEEESSSS...”

“Everyone hang on!”

Fields of cervine fur ruffled in joy as the elder stag made fists at his sides, billowing steam through flared nostrils as his pectorals kissed up at his muzzle, happy to be that overwhelmingly big once again. As it happened, he was glad too.

“I K-KNEW ITTTT...”

The cure had been successful on its test run, he knew that firsthand. Yet, the aftereffects were naturally anyone’s guess. There was no way to know if it would work permanently or not. There was no way to know that it ultimately had an unwanted side effect all its own.

Ogma grunted dumbly as his shaking form swelled faster, throbbing to 15 miles in one hard push. His rump flexed painfully as his bulking legs spread out, his back muscles surging overhead in time with his widening neck. Biceps as big as small islands detonated larger, stronger, overloading the rest of his arms seconds before his triceps explosively caught up.

Sir Ogma please stop—

“THE CURE...BACKFIRRRRRRES...”

He could feel it: if every growth spurt before had been one huff into a balloon, then this huff was ongoing. There was no slack between, just an ever-increasing pressure forcing him to stretch bigger, faster. There was no other reason on hand as Ogma billowed to 60 miles, quadrupling his size instantly, his muscles screaming out everywhere.

The cure worked. It shrank him back down to a decent rough point.

But it didn't stop the actual spurts, and this one was feeding off of it, somehow, compounded dramatically by its presence. The reaction was delayed until the next spurt, but it was a *tremendous* one, in exchange!

Much as they had with Melon's fur, Ogma's follicles rose around the shrinking chopper, cloistering into a forest of dark, rust-brown fur. T sat sourly within the hull, hands over her head, eyes closed, waiting it all out. She was almost used to it by this point.

Mienai and the pilot, however? Less so.

A lifetime of stoicism cracked one telling degree as Ogma's eyes widened, bright and bulging, waves of pure size bullying his upper body to preposterous scope. His lats inflated too wide, hefting his swelling arms higher as his shoulders exploded unevenly, his quaking thighs bursting so big they pressed flat together against his oversized sacs. He shook and shook, his pectorals blasting so large that they covered most of his torso and tilted his head back, his calmed shaft raging into a bobbing monstrosity as it bulged out ahead.

120 miles came and went, *boom-booming* aggressively to 360 without a moment's thought or preparation. Dismissing his rising height, his midsection stretched over 500 miles wide, without his 300-mile-circumference biceps and 400-mile triceps, making the deer taller in width than anything as his muscles refused to slow down.

His horns swelled into a cosmos of thick, spiking branches, his neck pushing longer, thicker, then longer still, desperately stretching to allow more steaming muscle to pump through as he laughed, bellowed, and blew up to 870 miles in height, only managing to slightly even his proportions out in the process.

Had he really been happy with his growth, just an hour or so before? Really?

This...this was true growth. THIS!

Slowly, grudgingly, Melon's fur strands began to meet his eyeline. With another shuddering hiccup, Ogma tripled in size, blurring his vision just as it rose above the canopy of fur around him. His erection swayed hotly through the forest, brushing it as it throbbed uncontrollably larger still.

“M...MUHHHOOOOOOORE...MOOOOOOOOOOOORE!”

Sir Ogma was adjusting, adapting, and fast. The raw, wild pleasure compacted into something just as pure, but more manageable, something his body was getting powerful enough to hold better—which only left him hungrier for something worse.

At 2,610 miles tall (Just under 14,000,000'), Ogma was likely the same size of colossus Louis had grown into, earlier. Perhaps an inch bigger, in fact.

So this is what he felt, Ogma thought, cutting through his racing thoughts and darker inclinations and needs. *And still, he had composure. Haha. What a perfect specimen he is! I knew I had chosen well!*

Even in space, the shadow was unmistakable in its arrival.

Even in space, it could be heard, there in the breadth of Melon's own atmosphere, felt rumbling through his immeasurably vast body.

Even Ogma stopped to notice the hybrid's hand overhead, suddenly, a dark sky ready to fall—upon him. The stag looked back at his erection, saw the way it tickled and swayed through sensitive fur, and understood his error.

“OH—”

A hand over 28,000 miles long, big enough to hold three Earths like juggler's balls, slammed down onto Ogma, blowing pressure out as it hit. Concentric waves ruffled the fields as

the mighty hand slowed, then stopped shy of the turf; gradually, it raised, though not by its own volition.

Ogma put every single muscle to work, making his startling physique erupt nearly twice as big around as he puffed and strained. The hand, not quite fighting fully back, allowed it, curious and questing as the tiny deer pushed back against it.

The old stag had doubled in size yet again, reactively ballooning to 5,300 miles tall, and just as bulging across. The growth was slowing, though—he could feel as all force and focus went into his muscles, which soon shook as the heavy hand held there, daring him to push again.

Big as he had swollen, Ogma was still only a whopping fifth of the size of Melon's *hand*, at the most. The hand gladly reminded him of such as it started to easily push down, forcing Ogma's bulk to boom out as he openly struggled to hold it up.

“LITTLE BUG.”

Melon's words were so large that they weren't so much heard as felt, as the concussive impact of his throat muscles finally made their way over to him.

Achingly, step by step, Ogma moved. Hands traded places, walking in a way, across the underside of Melon's palm as the deer pushed back enough to travel, if awkwardly.

The hand suddenly lifted on its own, leaving Ogma to tumble down into the waist-high fur with a hard cough and a gasp. When the tag glanced back, he saw that very same hand, building-high compared to him; three vast fingers arched out overhead in space, while a huge thumb curled against a single trapped finger.

Ogma had never been one for childish games or gestures, but he still knew what this was.

That finger released, and Ogma caught the flick full-force, flinging even his bulky body across the fields like he was crumbled paper. The deer stayed airborne for ages, spiraling this way and that, before catching Melon's outer hip with a hard smack to the head and antlers, followed by minutes of nonstop tumbling.

Ogma had been flicked the length of 40,000 miles, effortlessly, and was still only as far off as Melon's hips. It wasn't that the deer had been unaware that Melon was in fact bigger than

he; but now, as his invincible sides ached badly, he *really* understood how big the difference between them was.

“RRMN,” he huffed, shaking his head, then thinking for a moment. “ARE YOU STILL THERE, LITTLE ONES?”

Of course, being several thousand times bigger than he had been when he could just barely hear them, Ogma realized there was no way of hearing them now. He was far too big.

“HMM. I-IF YOU ARE...YOU’VE GOT A DEAL. I WILL FIND THE LANDMASS, LEAVE THAT PART TO ME. WHEN I DO...YOU MAKE ME ALL THE CURE YOU POSSIBLY CAN! I WANT...*ALL OF IT*...”

OUTER SPACE

MELON, 8:45 PM

“LITTLE BUG.”

It hardly mattered just who or what it was, or even that it had become big enough for Melon to detect, at all. He’d already forgotten the other specks floating nearby, in his dizzy state of deification. Mad euphoria was churning through his bulk like an ever-growing snake, coaxing geysering huffs from a muzzle big enough to swallow planets.

Mars could have rested on his tongue, six times over, before his cheeks would ever have swollen any. A neck over eight thousand miles wide bulged as he swallowed the idea up, just for fun, relishing every twitch, every rumbling spasm of muscles over 100,000 miles away.

A phallus over 193,000 miles long throbbed higher up in the void, weightless and warm, begging for Melon’s touch. Any touch, really. A planet might draw close enough for contact if he was as big as he felt, as he saw. Knee-covering testes floated, godlike and proud atop enormous thigh muscles and stretched fur patterns, making it all the harder to see the bottom half of his own body.

It was slowing, he could tell. Melon rode it nonetheless, snarling in delight as a last burst pumped messily through him, bloating his untold brawn even larger as he silently boomed to 310,000 miles—over 1.6 billion feet tall, and just shy of a billion wide.

And he felt it. By God and Hell, he *felt* it!

“FINALLY,” the god-hybrid rolled, his pleasure at a crackling zenith. “I F-FINALLY FEEL IT...TAKE A LOOK, ALL OF YOU BUGS! OBSERVE THE UNOBSERVABLE! HAHA! TO THINK...THIS IS ALL IT TOOK, TOO! YOU SEE THIS, HORSE? HMM? HOW ABOUT YOU, YOU OLD SCALY GEEZER? THIS ANSWER ENOUGH FOR YOU? IS THERE ANY DOUBT NOW, WHO’S FIT TO RUN THINGS?”

Melon stopped, then laughed out a thick cloud of prismatic creation, flexing theatrically.

“NOT THAT I WILL, HAH. AH, WHY BE A GOD OF INSECTS? WHAT KIND OF SILLY WASTE WOULD THAT BE? NO. NO, YOU DON’T GET A GOD. NONE OF YOU.”

A tongue so long even spacecraft would need a day to traverse slithered out of his sharp teeth, the leopard-hybrid nearly touching himself as he laughed. It wasn’t a fun laugh.

“BUT IF ANYONE NEEDS A DEVIL. HERE I AM.”

He wouldn’t do it yet. For the first time in his miserable, pointless life, he could feel everything—and the proverbial peak of that mountain was right in front of him, wagging in joy, throbbing and bobbing in blinding need. But not yet. He wouldn’t end this new bliss that fast, he wasn’t an idiot.

“NOW THAT I FEEL LIKE YOU ALL DID, WHEN WE WERE TINY,” Melon began, grinning wildly as he twisted around in slow motion, “WHY DON’T I LET YOU ALL KNOW HOW I FELT?”

The pointlessness, the overpowering futility of it all—he knew exactly how to put it across to the world.

No...to the *universe*...

OUTER SPACE

LEGOSHI, 8:46 PM

“Oh, what’s he doing now?” Bill moaned, the tiger not able to notice or enjoy it as he trembled and blew up to 2,250 miles, blowing up behind a surprised Pina. “Is he leaving?”

“I don’t know,” Jack whined, looking up with the rest of the party as the looming leviathan bade his huge body to move. “It doesn’t seem to be toward us, though—Legoshi, stop!”

The wolf was already following after Melon as he put his muscle bound back to them and began drifting away. Only Jack and Haru dared to move forward at all , with him.

“What?” Legoshi rumbled, cocking his head curiously, sincerely. “He’s getting away, Jack, let’s go! Let’s move, everyone, Louis is surely still on him—”

“I can’t believe I’m saying this, kid,” Yahya sighed, bitterly, “but we might as well let him go, at least for the moment. You’re the biggest here, and he’s what, fifty times your size?”

“About forty-three, I think,” Jack added, making the horse snort out a groan.

“Point being, Legoshi, there’s nothing we can do to stop Melon anymore. He’s too big.”

“Well, we’re all still growing too, right?” Legoshi checked, shrugging his enormous shoulders. “We can catch up!”

“I don’t think his growth rate will let us compete,” Jack said, drifting over to the bigger wolf. “I know how you get when you lock in, Legoshi, but be realistic. We would have to outpace him by a wild margin.”

“And even if, then what?” Haru interjected, taking Legoshi’s arm softly, despite her being even more hulking than he, at a third his size. “The point shouldn’t be to just get the biggest, right? That’s just chaos. We need to find a way to just make him stop growing, first.”

“That bear,” Cosmo said, perking up. “The one in the mines—his growth spree stopped when he was knocked out by the deer...Louis, right?”

“When Melon broke loose in the site disposal area, he had been unconscious, right?” Pina asked, looking over to the bigger Yahya. “Was he growing, then?”

“No,” Yahya started, his eyes flicking back and forth. “No, he wasn’t. We already had an idea that sleeping or loss of function stymied the growing process, but...again, at Melon’s size...how could we make that happen?”

“Grandpa,” Legoshi yipped, like it was nothing.

“Hmm?” Gosha hummed, his monstrous scaly tail whipping into a soft wag at his name coming out of his beloved grandson’s muzzle.

“The venom!” Haru shouted, squeezing Legoshi’s thick arm as she grinned. “Like with Louis earlier!”

“But the amount we would need, good grief,” Pina muttered, the sheep suddenly rumbling all over, worse and worse. “U-unless we g-get the old timer here...super-duper colossal, w-we don’t have a cha—”

At that, Pina exploded in size, to a shocking degree.

All the pent-up tension and anxiety must have been on hold long enough, because it all gushed forth as Pina erupted from state-sized to *continental* in one mean blast. A great, hot bleat escaped as he blew up to 1,400 miles, wobbled, then hiccup-*burst* to 3,300, his woolly lats bumping Yahya back as Pina trembled harder still.

“Hey, no fair,” Bill growled, shoving uselessly against the ovis’s expansion, already smaller than he once again. “How big does he get to—”

“B-BUH-BBBBAAAAAAHHHAAAAH!”

Alarmingly, Pina wasn’t stopping; the bulky sheep’s muscles roared out defiantly, having no force to resist it anymore, flaring greedily as his erection plowed out ahead. 3,300 miles rattled so bad that it could be heard in his horns as he bellowed and *pump-boomed* to 5,100 miles, his neck wool boofing as his locks of hair flowed over his growing muzzle. Growing ears flicked, each big enough to bridge the width of Lake Superior, and only getting bigger as pure power blasted within him.

“S-should he be getting this big in one go?” Cosmo rightly asked, before she too began to tingle all over violently. “Ooh—”

“Uh-oh,” Jack gulped, drifting purposefully behind Legoshi’s bulk as Pina strained and writhed and snorted, then blasted loudly up to 11,500 miles!

“Whoa,” Legoshi huffed, watching Pina burgeon and bulge, the sheep’s chest eclipsing his panting muzzle as he trembled *even more*. “Well, we did want to start catching up, didn’t we? Isn’t this a good thing?”

“I...I don’t know!” Jack balked, licking his muzzle over nervously as Pina loomed over them all, shaking and glowing brighter, pulsing angrily as his muscles surged in and out. “I don’t know what any of this is, at this point, we’re getting out contr—”

“HHHHHHUUUUUUUUUAAAAAAAAAAH—”

Pina, in response, shudder-rocketed *again*, bowling the group back as the Dall sheep gushed out in scope, billowing to 26,900 miles, oceanic wool smothering them all simultaneously as Pina’s neck ballooned to 5,000 miles across.

Bill angrily fussed as the backsides of Pina’s enormous sacs buffeted him further away, stretching hungrily against his frazzled fur as he pushed and shoved, only stimulating them more.

“I said I was sorry, Pina!” the tiger wailed, blushing darkly through his stripes. “I’m sorry, I’m sorry!”

Throughout it all Juno watched, keeping a distance, thinking. Pina’s eruptive growth spree aside, the wolf had been obsessively studying Melon, watching as the titanic being swam away through space itself.

Her ear flicked as she bit her lip, something from earlier welling up inside her, demanding an answer.

She had seen Haru cuddling up to Legoshi—that was fine. Honestly, the rabbit was alright, she had made peace with that just fine. This was something else.

Louis was still stuck to Melon’s gravity well, surely.

Louis, who was her superior.

Louis, who had completely blown her off.

Even the apocalyptic nonsense of the past 24 hours meant nothing in the face of that ever-present mania, that *need*, that was returning to her in full force. The changing of the world order hadn’t stopped Juno’s lust for recognition; it had merely stunned it.

It wasn’t about Legoshi anymore, if ever it had been. She had never even conceived of any living thing getting that big, ever, even up to before Melon exploded free from the planet’s topside. That level of scale was still too impossible to consider, until now. And, now that it was on the table...

She wanted it, desperately. *Wildly.*

The way everyone paid attention to her in Cherryton, the way they loved her so much. That nonstop high she got from it, from being that seen—it was enough to stiffen her monstrous teats as she chewed her thick black lip softly, shuddered, then snorted out her resolve.

Haru could have Legoshi, that was fair. She was a good bunny, she had earned it. Juno would settle for being a boundless, swelling Goddess, instead.

It'd be a win on both sides. *Her, in particular.*

“Pina, stop!” Yahya gasped, the 1,100-mile tall horse becoming an accessory atop the booming sheep's incredible form. “That's an order, dammit!”

“IIIIIII CUH-CAAAAAAAAAAANNN'T—”

Throb after hot throb shook the male as he moaned the words out, gulped, then rattle-burst to 53,800 miles, so big that nearly seven Earths could have been stacked to match his height—never mind his width. His eyes flashed bright, cool and vibrant, an unreal glow rising through lidding eyes as he force-hugged his own bulk tight, pleading with whatever of that power was truly his for it to *stop*.

Which, mercifully, it did.

A jet of energy hissed from Pina's vast muzzle as his chin settled atop his pectorals, the sheer volume of his neck forced back into a bulge as he rested a moment.

“HUAAAH...AH, G-GOOD GRI-IEF...”

Legoshi, huge and powerful as he was, barely comprised the height of Pina's head, perched atop a hilltop-neck, itself set in woolly horizons of muscle. Even the wolf had no chance of seeing all of the sheep as he *baahed* softly, gulped, then sighed out a last glowing contrail.

“Alright, how?” Bill grumbled, swimming awkwardly about from behind all that Dall. “How the hell did Pina get *that* big!? What am I, a joke?”

Either the cosmos had a sense of humor, or Cosmo did, because a violent burst of supple, soft okapi fur burled out against Pina, bigger and bigger yet. Her growth was so fast that the

dappled patterns of her fur flowed together and animated, heralding Cosmo as she was instantly a fourth of Pina's height, then *half* it.

"Lookout--"

Jack barked what he could as all twenty-seven thousand miles of Cosmo trembled harder, tensing painfully as her head loomed over two mammoth breasts; she tried to get a word out, anything at all, only to huff harder as her body detonated messily, blasting to Pina's size, her monstrous bosom bullying him back through space.

"H-HEY!" Pina gasped, fumbling against Cosmo's colossal chest, moon-sized palms flicking, tickling and thumping her bulging nipples.

"H...HEHE," Cosmo squealed, flush with heat, somehow managing that controlling laugh only she could handle.

"I, uh...think we're all due, here, at this rate," Haru gulped, helpfully tugging Legoshi away as Cosmo moaned, wobbled, and blew up over even the sheep. "We better spread out!"

"S-seriously, this is a good thing!" Legoshi offered, floating off with the bulky rabbit as Cosmo's body expanded yet again, heaving hotly to 54,900 miles, then 66,300.

The okapi's rear blossomed behind her, bulbous and pert, tingling as it stretched wider, her thighs burgeoning into lunacy as they each surpassed the width of her torso. Her chest jealously countered as it overtook Pina, who began to wriggle in between the planetary spheres.

"NNNNH," Cosmo whimpered, her pathological control fighting for dominance as pleasure battered her quaking enormity. "MMMM...I...I'VE G-GOT IT..."

The shaking slowed, then stopped, until she had it all locked down tight again. Yahya and Gosha swam out around her monstrous body, unable to keep from looking her over for just a moment. She easily allowed it.

"H...HEH," Cosmo rumbled, looking far-less put off than her predecessor. "NOTHING TO IT. GRANTED, IT...ISN'T AS BIG AS THAT HYBRID IS..."

"No, but if we all are getting that much bigger, we can still crowd him," Legoshi concluded, wagging a tail big enough to hide entire peninsulas in. "We all just need to push ourselves larger to have a chance of stopping him!"

“If we don’t lose sight of him already,” Jack mumbled. “He *is* still drifting away.”

“All the more reason to push it faster! You should grow any second too, Jack—I bet you’ll be incredibly huge, heh! If only the guys at the dorms could see us! Especially you!”

“I-I guess,” the labrador replied, unable to keep from wagging as well. “Y-you really think so, though? Me?”

“I bet you’ll be looming over even me, haha! Imagine if we had been like this back on the playground, when we met!”

“Pwuh, we’re bigger than most of the planet, Legoshi! Really, now! Haha!”

The two celestially huge canines wagged up a frenzy together, warmly grinning, either despite or in spite of the situation.

“Guess that means we’re coming up next, haha,” Gosha chuckled, flicking a massively long tongue playfully. “Reminds me of our older times, both of us.”

“Us?” Yahya flatly replied, letting it bounce off the komodo.

“Well, why not?” Gosha countered, his civility undamaged. “Now seems like the time, doesn’t it? Together again? Maybe it’s not the best time, haha, but I mean, we’ve never been stronger, have we? Even back then—”

“Look,” the horse shot back, glaring near-death at him. “I’m not saying I’m not glad you’re okay. I’m not even upset that you’re here, too, like this. But you don’t get to just drift back into things like this. You left the cause and got married. You left the dream we both worked for. This isn’t some big, huggy reunion, Gosha. It’s serious. And yet, once again, you’re just laughing it off. It’s not fun! It’s justice!”

Gosha watched, and listened. The old reptile blinked once, then twice, letting his old friend go full-steam. It was only fair.

“I don’t care if it’s you, and I don’t care if it’s your grandson here, either,” Yahya continued, his voice choking more and more. “You’re all here as a team assist to stop a severely-overpowered criminal, and that’s that. We are *not* friends.”

Gosha’s eyes calmly focused on him, a massive smooth tongue dabbing quietly.

“Whatever you need, Yahya,” Gosha gently said, “I’m it.”

Yahya went just as quiet, long ears flicking in the blackness, before looking away without moving his head. A sour grunt might have escaped at that moment.

“Right. Okay, listen up! The sheep is right!”

“I...I AM?” Pina soft-boomed, from over in Cosmo’s calamitously huge breasts.

“Really?” Legoshi seconded, before wagging faster. “We’re gonna make my Grandpa super-super-sized!? Can we!?”

Gosha was already rumbling all over, trying so hard to be cool for his kid. But it was impossible. Not even space could contain the aging komodo at that moment, seeing his Grandson like that. It had been a slip, he was sure—but there was his blood, a giddy kid again, the one that adored him almost as much as he still adored Legoshi.

“Haha, I-I’ll do what I can,” Gosha hissed cutely, his thick scales rattling as more and more emotion translated into more and more power, his body stretching subtly as it all kept building. “Just, everyone get behind me when I reach Melon, alright? You too, Legoshi!”

“R...right,” Legoshi barked, just as unable to hold back his surprise and excitement.

Juno was there again, just beyond Pina and Cosmo, paying exceeding attention to the komodo dragon as the plan sank in.

“If it doesn’t work,” Juno began, “we really should have a plan B in place.”

“Absolutely,” Yahya agreed, his voice steeled and confident again. “The whole idea here is to render Melon unconscious, and we can all clearly breathe and speak out here in space, meaning the whole ‘self-generating atmosphere’ theory seems true. In other words, we’re breathing, so he is too. We’ll need to be ready to do whatever it takes to obstruct his throat, if Gosha—if the venom fails.”

“Okay,” Bill growled, folding his huge striped arms. “We choke him out.”

“I suppose we could all go for his throat, worse case,” Jack added. “B-but we would all need to squeeze together, to even have a chance. His neck was just as massive as some of ours are, after all.”

“Goodness, such a plan,” Pina muttered, pushing politely off of Cosmo’s bust. “I guess it’s either that or we get as far across space from Melon as we can, and hope he leaves us alone. But I suppose no one’s interested in that. What a total carnivore plan, haha.”

“This isn’t *carnivores or herbivores* anymore,” Haru said, hugging Legoshi’s huge arm all the tighter. “We’re all in this equally, it’s sink or swim for us all.”

Legoshi met her black eyes a moment, and grinned wider.

“Yeah.”

“Okay, then,” Pina sighed, lidding his glowing blue eyes. “So, what’s the old-timer’s trigger, here? How do we maximize his size? Because good grief, he looks ready to blow.”

“Ah,” Gosha hummed, trembling harder as the party surrounded him. “Haha, I don’t really know what it is...when that Melon punk insulted Legoshi, it made me swell up considerably...but, ah...”

“What, Grandpa?” Legoshi asked, cocking his head.

“Well. Ahaha, I...before Melon snuck into the daycare I’d visit, likely to hide out from Yahya and the police...when I first went in, and all the kids cheered for me...”

Legoshi blushed deep.

“I ah, I...saw you there, Legoshi. Just a room full of my...o-of you.”

The old-timer rumbled so hard that they *felt* it coming out of his scales.

“You really saw that, Grandpa?”

“I...haha, well, I...don’t get to see you much, with you at school—which is good! You should be at school, learning, w-with all your friends...”

Those who knew Legoshi looked away, unwilling to say anything. Legoshi, however, grew beet-red in the face.

“And I...ah, I just don’t want to embarrass you—”

“Grandpa,” Legoshi interrupted, “I...I wasn’t sure...how to really—”

“Can we move this along?” Yahya grumbled, his dark bulk surging as he restrained his mounting anger.

“Right,” Gosha replied, nodding, his muscles vibrating as the growth built and built, reaching a fever pitch in the reptile’s stretching body. “It’s alright, Legoshi, you don’t have to justify anything to—”

“Grandpa, you’re amazing!” Legoshi roared, blurting it all out in an awkward, bassy burst. “Y-you’d never embarrass me! After Mom, I wasn’t sure how to t-talk to you, I was...I withdrew, but you...even now, you followed me into space...”

Gosha flicked his tongue too fast, his scaly brows titling up as he bulged worse and worse and worse and worse.

“You...y-you came to help me, without being asked or anything—”

“You beat down Melon, even giant-sized, sir!” Jack added.

“He did!?” Legoshi nearly howled, wagging faster. “That’s...that’s awesome!”

“W-well, I,” Gosha rumbled, his pecs flaring out ahead of him as his body screamed tighter, visibly expanding without growing yet. The pressure was going from promising to *scary* as the dragon rippled all over, glowing brighter still.

“Grandpa,” Legoshi yipped, grinning stupidly. “*You’re as cool as ever!*”

The old man’s stoicism snapped in two as Gosha’s tongue pushed out of a growing muzzle, bulging fatter and longer as he shook violently, spasmed happily—then *erupted*.

A wall of surging scales collided with everyone at once, blowing the party back as the old reptile exploded larger, and larger, and larger, and *larger*. Yahya’s great mane of black hair blew back as the unleashed pressure bashed his muscle, throwing him back in wide-eyed shock as Gosha went from 2,700 miles to 27,000, billowing tenfold times bigger in one hard pulse.

“HOLY,” Bill yowled, unable to finish.

In the afforded beat, that one second of relief, Gosha’s slamming lats receded one iota, before tense-blasting out to 73,400 miles, pushing even Cosmo and Pina away as his muscles fulminated freely. Scales as big as continents strained all the larger against them, sleek and

smooth and deeply warm, fur and wool dragging and slipping and sliding along stretching plates of polished, well-aged green. Legoshi caught Gosha's pectorals directly, bumping back with a surprised whoop as the old lizard's growing chin and lashing tongue flashed up, then vanished, leaving only the inflating immensity of his chest as he billowed to 127,000 miles, and kept growing onward.

Clawed feet pushed down, down through the pitch, moon-sized toes clenching in against a soft, ever-growing set of reptilian soles. His thighs boomed nonstop, hulking and heaving in tandem with his exploding arms and rolling shoulders.

M...My boy...thinks I-I'm...

It played on and on in the elder dragon's mind, his eyes shut in poorly-shuttered joy as Gosha's body relentlessly expanded. All the danger in the solar system was suddenly worth it as his only blood's approval, his adoration, billowed through him, blowing him up past 156,000 miles.

His tail swelled bigger and longer, almost cramping from the sheer tension with which it flexed, a muscle that couldn't stop tightening for the overload of happiness. He hadn't been any part of Legoshi's life for so, so long, that...that it—

B-WMMMMMMBH!

171,000 miles. Over eighty-eight million feet tall, without the tail. 21 Earths tall, and 25 wide from bicep to bicep.

“Go, Grandpa! You're HUGE!”

Gosha bit his tongue as it swelled bigger, shaking so hard he thought he would explode into stardust as the extra howl pumped him *even larger*.

198,000 miles. Gosha had surged past one billion feet tall. Nearly 25 Earths. A bullet train at top speed, never slowing down, would have needed two months and five days just to make it from one toe to his head. His treasured Grandson had stood 7,100 miles tall; to Gosha, it would have taken three-and-a-half Legoshis to fill *one hand*.

That hand was ready to hold him like a toy, a jewel, and just keep him forever. As Gosha gasped and exploded bigger, bloating up past 215,000 miles, he could have held about four.

His bliss at a heady, buzzing zenith, the swollen komodo huffed out his own cloud of streaking energy, letting the runoff spew loose as his tremendous body shook one last time, relaxed, and finally stopped growing.

“Bigger, Grandpa!” Legoshi barked, wagging wildly as he hugged into the towering elder’s bulk. “You can do it! You can get even bigger!”

“HAHA,” Gosha gently boomed, shaking his head up high, high above. **“I...I THINK THAT’S IT, LEGOSHI. EVEN BOOSTED, I THINK WE CAN ONLY GROW SO MUCH IN ONE GO...”**

“U-unbelievable,” Yahya gulped, the huge horse several times smaller than Gosha’s looming eye as he swam up towards it. “Unbelievable! It actually worked!”

“HOPE YOU DON’T MIND THE HELP,” the titanic komodo joked, nodding down at his old friend affectionately.

“Wh...of course I...j-just get going, already! We’ll ride along and try to trigger each other as big as we can, before you reach Melon!”

The huge lizard chuckled, nodding again.

“HAHA. WHATEVER YOU SAY. HANG ON EVERYONE! STAY CLOSE, LEGOSHI, ALRIGHT?”

“Of course, Grandpa!” Legoshi shouted, his thick tail slamming harmlessly against his Granddad’s wide scales. “I’ve got you!”

“YOU’VE...”

The old-timer just beamed, wider than ever. He glanced politely about, flicking his tongue for everyone’s scent, before flexing his staggering bulk tight, then bolting forward, shooting through space like a polished bullet.

“Whoa!” Haru yelped, holding onto Legoshi as he held on to his exceedingly grand Grandfather. “How’s he t-that fast!?”

“That was quick thinking, Legoshi, praising him so much!” Jack laughed, half from what he said, and half from the nervousness with which he clung to Gosha. “You almost made him as big as Melon! We actually might have a solid chance here!”

“Hmm?” Legoshi hummed, confused. “What do you mean?”

“Well, you know,” Jack fussed, his labrador ears flapping as they careened along. “What you t-told him, just now.”

Legoshi blinked.

“But he *is* awesome! *Look* at him!”

Every time Gosha had read to Legoshi as a kid, tucked in and safe, all Legoshi could ever do was stare at his Granddad’s scales. Naturally, the lizard was bigger than him, so it was like a living mass of shiny gems. Now...with Gosha big enough to hug around all of Jupiter, it was secretly heaven. All there was now were scales, infinitely larger, shinier, everywhere...

The old reptile felt Legoshi squeeze in. From that moment on, no regrets could reach him.

MELON’S INNER THIGH

MIZUCHI, 8:51 PM

“Where is he even heading to?” the rabbit grouched, having climbed one of the hybrid’s massive follicles of fur, reaching high enough to watch as planets passed along in the far, far distance of space. “He must have *something* in mind, he didn’t even hesitate...”

She was right about that much; Mizuchi had hardly had time to reach a strand of fur, anything at all she could grab on to, before the behemoth had taken off in whatever direction this was. It wasn’t like space had street signs.

As there was nothing in trying to figure it out, the 500-mile harlequin rabbit scanned Melon’s body, instead. It was only unfair to call it an alien world, because Melon was already so much bigger than the planets themselves. Saturn could have substituted the rough width of the gazelle-cheetah’s monumental, far-off testicles, and Venus could have fit in the tip of an erection so tall and so bloated that it nearly vanished out in the pitch.

Great plains of tattooed fur wavered, more from the force of movement than from any breeze, stretching on and on for as far as Mizuchi could comprehend. Being six hundred and twenty times smaller than the beast, she was less than a flea. She, the endangered one, the one bigger than an entire state.

It meant nothing. What male could satisfy a girl of that magnitude, anyhow?

“Mmn.”

Then, she saw it. Rather, she saw *him*.

“That’s...Louis!”

All the way over in the distance’s edge, crumpled silent and limp against the base of Melon’s rumbling shaft, slept the red deer, completely out.

“Yes! Finally, some luck!”

She sighed hard, then slid down to Melon’s bumpy skin with a mute *thump* and made for the giant, determined to wake him. She could handle him, anyhow, she’d seen him around Cherryton, strutting and the like. Thinking he was so...well, big. But that was fine, actually; the bigger he was, the more protection she could get for herself.

MELON’S MID-ABDOMEN, WEST

OGMA, 8:54 PM

The tiniest little puff of green smoke caught his periphery, and the stag quickly understood why it had happened. It popped bright, blazed like a comparative firefly, then died, and Ogma turned in its direction and kept moving.

They had fired further up and around, over by Melon’s looming left bicep.

They have flares, Ogma thought, grinning. Which means they found a way to locate the facility, or the chunk of broken land it’s still on. It’s refreshing that I happened upon smart animals, for a change. A good omen, perhaps.

From that point on, the deer kept wide-eyed, ready for the next flare.

OGMA'S RIGHT SHOULDER

OPERATIVE T, 8:54 PM

“That’s...four left, in the emergency case, sir,” Operative T said, having triple-counted, despite the easy math. “Two green, two red.”

“If he sees red, he’d likely think it was a *wrong way* communiqué,” Mienai snorted, thinking fast. “So that’s really two preferable flares left, total. Then we need to only offer corrections when absolutely necessary. You’re sure you’ve got the ping on the location, after all, over there?”

The owl was hunched over the device like it was his own child, unblinking as he turned the dials slowly on a small portable monitor, watching concentric digital rings tighten around a bleeping dot.

“I didn’t imagine you had a locator in the emergency case, hah,” he hooted, clicking his beak absently. “Any working station will keep sending out a distress beacon at high frequency, in any kind of explosive or tectonic disaster, and this certainly did the trick. The beacon is transmitting, and strong!”

“S-so, how far away did that section of land end up, on Melon?” T asked, leaning in.

“Assuming our boy doesn’t get bigger any time soon, and increase the geography under us...er, Ogma, that is...ah, the coordinates...ooh, it’s still a ways off.”

“Estimates, please?” Mienai pressed, looking around the side of his copilot chair.

“Ah, given Ogma’s stride, at his size? Couldn’t say.”

“But you’re a scientist!” T whined, the capybara sagging lower.

“I’m not God, miss. This terrain is completely foreign, I have nothing to measure with. All this monitor tells me is if the dot is straight ahead, left, right or behind. My best guess is, it’s resting somewhere near his far left lateral, possibly caught in a ridge of muscle, since it seems to be stationary at the moment.”

“Right, sorry doc.”

“We just keep straight for a little while, then gradually left for a bit longer. We should have enough for directional purposes.”

That was when the steady rhythm of Ogma’s gigantic steps changed, quickening into a thudding series of quakes that rocked the immeasurably smaller chopper over and over.

“The hell is—” the pilot started, prepared to turn on the machine and flee.

“He’s running,” Mienai said, plainly. “Save the gas, please. I think he’s more excited than we are, it feels like he’s double-timing it.”

“Good for us,” the owl laughed, either unfazed or in shock at the evening in general.

“Is it, though?” T asked, furrowing her brow. “Why would Ogma want to help us stop all of this?”

“There’s no sense in him letting an ultra-giant Melon go unchecked, is there?” Mienai posited, shrugging in his seat. “Why wouldn’t he assist us? It’s good for him, too.”

“Okay, but...back when he first grew gigantic and approached Site Omega, he seemed so enthusiastic about growing to mega-size. Just...odd that he’d contribute to stopping that size, long-term, when he’s even bigger and stronger than ever...”

“Do you think he—”

“He likely wants to shrink Melon, to knock out the competition,” the owl casually said. “There’s another possibility, but...I can confirm it during the batch synthesis, and be sure. No sense in bringing it up until I know better, and save a panic.”

T stayed quiet, but ultimately nodded.

“So, it’s not good news.”

“Haha,” the old bird continued, “it doesn’t matter, either way, at the moment. At his size, he could crush us. We need that cure, regardless of his own personal motives. So, we proceed. Once we finish the cure—assuming the facilities are intact—then we have two options: either we lie to Ogma and say we couldn’t make any, then escape quietly...or we actually trust him, and work together to cure Melon. If we can make more, then I say we shrink Ogma and Melon simultaneously, and prevent either party from acting any further.”

T stopped nodding, even though she knew it was correct.

MELON'S INNER THIGH

MIZUCHI, 9:08 PM

As stereotypical as it would have been on school grounds, it hardly mattered if Mizuchi hopped here. No one was around to see it, and any regular idiot that complained, she could crush flat. So, whatever; it was sure as hell faster this way. With all that raw power, it felt kind of *nice* to do it. *Freeing*. Hell, she could have bounded like this for hours if she really—

“Finally!”

She crashed down on both huge feet, huffing from mild exertion as Louis’ form remained where it had been, settled in a heap of muscle against the foundations of a towering phallus, one that proved so monstrous up close that all she could hear was the rapid throb of its bulk.

She understandably hadn’t accounted for it, and her attempts to shout the gigantic deer awake sank under the tonnage of Melon’s throbs.

“Argh, stupid—wake up! Hey, you! Hey, stupid!”

Sure, Louis came from money—more than her own family’s, if rumors were to be believed. But red deer were hardly *endangered*, and money was never ‘special’.

“Dammit!” Mizuchi snarled, as best as a rabbit of any scale could, kicking Louis in his exposed side. “I’m talking to you! Don’t you ignore me, you pampered idiot!”

Kick

“I’m sick of being toyed with! Giving me all this power...but putting me in last...stupid...place! Even Haru is...argh!”

KICK

“Doesn’t anyone care about me!? What am I, garbage!?”

KI—

“KEEP THAT UP...AND I’LL *TOSS* YOU LIKE GARBAGE.”

The voice was big, thick and slurred, still heavily drugged by venom. But it was mad.

“Gah!” Mizuchi choked, leaping back so haphazardly that she fell back onto her ample rump. “Don’t scare me like that! What’s wrong with you!?”

“I’M AN INCH AWAY...FROM BEING *EVERYTHING WRONG* WITH *YOU*.”

Louis rose, and rose, and rose, wobbling as he forced himself into a more dignified stand. His hand went out on instinct, the 2,600-mile tall male leaning against the pulsating girth of Melon’s erection, too angered to notice it yet.

“WHAT IS...WAIT.”

Louis looked around, his face screwing in confusion, then horror. He looked down, felt his feet on pliable bulk; he glanced over his massive shoulder, saw the erection, and stumbled back, nearly crashing into the smaller bunny and joining her.

“WHAT...THE HELL. WHERE’S EARTH. WHERE IS THIS!? SPEAK UP!”

“Ah,” Mizuchi whimpered, losing all her nerve in a snap. “I-it’s somewhere, I don’t know where...somewhere here, probably, on this Melon-whoever-jerk—”

“A MELON?” Louis balked, rubbing his temples unhappily. “MAKE THIS MAKE SENSE, WHOEVER YOU ARE. FAST.”

“I go to the same school as you, stupid! Do you really not recall ever seeing the one and only harlequin rabbit on campus!?”

Louis removed his fingers from his temple, and shot Mizuchi a look so bad she wilted.

“Ah-hah, ah, M-Melon! H-he outgrew the planet a little bit ago while y-you were unconscious! This huge old lizard spat venom on you, b-but it didn’t kill you, it just knocked you out...but after that this Melon guy blew up out of the countryside, and he just kept getting bi-bigger and crazier! He got s-so big, that we...we’re on him now!”

“ALL OF US?” Louis growled, through grit teeth. “EVEN THE WOLF? LEGOSHI?”

“I...n-no, I left those idiots, and hitched a ride on Melon...w-why?”

“KOMODO VENOM IS **LETHAL**, THAT’S WHY,” Louis seethed, openly trembling with anger. “THEY REALLY SPRAYED ME WITH KOMODO VENOM!?! **REALLY!?!?**”

Mizuchi thought, and thought. A bad door opened, and she walked right in.

“T...they did! I saw it all! That wolf said something about stopping you, w-whatever it took, so they tried to kill you. They must have thought it worked, because a-after Melon grew super-gigantic and flung us into space, they...didn’t even talk about you anymore...”

Louis stopped seething for a moment and squinted down at her past his monstrous chest, scanning her with a mean glare.

“PFF. WAIT, WAIT. LEGOSHI, WITH A KILLER INSTINCT? HARDLY.”

“Yeah? W-why else do you sound so drugged, if I’m lying?”

Louis looked away.

He pulled his lip back.

The rumbling began.

“UNBELIEVABLE,” the great deer boomed, his muscles shaking bigger across his stretching body. “HE REALLY DID...NO...I CAN’T *BELIEVE* THAT SOFT-SPINED *MORON* COULD...REALLY MAKE THAT CALL...”

He checked his muzzle, found it half-wet, and sniffed his fingertips.

Then, the rumbling grew. And grew. And grew. *And grew.*

“HE REALLY...DAMN HIM,” Louis bellowed, hissing reddening energy out through his teeth. “DAMN HIM! SOME STINKING HERO! IF HE EVER TALKS...I-IF HE EVER TRIES TO LECTURE ANYONE, OR ME, **EVER—**”

Louis’ fur darkened as his antlers creaked and swelled, his eyes glowing with blistering fury. His body rippled out in a bizarre cascade of growth as it tried to adjust, the deer *p-p-pulling* taller, his height surging up to 5,000 miles in one ugly, frantic shove.

“I’LL...CRUSH HIM...FLATTTTTT!”

Mizuchi gulped, sensibly backing off as Louis' growth rattled everything nearby; the deer hissed out a thick vapor streak as his neck ballooned twice as massive, the hard gush flooding into his bulging shoulders, roaring biceps and swelling forearms. His thighs burst out against each other, having nowhere left to grow as they hefted his ankle-low sacs out, forcing his ruddying erection higher past his inflated pectorals.

In one phallic bob, Louis was 11,000 miles tall, shaking in uncontrollable rage.

“T-THAT...MANGY...HYPOCRITICAL...”

To Mizuchi, the deer was mostly feet and sacs, the rest of his billowing figure obscured by Louis' rising shaft. There was no lust to the growth—rather, it was as though the excess wrath was forcing itself into it, bloating his over-tight sex into a kind of strained, agonizing mass.

This time the bobbing was so huge that she could feel it travel down, the most incidental of twitches forming shock waves that tickled through Mizuchi, through her feet, through the ground of Melon's bulk below them.

The red deer's skin pulled loudly as his bulk inflated, the heaving male already over 36,000 miles tall, and only shaking harder and stronger. Vast plumes of dark energy cascaded out of his nostrils, dusting his bulging pectorals as they stretched higher than his cheeks, pushing his bursting neck away as it too swelled beyond sanity.

“ALL OF THEM...IF I SEE THEM AGAIN...I'LL BREAK THEM ALL! IT'S NOT LIKE I NEEDED THEM FOR THE NEW WORLD! ESPECIALLY HI...H...HAAAAAAH!”

Again, violent growth stormed through the bellowing male, his body booming wider faster than his height, even at 52,500 miles tall; that put him at six-and-a-half Earths in height, and nearly 10 worlds wide, bicep to bicep. Just shy of a *sixth* Melon's size, and half the hybrid's shaft. Louis could have built whole cities on one follicle of brown-red fur, thousands of Cherryton Academies back-to-back-to-back...and he was *still* that outmatched.

“R-right,” Mizuchi shouted, still back away, even as Louis' feet swelled past her on either side. “T-they all were in on it, clearly, sad as it is! B-but you know, this Melon—”

“WHAT ABOUT HIM!?”

The fist that interrupted hit Louis with such horrendous drive that even the deer went sailing offworld, flung on impact into Melon's shaft. He caught it on the shoulder, flipping out with a bounce into open space as an unfathomably big laugh broke out everywhere.

“SORRY, WHAT?” Melon thundered, an endlessly colossal horned head rising over inflated pecs as he finally looked their way.

Mizuchi snagged a handful of gigantic fur strands, holding tight as the force of Melon's punch grazed her, putting her into a temporary stupor as he clung.

“HAHA, DID I REALLY HEAR YOU RIGHT, OVER THERE? WHAT ‘NEW WORLD’? I SWEAR, YOU HERBIVORES—THE ARROGANCE...”

Louis flexed every thick fiber on him in order to stop the tailspin he had been put in.

“WH-WHAT—”

He shook the hit off, his negotiable invulnerability working overtime as he drifted to a halt. Flung that far away, the massive deer could finally see his superior at full scale, and even his anger flickered off a moment on sight of him.

“THAT... THAT'S MELON?”

The hybrid was immense beyond any real point—that was the only way his mind could package what he was seeing.

It was a...what, a cheetah? A gazelle? He had carnivore teeth, and god-level bulk. How could any creature have gotten so big? No...so much *bigger*? Bigger than even him!?

“IT IS,” the monster-sized deity spoke, rather blithely. ***“FEEL FREE TO OBJECT. YOUR MANNER, YOUR POSTURE...YOU'VE HAD AS MUCH POWER AS YOU'VE HAD TAKEN, I CAN SEE IT. YOUR***

MANACLES ARE SO MUCH NICER THAN THE ONES I HAD. I'M JEALOUS. REALLY."

The sheer insincerity was surely the point. *Still.*

"HMPH," Louis sneered, easily matching Melon's disinterest. "A LECTURE, REALLY? THIS BIG, AND YOU STILL HAVE TO TALK THAT MUCH? DON'T BOTHER CALLING *ME* AN OVERCOMPENSATOR, IF YOU HAVE TO KEEP RAMBLING ON IN ORDER TO MAKE AN IMPRESSION."

It was something else, watching anything that big react: Melon's grin curved all wrong in all the worst places as his vast eyes lidded to slits, rows of demonic teeth gleaming as he stifled most of a doomsday laugh.

"OH! GOOD FOR YOU, LITTLE MAN! HAHA, A CHIP ON THE SHOULDER AND IMMEDIATE OFFENSE-DEFENSE SWITCHING, A CLASSIC POOR-RICH KID DYNAMIC. HMM. CUTE! I HONESTLY DIDN'T THINK I'D GET ENTERTAINMENT FROM ANYONE, AT THIS SIZE. TOO BAD WHOEVER DRESSED YOU EVERY MORNING ISN'T AROUND TO SLAP SOME MONEY OVER YOUR WOUNDS!"

Louis' body resumed shaking as his godly blood boiled inside, screaming under the well-tempered mask that was his body.

"THANK YOU," Louis rumbled, his bulk swelling anew as he doubled in height, in one bulbous, pumping spurt. Nearly half Melon's size, the deer tensed and pushed his ludicrous pectorals out, smiling and glowering at the same time.

Melon snerked, cocking a titanic head in the far distance.

“HOW’S THAT, CUTIE?”

“THANK YOU FOR INSULTING ME AT THIS EXACT MOMENT, WHEN I’M IN THIS EXACT STATE. JUST WATCH, YOU HYBRID TRASH! *IT’LL BE CUTE!*”

Even Melon widened his eyes as Louis pushed his body, throwing his head back against a stupendously thick neck as he roared into space, trembled with rage, and *exploded larger...*

MELON’S UPPER RIB CAGE

OGMA, 9:14 PM

Another tiny puff of green, aimed farther North, maybe Northwest.

“Good,” Ogma huffed, the bulging stag grinning lopsidedly as he pivoted to match its trajectory, then stomped along in that specific direction. “Very good—”

The world below interrupted as Melon moved. It wasn’t drastic, but it was enough.

Ogma nearly bit his tongue as the landscape shifted, the mountainous outer range of Melon’s rib cage pulling back as, far far away, the sky-sized arm on the opposing side pulled back, then jabbed out South, pummelling into something that the deer couldn’t see in time.

“What in blazes—”

Words erupted out of Melon’s huge maw, entire worlds away, but even being over 5,000 miles tall, they were just too big for Ogma to comprehend. It just hit him in a wall of sound as the beast’s body twisted again, this time bringing a looming pectoral under-curve his way.

Was Melon...leaning in!?

OGMA’S RIGHT SHOULDER

OPERATIVE T, 9:14 PM

“He’s growing again!?” the pilot howled, reeling in his helicopter seat as everything rattled around them, through them.

“N-no,” the owl spoke, his voice quaking for it, “the distance isn’t getting farther, it’s...closer! No, much closer! The location on his body is moving toward Ogma! Melon isn’t growing, he’s moving...leaning in, I would guess!”

“W-well, how close does that put it now?” Operative T asked, cutting off Mienai before he too could ask.

“I...it’s almost on us! I think it’s near the armpit or the underside of the pectoral, but it the lower pectoral collides with the upper rib cage, even if it just brushes here—”

“Ogma can grab it and close the distance! Do we fire another—”

“Wait until it’s nearly on us!” Mienai shouted, over the churning bulk below them, and below their ride. “Doctor, as soon as—”

“It’s right above us!” the owl hollered back. “Fire upwards at...exactly sixty degrees North of us! Now!”

MELON’S UPPER RIB CAGE

OGMA, 9:15 PM

For a moment, Ogma considered pulling back; the wall of tattooed fur was inbound, and fast, with no signs of stopping.

The last blast of green up overhead stole his thoughts as the flare detonated bright, and Ogma snapped to the target: at his size it took some squinting...but there was land. In fact, it was a modest chunk of it, lodged in a tangle among Melon’s incoming fur. Being over half the size of Earth, his being able to detect it meant it must have been nearly a continent’s worth of split land.

So much the better.

Illuminated in that tiny patch of green, it took only seconds for Ogma’s vision to make out the rest of the mass, and the elder stag understood the rest perfectly fine.

“Haha, clever,” he huffed, raising both mammoth arms high, intercepting the upside-down landscape of Melon’s pelt as it nearly touched down.

Patient hands waited, then struck, grabbing the entire mass out of the fur above with one smooth pluck. It hardly mattered that the landmass he found was bigger than a country—it still fit in just one gargantuan, careful hand. By the time Ogma had it lowered, it rested safe (enough), nestled in the small of an immensely large, warm palm.

“Hmm,” he hummed, pleased. “Very good. Now, I trust you can see it, little—”

A red flare blasted, just barely visible to him. Truth be told, as a deer, his vision was never that amazing; but in terms of motion detection of any kind, he was a king. Amplified by whatever strange power flowed through him, through all the giants, it proved doable enough.

“Stop?” he pondered, before softly nodding, going stock-still. “Excellent. Consider it done, then. Good journey to you, and good luck.”

He could only take it on faith that the tiny helicopter was already on the move. The deer had his hand up right beside the shoulder, in hopes of conserving their fuel with the shortest imaginable trip. Likely, he would be holding still for some time—a small sacrifice, at worst.

That’s right, friends, he thought, suppressing a massive grin, his member bulging bigger in anticipation, despite himself. The average flight time of a military-grade helicopter at maximum fuel efficiency, and my palm’s proximity...I’ll give you all a few minutes’ time, to be sure you’re there...then, I close my hand and contain you. Haha, you’ll have to cure me first, then Melon...only I won’t let you waste any of it on him! He would become cataclysmically enormous when the effect wears off, after all, that does me no good.

*No...no, all of that blowback...will be **mine**.*

OGMA’S PALM, FORMER CONTINENT, SITE DELTA

OPERATIVE T, 9:18 PM

“We’re set, assuming Ogma can stay still enough,” the pilot gulped, his throat dry as sand at this point. “We have a little fuel left, thankfully, so...do what you all have to do, and when you get back, we’ll get vertical, then cure Melon, then try to land on Ogma again and cure him.”

“Before he tries anything,” Operative T sighed, all but certain. “You *know* he will.”

“That’s literally out of our hands for the moment,” Mienai replied, unbuckling. “Doctor, you lead, that device should—”

“We’re practically there, don’t worry,” the owl hooted, trying to unruffle his plumage as the doors opened. “It won’t be more than a few minutes’ travel! Most sites have an intentionally similar design, I know where to find the backup generators. They keep fully fueled at all times—”

“Great, let’s talk as we go,” the zebra huffed, strolling ahead, his walking cane extended.

“Of course, of course.”

Operative T took the oversized flashlight from the chopper emergency kit and clicked it on as they entered the site door. Given it had been bent into its frame by shifts in the building’s cracked exterior, they opted to smash the remaining glass and crouch in, instead.

Whatever sunlight had given them sight on Melon’s body, it was gone in here; considering how the landscape they touched down on was partially split in hundreds of places, with great spears of earth jutting up through broken mountains and slowly-draining lakes, it was a miracle the place was even upright at all.

“This way, sir,” the capybara whispered, kicking loose chunks of fallen cement away as the zebra followed. “Watch your step.”

“Appreciate it,” the zebra muttered. “Sorry, agent. I was too harsh on you earlier, over the phone. You’ve...done what you can, and then some, considering.”

“It was a tense situation,” T said, keeping ahead and clearing the path behind the owl.

“It still is, hah. But really, thank you for your service. I can imagine Yahya is pleased with you thus far.”

“He didn’t seem to hate how big he’s gotten, I’ll say that sir.”

Mienai paused, pursing his lip.

“That’s right...Master Yahya is...enormous, now. Hmm. W-when exactly did—”

“At Site Omega, sir. Yahya and this old komodo dragon both grew gargantuan, to combat Ogma. I can only imagine how big he’s getting by this point, frankly.”

“Hah,” Mienai sighed, deeply. “He’s outgrown us, then. I always knew he was bigger than I ever could be, but...this really punctuates the chasm, doesn’t it?”

“Well, sir...it doesn’t make us useless. We’re the ones who need to stop this insanity, and none of the giants are capable of that, despite all their new powers. It’s on us little guys, sir. Yahya needs us beyond all belief right now, right?”

“Hah. Of course.”

At that the lights flickered on, wherever functioning bulbs remained overhead.

Operative T looked over as the owl puffed his way back up from the basement stairs, a big grin edging around his beak.

“Got it! Let’s make a cure! Follow me, the lab we need is this way—”

“You already got the generators going?” T asked, brows high.

“It’s just a generator, miss. Certainly. Hah. Now, I’ll need your hands to make this move along quicker. If all goes right, with a few quick fixes to the ratios, we can have a mass batch ready soon.”

“H-how soon?” Mienai asked, hurrying along behind them as the owl scuttled down a long hall to the right.

“Haha, not even half an hour!”

“What!?” T balked. “S-seriously, that fast?”

“I know what to do, plus this site has better machinery! Let’s go, go!”

“Hey, things are looking up, sir!” T chuckled, suddenly alert again. “Who knows, maybe we can cure Yahya after! I bet he’ll be happy to see you, especially!”

Mienai let her go ahead, trying his absolute best to get the blush off his striped muzzle.

Yahya...bigger than entire planets...

It hadn’t been despair in the zebra’s voice, earlier. Not even close to it.

Of course, he would do his duty. Now, more than ever. But by God and all...before the curing phase...before this horrendous mess was as fixed as it was ever going to get...

If he could just *see* Yahya, that big...just for a moment...

The thought had never once had reason to cross his mind, yet here it was. Now, he couldn't cast it out, even in the face of near-certain doom.

"Hah."

How many other nobodies out there were thinking the same thing?

As he followed along, with the overhead lights active, and with them going deeper into the building, not one of the trio took notice of the descending darkness outside...

MELON'S UPPER RIB CAGE

OGMA, 9:28 PM

"That should be enough," he hummed, slowly closing his free hand down, sealing it against his open palm below. "There's no reason they wouldn't be rushing to get the cure made, if it's happening at all. This way, I hedge my bets."

To think, it was the tiny bugs that would prove his salvation, in the end!

Thoughts of how big the blowback would make him this time tantalized the stag as she maintained his stillness, a bulky statue of sorts in a plain of patterned fur.

Through that very fur something emerged, not far off, making Ogma glance over without moving his body.

"Hmm?"

There was motion, yet the mass was stationary. Given the nature of the past day, Ogma quickly surmised what that meant.

"Hmm."

Something was moving without moving—meaning, it was growing bigger. He squinted cautiously as a wad of fur billowed bigger, pulsing up big enough to spread the wheat-fur away, revealing a brown bear; it was smaller than Ogma, considerably. But the deer only had so much of an idea when the bear would stop growing.

Plus, it was still absolutely a bear, and instincts surged within him on sight.

Relax. He won't keep growing like you did, Ogma. Remember, you took the cure. So what if he's a carnivore? Look at you. The cure takes priority, man, stand your ground, and stay still. He doesn't even notice you.

The bear growled and thrashed as his bulky form rattled and spasmed, tensing into a swelling ball as he ballooned from the size of Ogma's ear to the size of his entire head, Ogma's estimations putting him at about 600 miles and up. The brown bear was suddenly the size of an entire country, at least, just like that—and he was still quaking *bigger*.

"Mmn."

This was less encouraging.

Worst-case, perhaps, he could be reasoned with. If he got any bigger, noticing the stag would be an inevitability. Ogma began to work out the best possible greeting and speech he could, when the bear broke through with a horrible, agonized roar of pain and confusion.

Oh. Oh, no.

That he was blowing loudly up to 1,300 miles wasn't the worst of it; nevermind that he could have hugged the planet with no trouble and met hands on the other side's oceans. It was the bellowing, the mindlessness inherent. The last two words any herbivore wanted to see or think together hit, and hit hard:

Meat-sick.

A grunting snuffle broke through as Ogma watched the growing bear sniff into the air, detecting something above the boundless scent of Melon's immeasurable self. The stag tensed, refusing to move yet, but entirely ready to, the moment that feral thing happened to notice he existed there, too.

Which is exactly what happened.

OUTER SPACE

LOUIS, 9:29 PM

There was just enough truth to the idea that the madder he grew the more he liked it that Louis couldn't fully absolve himself of it. That frustration only added to the fire, which helped that extra bit. Considering the red deer had blown up from 52,500 miles, over two-hundred and seventy-seven million feet tall, to a stunning 161,000 miles, *tripling his size* after a growth spurt, he should have been elated. Mad with his own power, in the best way.

At the moment, though, after ten minutes of effort, all Louis was, was mad.

Even being roughly half Melon's colossal size, even with biceps that outsized his own home planet, the deer couldn't lay so much as a hand on him. Every time Louis bolted forth through space, rearing back for a punch or a headbutt or anything, all Melon had to do was kick him right back. Over and over. He might as well have been a toddler fighting a high schooler over a stolen toy.

"YOU KNOW," Melon rumbled, his voice at least more manageable, **"I APOLOGIZE FOR DOUBTING YOU. THIS IS CUTE! YOU HAD ME WORRIED YOU MIGHT BE REMOTELY EFFECTIVE IN SOME SLIGHT WAY, FOR ALL YOUR BLUSTER."**

"SHUT IT!" Louis boomed, throbbing with anger, yet swelling no larger.

"NO NEED TO LASH OUT! IT'S NOT MY FAULT YOU RAN OUT OF GAS FOR THE MOMENT. HEY, MAYBE YOU'LL HIT ANOTHER BIG SPURT BEFORE I DO...BECAUSE MY SPURT...WILL BE TERRIFYING."

"WHAT NEED DO YOU HAVE TO TERRIFY ANYONE?" Louis shot back, panting as he drifted along. **"WHAT, ARE YOU SO ANGRY AT SOCIETY THAT YOU'LL TAKE ANY SHOT YOU CAN GET--"**

"YES."

A vicious rumble tickled through melon's godly physique as he snickered, licking his teeth over slowly. The slightest stretch stole through his huge bulk as he lidded his glowing eyes and snorted into his rising pectorals.

"ARE YOU REALLY GOING TO PUSH BACK? YOU'VE BEEN AT THE TOP, HAVEN'T YOU? PRETTY BOY, ALL POLISHED INTO A NICE TROPHY FOR THE

DINER'S CLUB SOCIALS. ANYONE AT THE TOP FEARS LOOKING DOWN, UNLESS IT'S ON LOWER LIFE FORMS...LIKE HYBRIDS. WHEN YOU LOOK DOWN, YOU CAN SEE ALL THE THINGS YOU DON'T HAVE TO STEP IN, EVER. WHERE ALL THE SLIME AND SWEAT ENDS UP."

Again, Louis charged, and Melon's tail whipped out instead, feinting a strike. When Louis blocked in its direction, the monster's enormous foot crashed into him, punting him so far back that Louis couldn't stop the momentum.

"WELL. THERE'S TOO MUCH OF ME TO COVER, NOW, HAHA. NO DRAINS TO WASH ME INTO! DO YOU, FOR ONE SINGLE INSTANT, REALLY NOT UNDERSTAND MY PURPOSE!? IT ALL NEEDS TO COWER! IT ALL NEEDS TO WATCH AS I OVERFLOW FOREVER, POURING EVERYWHERE! THEY NEED TO KNOW THERE'S *NOWHERE* LEFT TO GO, BUT ME!"

The deer slammed into something hard, feeling it nudge back through space a relative inch on impact. He wheezed through his own atmosphere, coughing, both thankful and bitter that his godhood only kept him alive for more humiliation.

He looked up to see Melon's body closing in, bridging their distance quickly.

"DON'T YOU FEEL IT, EVEN OUT HERE? I DID, RIGHT AWAY! IT WAS FAINT...BUT OH, IT WAS THERE!"

"WH...WHU-WHAT?"

Louis perked his ears, then turned around, bulb-eyed. The planet behind him was easily big enough to accommodate his mass, and then some, craggy as it was.

And familiar.

The feel, the smell. It...

"HEH, THAT'S RIGHT. IT ALL HAD TO COME FROM SOMEWHERE, AFTER ALL, AND THERE'S NO SOMEWHERE LIKE *NOWHERE*!"

The red deer gulped, his erection rising back up to where the tip kissed the surface, tickling and dragging excitedly up, up along its rocky span.

"I...IT'S..."

“IT’S EXACTLY WHAT I NEED,” Melon doom-spoke, towering over the exposed cervine. **“TO SHOW THOSE THAT REMAIN REAL DESPAIR. TO REMOVE ANY LINGERING ATTACHMENT TO THE OLD, ROTTEN WORLD. I COULD WREAK WHAT LITTLE HAVOC I COULD, AT MY OLD SIZE, ON EARTH...SHOOT, I COULD BREAK EVERYTHING APART RIGHT NOW, IF I REALLY WANTED TO BOTHER...BUT TO BREAK SPIRITS? THIS, RIGHT HERE. THIS IS HOW.”**

Louis swam back from it, despite the proximity to his foe, seeing more of it, taking it in.

God help them all—it was the rock itself.

It was an *entire planet* of meteor-rock.

“THIS’LL TAKE EVEN ME A LITTLE WHILE TO CONSUME, GRANTED. HEH. YOU CAN WATCH IF YOU LIKE. IN FACT, YES! STAY! I WANT WITNESSES, I REALLY DO. I WANT EVEN THE MIGHTIEST OF YOU GIANTS TO SCREAM, AS I BECOME TOO INSANELY BIG TO FATHOM!!”

“N-NO...”

A massive, thick chest bumped Louis from behind, thumping the mega-deer callously back into the rock.

“AH-HAH, YOU KNOW WHAT...SURE. *RESIST*. THAT’S BEST.”

Sheer closeness made it impossible to keep Melon’s monstrous pride from contact, leaving Louis pinned against the rock as he shoved it back. Again and again it thumped back against his enormous arm, pulsing, *laughing*.

With no other sight, escape or recourse left to him, Louis swung both legs forward, hefting his own member up high as he kicked into Melon’s looming abs.

“HMM,” Melon chuckled, barely able to observe over his chest bulk. **“FEEL FREE TO RESIST A LITTLE BETTER THAN THAT, HOW ABOUT?”**

“HAPPILY!”

Louis kicked, as hard as a deer knew how. The downside had been, Louis was only half Melon's size—but on the plus side, he was half the titan's size, and it was more than enough to push off, and gradually shove the entire planet out of orbit, along with him.

Melon's condescending laughter subsided as he opened his eyes again, saw nothing, and looked out as Louis and the entire mass drifted off into space.

“HUH.”

There was less than no time to waste: the deer spun around, latched onto the rock, and opened his jaws as wide as he possibly could. The surface being too wide, too flat, he reared back, thought, and bashed the face with his antlers. Had it contacted poor old Earth, it would have likely been obliterated. The much larger rock planet just cracked politely, a few bits drifting off as debris.

Knowing better, at long last, what he was up against, Louis bit down on every single little morsel that came past, gulping fast, then smashing the crack again, desperately flinging more mites of rock off.

How much could this really help, before Melon was upon him again?

The hand would surely catch him in a second, in a thudding heartbeat.

Again, he smashed, pebbles starting to break loose for him to devour. Again, he ate, even though they hardly made enough matter to matter. He hardly detected anything on his tongue.

He bashed one more time, and larger fragments finally decided to blow loose.

If I can just get big enough, Louis thought, hammering the idea in over and over, to draw nout his rising panic. *If I can just get big enough, even if it isn't big enough to stop him...I can stall! I can get this rock away! I can eat it all—*

The hand had him, just like he thought. Just like that. It closed around his entire neck, wide as it all was, and fastened like a furred vice against it, stopping the deer cold as the planet continued to sail off without him.

“GOOD FOR YOU!” Melon purred, nodding with a pressed mock-grin. **“THAT’S NOT BAD AT ALL. HAHA. AH. I CAN APPRECIATE THE NEW WRINKLE HERE: DO I JUST TOSS YOU OFF? OR DID YOU MANAGE TO GET A LITTLE BIT OF THE ROCK FOR YOURSELF? OH, SHOULD I LET YOU GROW? JUST TO SEE? WHAT**

IF YOU GROW RIGHT NOW, WHILE I'M CHOKING YOU? GOODNESS, THAT WOULD ACTUALLY GET PRETTY UGLY, YOUR NECK SWELLING AS IT CRUSHES AGAINST MY GRIP..."

Louis wheezed, or tried to, but nothing got out. For a moment, the rules of space felt a little closer to applying, dangerously so.

There was actually a tremble, within, and for that same instant the deer feared Melon might be right. That tremble raced and swelled into a well known, almost-cherished pleasure as his body rumbled and spasmed with bursting power.

Melon calmly remained, holding tight, waiting to see for himself what would happen...

HORNS TRANSIT SHUTTLE, ROW 19, SEAT A

GOUHIN, 9:30 PM

The lack of screams or chatter informed Gouhin that, like a bad movie, he was the first one up. He didn't so much jolt awake as gingerly lean back into his chair, only to find gravity forcing him back down against a straining seatbelt.

"Nn."

A bent cigarette stuck to his lip, long dead, and there it stayed as he shook his head and willed his sight back into focus. The interior cabin was dark enough that it was nearly pointless, but at the moment it was the only goal he felt like achieving.

Silhouettes lay still in their chairs as far-off sunlight came and went, teasing through the windows on his side. Tree branches at noon? It wasn't noon. Was it?

No. No, wait. The shapes outside were all wrong, too simple; they were each like gargantuan poles wavering in silent winds. He sniffed, clearing out the aftertaste of his own menthol, when the scent barreled into his nose, assaulting him in a rush.

"Ah, what..."

The panda froze, then sniffed again. Dry as it was, his throat managed one unhappy gulp.

"It can't. Come on."

He twisted to the window and stared, smelling the full scent as he processed. He knew the smell, it was from earlier on in the day, back in the realm of sanity. It was both the fur and smell of the same brown bear at his office, before things went tits-up-a-thousand.

“Can’t be.”

He hadn’t woken up, that was it. Sure.

It’s not the kid. It isn’t Riz.

Riz’s bulk as it overfilled the train answered in his memory, and Gouhin grimaced deeper. The kid had been growing, that’s right. Pretty big, even. Were they really on him now? How? Had they really flown into him, or had he just gotten big enough to be in the way?

Wait. What the hell had the bear been standing on, then? Space??

A miserable groan rose elsewhere as Gouhin’s mutterings woke a chicken, who coughed their way into an accidental cock-a-doodle, waking nearly everyone else after.

“Are we there?” someone croaked.

“Why’s it dark?”

“Did we land? Oh hell, did we crash? Did we crash land!?”

There was no armed dog in sight this time, Gouhin was checking all over.

“What is all this, outside?”

Gouhin waited for it, closing his eyes.

Holyshitit’sfur

It’s not

It is look look

A giant! We landed in a giant’s pelt, look!

Something utterly enormous shattered the relative quiet, a series of deep *boom-boom-booms* from above and beneath them, from all around. The massive fur strands outside swelled uncontrollably each time, sending waves of confusion and force through the shuttle as it shuddered.

“It...it’s growing again!” the same zealous leopard laughed, breathing faster in her chair. “I...I’m here! Haha! That’s hilarious! It doesn’t even notice us, does it!? Why would it?”

“Dammit, not you again! Shut up, over there!”

“Hahahaaaaahaaa! This is incredible! I can feel you growing! I can feel you!”

“Lady, I swear, if you don’t get—”

The shuttle tilted in at the nose, shoving everyone forward into the seat ahead with a unified holler of panic. The ground under them moved, growing follicles brushing bigger as Riz’ fur grew and bunched around the exterior, blocking more light as they rose.

“What’s that!?” the chicken blurted, pressing his beak to the glass on the other side of Gouhin’s aisle. “There’s something out past the fur! It’s a...it’s another giant! He’s way bigger!! It-it’s a deer, I think! Like, a stag, maybe!”

“Hey, he’s looking this way, but he isn’t moving any...”

“He sees the giant we’re stuck on, it’s gotta be that!”

“That’s Horns! It’s Horns, it’s him!”

“What!?”

“It’s, it’s the guy, him, from the video! The president of the damn company! Can’t you tell? Look up at his face! I’m telling you—”

“It’s not fair!” the leopard wailed, suddenly shifting attitudes. “He gets to be even bigger than our giant? One of us? The rich one gets more!?”

“That does it, lady, I warned you—”

Gouhin was already fussing at his seatbelt to intervene, when the forest around them shot up higher. The shuttle flipped nose-up from the force as Riz simply stood up, a terrible bellow-roar smothering everything else from much higher up.

The following cries melted into a gibbering nothing as the view of the gigantic Ogma Horns rushed at them—rather, their own giant was charging *him*.

Gouhin kept the seatbelt on after all, as the two masses collided, and the ship went flying wild and free between two walls of unthinkably thick fur.

MELON’S UPPER RIB CAGE

OGMA, 9:32 PM

So much for peace.

The bear had gone from a sniff to a grunt to a snarl to a full-on charge so fast that Ogma only had seconds to brace himself. The stag flexed with full intent, demanding his bulk strain as big and thick as it could. Assuming he wasn’t completely invulnerable, it would be his only shielding against something close to his size.

“Damn—”

It wasn’t the most delightful means of testing: Ogma could only raise both clasped hands up as slowly as time allowed, effectively letting the bear clamp his smaller jaws on the nearest thing to them—Ogma’s huge outer thigh.

Unfortunately, some pain did manage to reach him; it wasn’t agonizing, thankfully, but that it existed threw his older theories of godhood into muddier waters. Still, he felt far from dead, so Ogma kept his hands high and flexed even harder, his erection shuddering up higher as his thigh muscles boomed out against the bear’s teeth, stretching his mouth painfully.

The bear doubled down, eyes glazed and empty, biting in deeper, challenging the flex.

Ogma had, being president of the Horns corporation, always been a senior member of its attached gymnasium and spa franchise. He was actually quite good at running, yet had never brought himself to partake in the lower fields of weightlifting. There was enough posturing to the public, to the point where straining and grunting and glowering like a fool had no appeal to him.

Something the stag had never needed ever rose up from a place he had never checked; his lip pursed up above as he dug his muzzle down into his pectorals, snorted, and *ordered* his body to be thicker, still. It was an employee, too, and he...he was the boss.

Once more, the stag's astonishing thighs burst larger, a nasty click escaping the bear's jaws as they stretched so tight that they became stuck, tension-caught on pure, bulging muscle.

"HNH!" Ogma said—*grunted*, even—his muscles exploding out in a hot bulge of size.

The bear's eyes boggled as he tugged back, suddenly unable to extricate himself from his bigger prey. Whether he was shaking his head 'no' or just trying to shake off, it hardly mattered.

That is, until the bear lidded his rolling eyes, shook, and rumbled up larger, again.

Ogma immediately willed his bulk larger again, but it only swelled a few iotas bigger for him, his vision starting to blur instead as overexertion let itself in.

No. Not like this. Not after all of this—

A foot several times bigger than Ogma slammed the firmament, burying itself with a harsh dimple against Melon's landscape-belly, just past the stag. The bear yelped, mid-growth, as an impossibly big sole smashed it flat against said belly, the ursine vanishing entirely from sight.

Despite the salvation and all, it proved so powerful that Ogma stumbled back, his bloodied thigh marked with the bite as he lost his balance and pitched back.

OGMA'S HANDS, SITE OMEGA

OPERATIVE T, 9:33 PM

The entire lab leapt suddenly, heaving the trio up off the cracking floor with it. Monitors and stands and racks and shelves shook in protest as the entire facility tipped hard right, sending them sliding along the tiles with a very upset rolling chair.

"Hang on!" Mienai shouted, bashing into the side of a counter with a grunt.

"Holy—Ogma's moving!?" T hollered back, just as the facility tipped back the other way, tossing them along just after. "What's he doing, out there!?"

“Doesn’t matter!” the owl hooted, fluffing up as he crawled back to a large monitor readout, clacking away as he typed fast. “We’re fast-tracking this as much as possible, so as long as we last another five or ten minutes, we’re fine!”

“Can I help any?” T offered.

“Throw...those two switches, on my mark, we need to reroute all the generator power into this mixer, it has to be a violent process to make this work quicker!”

“F-fine!”

“What’s all the extra typing for?” Mienai asked. “Isn’t most of this automated, once you input the mixing equations, or whatever?”

“It does, but I’m at a final input phase, and I’m...making some alterations! Just trust me on this, both of you! We just–NOW, NOW, THROW THEM!”

“Gah!” Operative T yelped, the short capybara having to lunge up to the switch panel.

“Good! We just need a few minutes, and we can save everyone!”

“Mienai, sir, come in!”

“Ah, r-report,” the banged-up zebra huffed, the radio already up at his muzzle.

“The shift, just now! The chopper, it...I got out as it was tipping over, it’s wrecked! It slid and crashed into a big rubble formation, sir!”

Mienai and T both stared at each other in horror, before:

“Tell him to make for the East rooftop!” the owl commanded.

“Why–”

“It’s fine, there’s always at least three helicopters there, fueled! Standard evacuation is by underground rail, they should all still be in the rooftop bay! Have him start one as soon as he’s there, I doubt we’ll be long behind!”

Mienai closed his mouth, nodded, and opened it again to make the call.

“Guess it’s not really over until the after party, huh?” T joked, laughing wearily.

“Hmm,” the owl replied, absently, staring at a screen over to the side.

“Oh, what?” Operative T groaned, approaching as it bleeped angrily. “What now!?”

“These sites are common targets for attack,” the owl sighed, rubbing his eyes. “They come equipped with monitoring systems planted well over a mile away.”

“WHAT.”

“...I think Earth retaliated, after Melon erupted free earlier.”

“Oh God, just say it—”

“Nuclear warheads are tracking him now, I can see them through the system’s deep space scanner. Well, less-deep, from this point, but you get it. They must have been launched right after our collective...departure.”

“But...well, how many?”

“Enough to destroy the rest of our world, several times over. All of them, really.”

“Really!?” T whooped, grinning wide. “Good! Ah, you had me worried! Yes, let Earth nuke his ass, then, that’s perfect! Well, I mean, I guess at his size, it...still wouldn’t be enough to kill him...at least it’d really, really hurt? Right?”

The owl gave her a look. It wasn’t a good one.

“Exactly right.”

OUTER SPACE

JACK, 9:34 PM

“Legoshi,” Jack began, tapping the far bigger wolf tentatively. “D...do you smell that?”

Legoshi paused, his ears swiveling to Jack, before flicking back thoughtfully.

“You caught it, too?” he asked, perking his ears back up.

“Y-yeah, it smells like...our food, earlier. At least, what I ate, which should definitely be what you ate, too. Well, not the food itself, but an ingredient—”

“The rock?” Haru gasped, looking around as they rode Gosha’s titanic body through space. “Where? I don’t see anything like it around, at all.”

Behind them, Juno tensed, her tail thumping involuntarily.

“I don’t either,” Jack sighed, whining. “B-but it’s close, seriously!”

“He’s right,” Legoshi added, snapping his focus out ahead of them. “It’s...it’s close! Closer and closer, even!”

“Is that it, out there?” Pina offered, pointing out to some space debris as it passed.

“No,” Yahya huffed, shaking his head. “It’s over to the far left. Gosha!”

“*HMM?*” the immense komodo rumbled, underneath them all.

“Hard left! Now!”

Gosha beamed, casually twisting his girth left, muscles churning silently under a sea of shimmering green scales. Yahya squinted ahead, but reflexively patted a single massive scale in thanks. A reptilian chuckle quaked through the old-timer’s body after.

“How are there pieces out here?” Jack wondered, before—

“There! Look!”

Legoshi already had one snagged in his hand, needing both to hold it all as it zoomed over into their flight path. Juno pushed in against him and Haru, grabbing another one for herself before anyone even knew she was moving.

Jack opened his mouth to speak, and caught one with a shocked gulp and a sputtering cough, before choking it down a bulging neck.

“G-HAH! AH!”

“It’s a free-for-all, I suppose,” Cosmo sighed, reaching out for a nearby drifter, only to have Bill pounce out past, catch it, then land in the huge okapi’s lap, stuffing it into his maw. “Oh, Bill, really!”

“HMMFH!”

“Forget that, I’m not getting any bigger if I can help it,” Pina sniffed, turning away.

“Don’t you want to stand a chance against Melon?” Haru asked, catching her own piece, with Legoshi’s help. He absolutely let her keep it, even closing her smaller hand around it. “We need all the help we can get!”

“Exactly,” the dall sheep replied, “you need to be extra-big, right? Why would I take that boost from you, when I can cheer you all on at this size? I’m just big enough to be heard, so it’s really a good deal!”

“I just want to be bigger, to be bigger,” Cosmo boomed, grinning slightly. “It’s not like we can go back, so why not keep increasing?”

“We can still shrink back, Earth should still be intact, overall,” Pina retorted.

“Maybe you can,” she chuckled, shaking her huge head. “But could you really go back to being a little toy for the world to bat around? Hmm, no thank you. I’ll take this.”

Bill thumped his chest, making sure it all went down, before hiccupping painfully.

“Ah, God, ow.”

“That’s what you get,” she snorted, hugging Bill to her massive body nonetheless.

“Everyone,” Yahya began, “eat whatever you have now, we won’t get a chance to boost up our sizes when we confront Melon in real time.”

“Right! But thith ith puhfict,” Legoshi hummed, talking dumbly through the chunk he was forcing into his muzzle. “Weh cun...mmmng! W-we can take him on for sure, with this much of a boost!”

“Are you *really* Gosha’s kid’s kid?” the horse grumbled, before stuffing his jaws with a large hunk of rock, and chewing it slowly.

“W-what? What’s that supposed to mean?”

“Seriously, though, what could have caused this?” Jack asked, concerned. “Legoshi, think for a second, come on. Whatever amount landed on Earth, however long ago in our history...I mean, seeing more bits out here...what if the chunk that fell to the planet is just that? A chunk? As in, not the who—*OH, GOD LOOKOUT!*”

The entire party held on for all they were worth as Gosha crashed, head-first, into Melon’s vast backside, battering the shocked hybrid with such speed that even he went spiraling off to the side. Louis drifted into their view as he coughed and gagged, his face flush.

“Whoa,” Haru huffed.

“Louis,” Legoshi murmured. “He’s...even bigger, *again*...”

Indeed, the recovering deer proved bigger than everyone but Gosha, and by a good margin. Said komodo bounced back in space from the impact as they spoke, the entire party clinging to their mighty elder.

“AH, HE JUST APPEARED OUT OF—” Gosha mumbled, mutually surprised.

“YOU.”

The word came twice, overlapping. One was big, but the other was *even bigger*. Legoshi turned to see Louis as he approached, his aura alone pushing the startle wolf back against his Grandpa’s pectorals. Gosha, in turn, saw Melon as he laughed the word out, more incredulous than angered. The huge hybrid floated a bit farther out, busy with taking in the sights.

“L-Louis!” Legoshi fumbled, eyes bulging. “You’re okay! W-we came to rescue you!”

“HOW GOOD OF YOU!” the red deer hissed, looming closer still to the komodo, who glanced back and forth between both supergiants, thinking silently. **“COME HERE, AND LET’S HUG! LET ME JUST CRUSH YOU WITH THANKS FOR TRYING TO KILL ME EARLIER! BRING IT IN!”**

“Eh?” the wolf peeped, ears going flat-back. Jack was already wincing hard.

“Glad to see he hasn’t changed any,” Pina muttered, staying far back.

“Forceful type?” Cosmo asked, perking her ears, as Bill looked away sourly.

“DON’T BE SO MODEST,” Louis replied, continuously getting closer, getting bigger, to the point where they worried that he hadn’t reached them still. **“THERE WAS KOMODO VENOM ALL OVER MY FACE. WAS THAT AN ACCIDENT?”**

“NO,” Gosha sighed, the tinier party holding on as the reptile raised his bulging arms in a peaceful gesture. **“I’M VERY SORRY FOR THAT, THAT WAS MY DOING. I ONLY MEANT TO STOP YOUR FIGHTING, BACK ON EARTH. MY GRANDSON HERE, THE OTHERS, THEY AREN’T RESPONSIBLE. WE SEEMED TO BE GETTING SO STRONG THAT OUR BODIES COULD WITHSTAND ANYTHING, SO–”**

“SO, YOU ROLLED THE DICE WITH MY LIFE,” the deer shot back, no less incensed as he loomed, suddenly bigger than even Gosha by a head at 240,000 miles. Legoshi was so much smaller that four of him could have stood and barely made up the size of Louis’s head—forget his bulk. Only Cosmo and Pina were big enough to be toy-sized.

“AGAIN, FRIEND, I APOLOGIZE. YOU HAVE EVERY RIGHT TO BE MAD. I ONLY DID IT OUT OF DESPERATION, AND I WAS ALL BUT SURE YOU WOULD BE OKAY...FOR WHAT IT’S WORTH.”

“REGARDLESS...THAT IDIOT AND I HAVE THINGS TO SETTLE. AFTER THIS BIGGER IDIOT IS STOPPED. UNDERSTAND, LEGOSHI? WE’RE NOT DONE!”

Legoshi trembled, but it wasn’t from fear. Granted, there *was* a little in the mix.

“WHAT’S S THIS TRIPE?” Melon interjected, towering over them all effortlessly. **WHY SO GENTLE, NOW, OLD-TIMER? YOU WERE MORE FUN BACK WHEN YOU WERE BASHING MY HEAD IN! IS IT HAVING YOU PRECIOUS BOY HERE THAT’S DOING THE TRICK?”**

Gosha grimaced, glaring back at the larger beast with steeled eyes.

“ABSOLUTELY.”

Melon bit his lip as his smile grew jagged.

“THAT’S GREAT! HAH! OH, THIS WORKS OUT. THIS REALLY DOES. YOU CAN ALL WATCH AS I OUTCLASS YOU ALL AGAIN, ONLY MUCH...MUCH...MUCH WORSE! WORSE THAN ANYTHING IN EXISTENCE!”

“LEGOSHI, JACK, EVERYONE...PLEASE GET BACK,” the dragon gently asked.

Louis watched, through his anger, as a series of flea-sized flecks and a few larger animals vacated the towering lizard, falling obediently back through space.

“I DON’T WANT YOUR HELP, HANDBAG,” Louis snorted, preemptively advancing toward Melon. **“I DON’T EVEN WANT TO KNOW HOW YOU’RE THAT MORON’S BLOOD, BUT IT MAKES SENSE ENOUGH THAT IT’D BE LIKE THAT. IF YOU’RE AS DUMB AS HE IS, THEN JUST STAY BACK AND LET ME FINISH THIS.”**

Both Legoshi and Gosha grunted angrily, for the others’ sake.

“HAHA, WELL, HOWEVER YOU WANT TO SCHEDULE YOUR RUIN, IT’S FINE,” Melon calmly answered, going out of his way to put his bulky, tattooed back to them. **“I’M HERE TO EAT, NOT TO BRAWL.”**

Louis perked up.

“THE HELL YOU ARE!”

The instant the others had pulled back enough, Gosha shot forth, needing to wait on nothing else as he tackled Melon hard from behind. Louis threw his humongous arms up in agitation, slapping his own head, before taking after the old reptile.

“D...DAMMIT!”

The bigger hybrid took the brunt with a mixture of a laugh and a grunt, twisting around enough to plant his elbow deep into Gosha’s face. The elder took it, however, then slipped his muzzle back, opened his jaws wide, and bit into the exposed forearm. Melon stifled a happy snarl as his erection shook harder, throbbing even larger as he shuddered in joy.

“HARDER...COME ON, OLD-TIMER, HARDER!”

The colossus shook as his body began to rumble and stretch, pulsing bigger again as raw pleasure coursed through it. His free hand swung around and caught Gosha’s head, squeezing tight, forcing the surprised komodo’s jaws in *deeper*.

A giddy, dark growl erupted as Melon blew up to 340,000 miles, his huge muzzle curling into a wobbling sneer as his sacs exploded bigger against his thighs.

“S-SEE? LIKE THAT. GOT IT?”

Gosha snorted, the edge of his jaws forming a sly grin, despite the manner in which he was currently held. A thick gush of venom burst out of the bite wound, pouring down over Melon’s arm, soaking the massive strands of fur as he pumped literal oceans of it out.

Finally, Melon’s sneer sank into a confused curve, his ears flicking.

“HMM. RIGHT, RIGHT, YOU HAVE THAT–”

Louis landed a punch with such force that Melon’s head snapped away to the side, whipping audibly as a shock wave blasted everyone, hurling Legoshi, Haru, Jack, Pina, Bill, Yahya, Juno and Cosmo all farther out.

“S-such force,” Legoshi gulped, watching like a bug on a very, very big wall as Louis kneed Melon in the belly, just as Gosha grabbed the hybrid’s head and launched up into it with a cracking heabutt. “Incredible! Ah, we have to help out! Why aren’t we bigger yet? I mean, I started rumbling some, I know I did...come on!”

“It’s not always instantaneous, Legoshi,” Jack reminded, the smaller canine floating over to his best friend. “We just need to stay out of their way until our spurts hit!”

“I’m staying out of the way, period,” Pina huffed, putting his woolly hands up.

“We should try triggering them,” Yahya suggested, rumbling all over as it built up. “Get things moving. I’m not leaving my partner out there with that lunatic!”

“Right!” Legoshi seconded, mildly impressing the horse. “Let’s do that!”

“Maybe you are Gosha’s kid’s kid...”

“If all of us chip in, even if we aren’t as big as Melon, it can tip the scales,” Haru said, hugging Legoshi’s arm on the other side, her white muscles surging supportively. “Bill, Jack, Yahya, Cosmo, Pi...er, Juno...”

She looked around.

“W-where’s Juno?”

It only took a second of scanning for the massive rabbit to gasp.

“There!”

Sure enough, Juno was floating out and away from the group, towards some ugly, craggy planet out in the distance, far from the brawl nearby.

“Where’s she going!?” Bill grouched, gesturing angrily out to her.

“Is she always this aloof?” Cosmo asked, cocking her huge head softly. “You all seem to know one another, so...”

“No,” Pina and Bill both flatly rumbled.

“I think she’s more interested in being center-stage, normally,” Legoshi added. “She’s definitely social and you know...I-likes attention, and...Jack, do you—”

“Smell that?” Jack huffed, sniffing again. “Yeah, that same smell, it’s super-close now. In all the fuss here, I hadn’t really paid it enough mind—”

“Oh, hell,” Haru started, the rabbit bulging with tension as she shot after Juno. “You all stay put, I need to stop her! I know what she’s doing!”

“W-wait, what?” Legoshi balked, bringing a massive arm up to rub his ears.

“Oh, hell!” Jack barked, ears perking up high. “Legoshi, she’s right! Miss Juno, she’s going for that big planet there! Look at it closer! I-it’s the rock!”

“What rock? Our rock!? There’s more rock on that planet!?”

Yahya went pale.

“That rock...IS the planet!”

“If she eats even a bit of it,” Bill gathered, “she...she’ll outgrow us all by leaps!”

“But if we eat it, we gain the advantage,” Yahya snorted, shaking with excitement. “Move! You all stay here and help Gosha! I’ll handle this!”

“Whoa, whoa, why you?” Bill groaned, immediately getting in the way.

“It’s personal!” the huge horse whinnied, thumping a billowed-out, black pectoral. “Gosha is my partner!”

“And he’s *my Grandpa*,” Legoshi added, joining Bill. “Let’s all just follow Haru—”

Louis’ far bigger body slammed into the party, scattering them into chaos as he sailed past, thrown by Melon with little effort. The 400,000-miles tall hybrid was slowing down as Gosha lizard-scuttled around his bloated bulk, biting his shoulder, then his neck; venom blasted out in crashing waves as he pumped more and more poison, trying to match the gargantuan male’s growth.

There was no going back—more so now, than ever. All the conjecture was gone, only cold reality left in its stead.

Somehow, it had to happen. Melon had to be knocked out, or *killed*.