

SOUTHSIDE HEALTH PLAZA, BUILDING D

MELON, 2:06 PM

It wasn't the most convenient way to work, bringing so heavy a gun in on a job—but Melon had never disliked carrying it. The fun was in the challenge, as they said. It was more a matter of practice, than encumbrance, the way he had to constantly account for its presence. The way the metal slid, or the rubber grip caught, the way it *clacked* if he forgot for one moment how to set it down the way it wanted. The thought that it might slip out of one hand—whoops—and bam, chaos. Ricochet, maybe. Maybe he'd die first.

Maybe the things he needed would just steal themselves, and render it all academic.

Either way, he had a gun. A big one. And *big* felt nice.

No one was around, as much to the hybrid's disappointment as to his relief; the back warehouse was minimal, at best, given that it was basically a Black Market hospital, but that meant no one cared enough to put real security at the door. It was a joke. Had he not been in a hustle all day, he might have luxuriated over better targets.

The surgical mask had been pulled tight as a rictus grin over Melon's muzzle well beforehand, as it minimized any signs of his carnivore's teeth. For all anyone knew, he was just some plain antelope—the plainest, really. *Cream cheese on toast*, that's what they would say—however that garbage actually tasted. It wasn't like he knew.

Cases were left unlocked, row after row, giving him unimpeded access to syringes, bottles, bandages, everything his own unofficial little practice required to keep on the up-and-up. Therapy still took more than time and hugs to work—in his line, it took *tools*. Everything he grabbed *clinked* and *clanked* into the bag (though not with the sublime callousness in which his gun did), and in a minute he had it all—

“Oh, pardon me, doctor, I didn't know anyone was in here!”

There was no reactive jerk around or shock. Melon just lowered the bag some, and closed the case. When he turned to face the nurse (a plump ewe) his eyes were closed to unassuming, gentle slits.

“Haha,” Melon chuckled, popping his back slightly. “You know, I've heard that a million times, even in my own house. It's something.”

“Aha, well, I didn’t know anyone was even in the back of the building,” the ewe stammered, straightening up some.

“Stealing supplies, eh?” he started, leaning in toward her playfully.

“Oh no, haha, no! I-inventory check! Might I, ah…”

Her eye flicked down, then right back up, barely a twitch.

“Oh, I’ll be out of your wool in a beat, dear, excuse me. Or should I say, ‘bleat’?”

“Oh,” the nurse groaned, switching her hips to more of an *oh, you* posture. “It’s really no trouble, doctor, just surprised me. Are you floating from one of the satellites today?”

“Central,” was all he said in reply, not even nodding. The bag stayed quiet. “If you’ll excuse me, then, miss. Long day.”

“Don’t I know it—”

The scalpel caught her hand inches shy of the fire alarm, pinning it to the wall before the scream made it to her throat. Her mouth hung open, but her eyes slitted to white lines as the pain snapped the sound up for that one usual moment. Melon could count it out. He actually was.

The other palm slapped over her muzzle just before the scream made it out, damming it up in a hot blast of nothing as she writhed in place.

“You did know it,” he chuckled, leaving the scalpel in, even as she pulled against it. “You keep tugging, you’ll bisect it. Your day will either get a lot shorter, or a lot longer.”

Her free hand beat uselessly on Melon’s chest.

“Mn. Stop.”

Tears were forming as she thrashed again. Melon’s smile faded, lowering the rim of his mask as his eyes opened fully, cold and deep as space.

“Stop.”

A decent slap found his face, and another scalpel found her neck in return.

When the exit door opened, her last scream went out after him, chasing him in a final curse. Not that Melon heard it—the streets were talking loud enough to cover the deed, as far as he figured.

Still, took one extra bleat to calm down—or at least, let the thrill subside. Clear heads were lighter, after all. He rolled his shoulders, checked the bag, and went on his way, not minding the gathering crowds at the fronts of numerous storefront televisions, not caring about the news report that was grabbing so many eyes and ears.

Until the crowd all hollered and gasped in unison, making him turn back. What he saw wasn't the crowd, or even the new report—it was the horse.

Over the din, he seemed to shout something authoritative and pushy. Seemed a safe bet. Melon grinned wide, just to do it, just to make sure he said something back, with or without words. He was a killer, not a bumpkin.

At any rate, the horse was bolting for him—nearly on him, actually. It wasn't half bad of a showing, for an old-timer like Yahya. Melon was off, too. If the horse was firing, it was a perfect starter's pistol.

Having prey chase a predator was the height of wit, as far as the hybrid cared to think. What, did Yahya honestly think this city was anything but predators? What did the civil designations matter, when anyone could get the gun? It was stupid. It was so damned stupid. It was all predators. It was all prey. Everyone had power, and no one did. Just a big bowl of bullets all rattling together in a buzz, getting nowhere but in each others' way.

Empty casings full of bland, bitter gunpowder—black sand. The way everyone was, the way everything to him tasted—all empty. All nothing. So full of nothing, that it might as well all be space.

Still, Melon ran anyway. He kept his goods, he kept his gun, and he kept his head—because, why not. He could still manipulate, still attack, still thrive. He could still have some kind of fun, if he just absolutely had to be a part of this rotten world. Because this was it—this was life. This was the world. It was everything.

And what else was this dungheap world good for, if not fun?

OUTER SPACE

MELON, 9:40 PM

It was only then that the joke boomeranged back around to strike Melon, making his feral grin peak even higher over his gums. The idea of him, many hundreds of *millions* of times his original size, still running down an endless alley, in that endless city. Still stuck. It had swallowed him up his entire life, indifferent, uncaring.

The thought of him, now over 2 billion feet tall, still holding a gun—it made a steaming chuckle boom loose through his fangs. Why not?

The gun would have been over 50,000 miles long, sure—a little bigger, and the Earth could have been a bullet, in and of itself. Melon's gargantuan shaft bloated tight at the imagining of the planet blasting apart as he fired it, fragmenting in a magma-blaze, both ammo and target, all in one, all in slow-motion. His body had changed so much in half a day that he could swear full sensation was grudgingly returning to him—so help him, Melon could feel his erection. It bobbed and leapt through space, hulking, enormous and dumb, straining with *want*. Sex and taste had fallen so far out of the strata of Melon's world that it was all terribly new—alien, even.

Not bad. Just *alien*. And here was space, coincidentally.

It was through that very void that Melon's 400,000-mile body drifted, countless melon leaf tattoos stretching over immeasurable muscle, each thick cluster ready to explode with one idle flex. Even relaxed, his upper pectorals crowded his trunk of a neck, traps so big they rimmed the sides—nearly all the way up to his jaw.

He broke through the haze of his own self-indulgence long enough to focus ahead as a moderately-large hunk of rock appeared, and drew close. His fur frazzled out with a sudden ping of lust; Melon knew what this rock was. It was *his*.

OUTER SPACE

HARU, 9:42 PM

Haru saw the shadow just as it overtook her, even in space. Impressively, that same shadow kept darkening and darkening, the more the Sun was blocked out by it.

The rabbit didn't bother turning around—she just swam faster, kicking with all the planet-pushing power her humongous legs had. It bought her about three seconds.

Not yet, Haru thought, straining so tight that her body doubled in size, making her effectively a larger flea as Melon's vastness closed in from behind (and overhead). *I'm so close, there it is, there it is!*

There, indeed, was the rock-planet, drawing her way as she kicked again and again, finally resorting to outright paddling with both bulky arms. Atop it was Juno, the female wolf trying desperately to break enough rock apart to start consuming some of it—any of it. The look on her faroff face only confirmed Haru's terrors as the shadow spilled over the whole planet.

“N...no!” Haru yelped, catching the unwanted sight of Melon's enormously huge hand reaching forward, shooting past her, a thick, bulging forearm attached as it clutched the rock mass tight. “W-wait! Juno!”

One flick was all it took to send Juno hurtling out of control, out into increasingly dark realms of the cosmos. That was all it had taken, for all her size and power and work. There wasn't even any argument to be had—for her, either.

Haru only had a moment's notice before the sheer wall of Melon's ridged abs bashed her from behind, scooping the caught rabbit deep into immense, lengthy follicles. At Melon's size, Haru simply melted into the fur, swallowed whole, held against throbbing muscle from the force of Melon's simple, insultingly lazy drift.

As the fur crept over her, the last thing Haru saw was Mizuchi, playing her ace: she had been hiding behind the rock planet, and was lunging out with a mean bite on the web of Melon's much larger hand.

Another flick settled things.

Then, it was darkness and heat, and the ominous rumbling of Melon's body as excitement trembled through his swelling bulk, blowing the hybrid up even bigger, and drowning Haru in the unthinkable sound of that much male, growing that much larger...

“Legos...shi...” she coughed, struggling against the blooming forestry of Melon's fur, before everything went dire black.

OUTER SPACE

MELON, 9:43 PM

“Hmn. Easy enough–”

Even at his own size, Melon felt it. He felt how his light mumbling was like exploding supernovas in his swelling throat—and it felt *sublime*. His glowing eyes lidded to nasty, joyful slits as Melon’s body continued to expand, heaving up and up in messy, stuttering bursts of power that stretched his pelt horribly. Cascading muscle heaped and rubbed and slipped and caught and kissed as his bulk competed with itself, making the 500,000-mile tall hybrid shake with satisfaction.

What was he to even do with this situation? Really? All he had ever had for power was a gun and a knife and a well-placed word...but he hadn’t had *this*. Moreover, he hadn’t felt or tasted or enjoyed anything of the sensory sort—yet, every nerve was afire now, his body a hot, thick, yammering thing that knew only greed and lust. In a way, it was beneath him. In another way, it was a sign of ascension.

Was the old Melon dying, or being born? Was he still him?

His thoughtful moment was killed too young as his muzzle pulled back, his growing mountain-teeth sliding open to let out a wheezy, blasting laugh. The laugh grew, and grew, getting so big that Melon momentarily wondered what to even do with it. His pectorals swelled out ahead, bobbling in rhythm as he closed his eyes and cackled openly, clutching the whole planetoid in one thick hand.

“Ahahaha! Hah!” he bellowed, his bulk inflating slightly with each vaped breath. ***“Like it even matters any! What, am I going to just...not do this? Really?”***

As if he would just let it go. *Cute*.

With a final hum, Melon opened his maw wide. At 600,000 miles tall, it was almost small enough for a mouthful. Not quite, but—

The impact was just large enough to make Melon move, shoving his tremendous bulk forward with an unceremonious pitch. His hand kept hold of the planetoid as he looked down, seeing a pair of huge scaly arms around his midsection, a set of red-brown furred biceps hugging about his neck.

Right.

That same gigantic deer from earlier had Melon by the neck, close to a third of his towering size—big enough to force some kind of restraint. The old lizard had him at the Equator, arms locked just above the base of Melon’s shaft. Together, the 240,000-mile tall deer and the 230,000-mile dragon would have been just larger than him, stacked—had he not just blown up even bigger, himself. Still, they *did* have him, more or less.

“NOW!” Gosha roared, the godhood they all possessed allowing the impossible communication to reach the others.

Melon’s huge ears perked as he blinked, then felt other smaller giants all crowding aggressively in against him—surely a living cage maneuver.

MELON’S BODY

LEGOSHI, 9:45 PM

“NOW!”

To Legoshi, his Grandpa’s command was enormous, both exhilarating and incredibly intimidating. His father-figure had always loomed large, in a sense, even after the wolf’s eventual growth spurts—but this was just *insane*.

Legoshi and Jack were only roughly the size of the Earth, if a bit lesser. Seeing Melon up ahead, seeing the hybrid go from an abstract threat to literally becoming his entire horizon, it took more than he cared to admit just to make himself move forward in the charge. Cosmo and Pina were themselves many times bigger than he, Jack or Bill—either male or female could have scooped them up like pets.

Yet, they too were less than Legoshi was to them, compared to Louis or Gosha—and they had trouble holding Melon, still. In all honesty, the grey wolf had no idea what he could do. None at all. But damned if he wasn’t still going to do it.

Cosmo collided next, 66,300 miles’ worth of female okapi curves slamming up into Melon’s side, pinning his free arm down as best as could be. At the most, she just weighed it in some—but it beat nothing at all. Pina hit right after, wrapping his prodigious sheep bulk around Melon’s occupied arm, boofing his woolen muscles out to keep his arm out at a straight line.

Clearly, they saw what was already in hand, and were moving to prevent any paths toward Melon's mouth.

“LEGOSHI!” Gosha bellowed, stern and sharp, snapping the wolf to his voice.
“THE ROCK! GET TO THE ROCK, NOW! YOU, YAHYA, ANYONE!”

He was adjusting some to the volume, but not the raw push of it. The wolf's bones shuddered inside quaking bulk as Legoshi nodded, and nudged Jack. Yahya was already dashing forward, arms out.

“Jack!”

“R-right,” the labrador gulped, following behind the bigger lupine.

Melon's arm flexed slowly, experimentally, just to see what Pina would do as it bulged larger against him. The sheep grunted, almost immediately having to struggle to buttress his horned head and bulging neck against the inside of a descending, patterned forearm.

“GHG,” Pina moaned, pushing back against it until it straightened back up and out, keeping the rock planet away. “G-GOOD GRIEF—WHATEVER YOU'RE ALL DOING, JUST D-DO IT, ALREADY!”

“On it, kid!” Yahya neighed, the horse moving faster at his much smaller size range. Being 1,100 miles tall made him the runt of the group—Melon was so much larger than he that his hand was practically a building, in itself. At least the horse knew where to park.

Pina hadn't even heard him, being about fifty times his size; the sheep was indisposed, anyway, struggling more and more as Melon grinned over to him, and flexed *harder*. His vast bicep peaked ever-higher, rising and rising, and rising higher still, with no amount of exertion producing a stop. Pina whined as it bulged against his body, an audible stretch of swelling cords and pulling fur gloating for the hybrid as his arm exploded in scope.

“CAN YOU SPARE A BLEAT FOR ME, FLUFFY?” he thundered, watching as his forearm started to sink in closer, and closer, Pina losing more ground by the shaking second.

Legoshi and Jack slammed into the rock just seconds after Yahya, the three of them clutching it as it sank nearer to Melon's jaws.

“W-w...how do we do this, Legoshi?” Jack wondered, as Legoshi knelt down, blinked, then slammed his head straight down into it, breaking pieces loose here and there.

“Like this, you two!” Yahya ordered, locked in perpetual boss mode. They looked as he stomped and stomped, kicking with such precision that the rock snapped and broke open, faster and faster. The horse was toy-sized to Jack and Legoshi, and he was still getting better results.

“W-what he said!” Legoshi concluded. “Just eat all you can!”

The three ate with desperate speed as the rock and the hand holding it kept lowering nearer to Melon’s mouth—a veritable gate of hell that steadily, teasingly opened wider, making sure tongue and teeth were present.

Louis’ hand clutched up at Melon’s huge wrist, the musclebound deer having to push hard to even slow it down as the rest of him held onto Melon’s neck and back.

“T-thanks!” Pina huffed, his teeth grit from the strain as they both held Melon’s hand back a little longer together.

“JUST...HOLD HIM,” Louis roared, his bulk swelling larger as he struggled, pumping bigger and thicker in great, waving spurts. “EAT FASTER, UP THERE!”

The trio in question might as well have been termites on a board too big for them. Even at high speed, even as their jaws ached and their throats started to hate swallowing, they were only leaving small divots in the mass, at best. Rather than retort, Legoshi smashed his muzzle down and began to openly wolf-down the cracked bits—anything to speed up the process.

“HEHEHE,” Melon chortled, shaking the group with it. **“HAH...YOU ALL THINK...YOU REALLY ALL THINK THIS IS THE ANSWER!? LOOK AROUND YOU! YOU’RE GODS, TOO! I CAN’T SERIOUSLY BE SEEING THIS! REALITY ITSELF CAN FINALLY CHANGE...AND YOU WANT TO BRING ALL YOUR PROBLEMS WITH IT!?”**

He laughed deeper, sucking in more and more, and his brawn began to expand even bigger for it, inflating with an uncanny, stretching groan of doom. Cosmo’s ears flicked back nervously as the arm she was weighing down ballooned larger, and larger, slowly filling up so big that her bust was pushed back by his bicep, her arms pulling wider around his booming triceps. She looked to Pina, who whined openly as Melon’s bicep flexed so big that he started to slip off, clutching at it in dawning horror.

“He’s blowing himself up!” Pina hollered, reaching out with one arm to Cosmo.

“I-I’ve got you!” she replied, throwing a hand out to catch his own. The connection formed a makeshift lash across Melon’s rumbling pectorals, and Louis growled in frustration as he grabbed over for Cosmo’s other hand. The deer’s palm consumed it as he clasped it tight, making the smaller okapi wince—but she held fast. “Gah!”

“EVERYONE, HOLD HIM!” Gosha commanded, the old komodo reaching up for Louis’ huge ankle, his thick scaly tail coiling around Melon’s calves at the thinnest points, and squeezing for dear life. “HOLD HIM IN! WE HAVE TO! AS LONG AS IT TAKES!”

Somewhere nearby, Bill hung back, stupefied at it all. He was too small to possibly help, it was more than clear. During that charge a minute ago, he had just...stopped. Everything.

“There’s no way,” the tiger murmured, unblinking, overwhelmed.

Legoshi ate, and ate, and ate, until it literally hurt. Jack was right beside him, furrowed brows and focus and fear, like it was the final exam of his entire life.

“*AHAHA,*” Melon continued, guffawing uncontrollably now. **“*THIS IS HILARIOUS! YOU’RE ALL TOO MUCH, WITH JUST HOW MUCH YOU AREN’T ENOUGH! ALL YOU’RE DOING...IS LETTING ME WEAR YOU, HAHAAHAAAAHAAAA—*”**

It was true. A pantheon of animals, now gigantic gods—and all they could do was make a snug wrap for him to rip open. It was actually sweet. The more he pictured it, the funnier it became, and the more he laughed...the more he *grew*.

His furred chest drum-burst larger, shaking out wider and farther, inflating with every ragged breath, until it pushed into Pina and Cosmo’s arms, straining the bond. His back muscles burlled out against Louis, shoving into the grumbling deer as he held Cosmo’s other arm, and helped Pina hold the rock-bearing hand at bay.

Melon’s rear blew up larger, his muscled ocean of a back arching hotly as he pumped his pectorals bigger, and bigger, wider and stronger, making the sheep and okapi cry out as they dug deep and contained them.

Pockets of thick, furry bulk began to blow up between the openings in their grip, spreading their tight embrace terribly, *painfully*.

“KEEP UP, LITTLE BUGS!” Melon sneered, laughing madly, his body disproportionately bulging around them as he passed 750,000 miles. ***“GAHAHAHAH! OR ARE YOU A BAD FIT FOR ME!?”***

“It h-hurts!” Pina screamed, his body forcibly growing bigger from the stress, pushing him up to 110,000 miles in size.

“Got...to...” Cosmo wailed, her eyes shut, her gorgeous muzzle wrinkling deep as she reactively surged bigger, her curves billowing out as she pulsed to 140,000 miles.

“AHAHAHA! HAAAAAAH! OH, KEEP ON IT!” Melon hissed, the rock getting closer to his opened mouth, his thick tongue rising, playing at tapping it. ***“I’M ABOUT TO BECOME THE HEIGHT OF FASHION!”***

Seriously. To hell with them and reality, if they couldn’t take a joke.

The great rock neared his teeth, at last, despite everyone’s efforts, despite the ways their bodies tried to grow faster, to compensate, as adrenaline spiked all around. It was near the edge of the palm bearing that rock, of all places, that one last effort was being made...

MELON’S HAND, ROCK PLANET

OGMA, 9:51 PM

Through the great forest Ogma marched, hoping that he had finally lost the bear’s track. There had been less disturbances in the high-above strands of fur, but no the old deer was left with his own sense of direction to guide him along—which was, frankly, nil.

“I can...only hope,” he puffed, trudging through increasingly thick follicles with muscles both incredible and inadequate, “that they have that formula made by now. I can...hah, only assume they’re...rgh, still on my person...*hopefully—*”

A nearby rustle caught the stag’s ear, making him twist all the bulk back in sudden, eerie silence. Like all deer, instinct took hold, and Ogma waited. All throughout, limping as he had been from the bite on his leg, he had kept one hand well-shut, without ever squeezing, never crushing. Only holding.

Silence. All of Melon's motions, at his massive scale, sent waves through the fields of fur, yet not once did Ogma slip off or fly loose, bound by the behemoth's intense personal gravity well. Ogma gave it another second out of habit, then proceeded 'forward'.

He came to the end before he realized there could possibly even be one.

"Hrm."

It clearly wasn't fur that awaited the stag—rather, a mountain of sorts. Virtually a planet, at his scope. Had something big landed on Melon?

Another rustle, and Ogma froze once again. A roar escaped as Riz's billowing backside grew and grew, crashing up just past the canopy of Melon's fur, charging toward him with no hesitation or visibility.

"Damn-nation!"

There was mercifully enough of a grade to the rock that, even one-handed, Ogma was quickly able to pull himself up, retreating North along its face. Toes found purchase, then another reach and a grab, over and over, all as the now-larger bear bellowed in a wild rage, clawing ineffectively at the rock below. Up, up he went, the bulky stag forcing his own heft higher, grimacing silently as his leg burned and slipped out.

Once he cleared a higher ridge, Ogma turned around to catch his breath—and gasped it all back out in shock.

"OH."

Far, far down along what must have been Melon's immense forearm, there was the sheep from before—only that young male was now more geography than an equal. His vast muzzle squeezed in against the base of the forearm and a mountainous patterned bicep, the dall sheep fighting against it with a darkening face and profuse sweat.

What in the hell have I missed, down in the fur?

His lone wanderings were cut short as the rock and himself shifted, and turned slowly about...to face Melon's space-consuming, wide-opened maw, fangs stretching like demonic ribs for as far as Ogma could dare to try and see.

OGMA'S PALM, FORMER CONTINENT, SITE DELTA

OPERATIVE T, 9:55 PM

The east rooftop was already on a mean slant by the time Operative T, Mienai and the Owl all crawled out the exit door. The helicopters were canting dangerously, still thankfully chained to their docking stations, and the pilot was already inside one, fussing with dials and getting the rotors turning. He stopped to peer out of the cockpit, then waved them over frantically—as though they needed the notice.

“Come on, hustle up!” he shouted as they climbed weakly inside, slamming the doors shut, then slamming them again due to the bad angle. “This sucker’s still fueled and set, thank heaven! We’re out of here, pronto! Belts, belts!”

No one argued. The sounds of licking filled the interior as a few last second beeps sounded, and the rotors began to drown all else out.

At liftoff, the adventuring party let out a deep sigh of relief, half-cheer, half-sob, watching as the few blipping lights inside the station spluttered out and went black, leaving them floating in the dark of Ogma’s closed hand—essentially, nothing much.

“Okay, okay,” T huffed, still riding the high of the escape. “We’ve got nukes inbound, Melon needs curing, then Ogma after. Right. How do we, ah...geez, the deer’s grip is really on right now, isn’t it?”

“It’s likely the whole reason we’re still all intact,” the Owl sighed. “Let’s get these vials set to shoot into Melon, we already have no time to spare—goodness knows how big that lunatic’s grown, in our absence!”

“But, bigger or not, they’ll still work, right?” Mienai asked, leaning over in the co-pilot’s seat anxiously. “That was the whole point, right?”

“At his scale?” the Owl replied, coolly. “It all hinges on a very miniscule chain reaction, and that reaction will invariably take time. But yes. Colossal or not, he’s still matter, cells, atoms, etcetera. Once these get introduced, however long the process takes, he eventually *must* hit a burnout point. The formula will put his system into overdrive, until it basically kills itself from raw stress, halting the growth process.”

“But, to be clear...we’re sure that ‘overdrive’ means—”

“Melon’s growth will skyrocket, for a period, yes. A storm, before the proverbial calm.”

No one spoke.

“I hate that,” the capybara grumbled, stonily staring at the small vials of formula. “So, like you said, let’s just...ugh, let’s do this, and burn that creep out!”

“Indeed.”

“There should be a sniper rifle case in the back wall mount, I hauled it in before you all got up top,” the pilot said, demonstrably thumbing backwards. “Load up what you need!”

“How many shots, sir?” T asked, unlocking the case as they hovered in the dark. “For just Melong, I mean?”

The zebra gulped, and glanced over to the avian.

“Two-thirds for Melon, one for Ogma.”

“Okay, okay. Got it. Whew. Here we go—”

Their entire world heaved as Ogma and his protecting hand flipped. T battered back against her door, flinging it open in a rush of panic. The vials and gun (and nearly T) all flew out into the open, flung deep into the black as Ogma’s vast fingers parted, revealing flashes of...*teeth!*?

OUTER SPACE, MELON’S HAND

LEGOSHI, 9:57 PM

“NO!”

The wolf’s words were less than a peep to Melon as the rock sank down into Melon’s greedy jaws, mashing down on a boundless pink tongue, pressing in as Melon began to forcibly gulp the whole planetoid down, down.

Louis's hand went from gripping the monster's wrist to grabbing for those on the rock, swiping Legoshi, Jack and Yahya in one snatching save.

“HURRY UP AND GROW, ALREADY, YOU!” the buck boomed, sourly glaring down at the three-bug-sized compatriots in his massive hand. ***“WHAT’S TAKING SO LONG!? HE’S EATING ALL THE REST!”***

“We’re t-trying!” Jack yelped back uselessly, as Legoshi grabbed several floating boulders’ worth of rock, thought, and chucked them out ahead.

Louis coughed, then swallowed on reflex, not quite sure what he had just had tossed into his mouth. Wasting no time, Legoshi slid down along Louis’ gargantuan arm, flying off the apex of his hill-sized bicep, and sailing down toward Gosha, who struggled to keep containment down below. He readied a last chunk of rock, welled up, and let out a howl that only his Grandpa could possibly hope to still hear.

“HRM?” Gosha rumbled, looking around, then straight up. ***“LEGOSHI!?”***

“EEEEEEEEAAAT!”

The titanic reptile perked up, then promptly opened his mouth in pure trust. Legoshi hurled the last chunk of rock down into it, and the far, far larger komodo obediently waited (just in case), then decided to close up his jaws and swallow. Legoshi rode the way down fully, coming to a rolling thud on his Grandad’s shining scales.

As Melon gulped more of the great rock into his mouth, his throat bulged powerfully, forcing it all in with a final, steaming huff. It was in him—all the rest of the planetoid. All the struggling had only bought the party a few precious minutes.

“DAMMIT!” Louis roared, just as something thin and bright streaked by—something so small that only Yahya managed to even notice it.

“Oh, we’re too late!” Jack whined, his huge golden ears tilting back in dread.

“What was that!?” Yahya knickered, watching atop Louis’ palm as the thin streak sailed directly into Melon’s mouth, just as it began to close. Jack? Louis? Did anyone see what just passed by? Anyone? Dammit, listen to me, you stupid bigger kids! Did *anyone* notice that?”

MELON'S THROAT, OGMA'S HAND

OPERATIVE T, 9:58 PM

"HANGONTOSOM—"

The chaos wasn't going to wait for the pilot to shout out the obvious. Instead, Ogma's tower-sized fingers slipped away in the distance, revealing Melon's jawline as the colossal rock hammered down past, segmenting and snapping apart.

The container and vials and gun and a few night vision binoculars all tumbled headlong towards the rock as it broke further apart in the beast's teeth, fragments shooting out past the spinning chopper and its screeching alarms.

T shut her eyes rather than succumb to vertigo, only able to hear the panic and pressure as the helicopter shook, lowered, then righted itself at last—at least, just enough to permit a bounce as it thumped down onto Ogma's continental shoulder.

"I-is everyone okay?" Mienai asked, only to be cut off as a line of fiery heat snapped ahead of them, charging with lethal focus into the tunnel of Melon's throat. Teeth too big to comprehend closed as the streak entered along with most of the bitten-off rock.

"The hell was that?" T pondered, before a great explosion lit up behind the descending fangs, backlighting them as the mother of all detonations began, then ended caged within Melon's jaws. To the colossal hybrid, it was less than a static jolt in size.

"The strike!" the Owl hooted, panicking instantly at the idea. "The nuclear strike, it followed his heat signature right into his—the vials! Did they fly—"

"Out of the c-chopper?" T panted, blinking faster. "Yeah. Why?"

The Owl went a full shade lighter, the blood draining all at once.

"The specifics of Melon's biology, the data from the old site on Earth...it was all keyed into the formula for maximum effect. If the vials and a massive chunk of the rock were combined with a superheated explosion of that force, I...I genuinely, I...I have no idea what on Earth or Heaven or Hell this will do, to alter its effect..."

The chopper rested, silent, just as a small aftershock wracked Ogma's huge body. From their place of the deer, they were safe enough, drifting back off into space with him—but what

they had all just seen happen spoke to a fate much worse, as Melon simply gulped the entire batch of madness down into his ballooning neck, and huffed the vapors back out.

“How long until we know?” Mienai grimly asked.

“I have no idea. But either way, we need to get very, *very* far from here. Now.”

OUTER SPACE

LEGOSHI, 9:58 PM

Legoshi could feel the tingle return in force as he jogged up Gosha’s enormous neck, claws clacking satisfyingly on ponderous shiny scales. He waved up at the looming head, catching enough attention to where the old dragon’s eye tilted down to spot him, and a great smile crept high overhead to match it.

“GUH-GRANDPA!” the wolf hollered, puffing away as his bulk began to tense up and boom out over his rising form, his feet getting bigger with every impact. “I THINK THAT WAS MOST OF THE ROCK! WE’RE ABOUT TO GET SUPERSIZED AGAIN, SO GET READY!”

“***OH,***” Gosha resounded, his body still so much bigger that the utterance shook the growling wolf anyway. “***I SEE! KIND OF YOU TO INCLUDE OLD ME, HAHA!***”

“L-LIKE I WOULD LEAVE YOU BEHIND, HEH!”

Legoshi tensed in with a body-wide cramp, half-grinning, half-snarling, before exploding in size. He leapt up by such a magnitude that his muzzle brushed in against Gosha’s entire neck in an instant, his ballooning brawn forced to rub down against the old komodo’s in a long, awkward stroke of forms, fur and scales colliding as the wolf bulged and bulged into absurdity. The sounds that needed out couldn’t make it through as the pressure grew in him, bloating his muscles as his pectorals pummelled into Gosha’s, and his shaft thumped with a dull *smack* of heat against his belly, their legs mingling and squeezing tight.

“HEAVENS!” Gosha bellowed, wide-eyed with due embarrassment as he and Legoshi tangled—only for Legoshi to explode with a straining grunt beyond him, outsizing even the dragon as he erupted to 300,000 miles, then 500,000. “H-HOLD ON, I! WAIT!”

“***GUHUAAAAAAH!***”

Legoshi's voice outgrew his, the positions frantically reversing as Legoshi *boomed* so large that he was suddenly only several heads smaller than Melon. By the time the howl was able to escape Legoshi, Jack blasted into view on the other side, rumble-bursting with escalating fury to Melon's size, outright.

To the side, Louis began to snort and quake, his eye rolling back as it lidded, his erection pumping uncontrollably bigger against Melon's dimpled-in girth.

“YYYYE-HHUH-HEEEEESSSSS–”

The shaking deer's body didn't merely grow, it vanished—replaced only by hints of itself, at a wild new scale. Melon grunted in shock as Louis' pectorals slammed him in profile, his horned head suddenly lost between two evergrowing mountains of bulging, furred might. The tilt it put on Melon forced Cosmo and Pina back as Louis was instantaneously twice Melon's great size—then, with a shivering twitch, *twice that*.

Melon shoved out against Louis's *three million-mile tall* body, suddenly dog-sized to some looming, overbuilt master. From on high Louis's muzzle descended, a vast chin settling on chest muscles nearly half as wide as the Sun. A surging tide of black horse bulk exploded after his, Yahya roaring in unrestrained rapture as he blossomed bigger, and bigger, and bigger. His chest crashed into Louis' at near-equal scope, the boomed-out horse blowing steam out of flared nostrils as he kept expanding on, and on. Even Louis felt his growing body shoved back as Yahya relentlessly inflated, all the equine's unspent desires spilling out as he blew up past 5,000,000 miles, quivering with need.

“FIIIIINNAAAAALLLYYYYY!!”

The group held tight along with Melon as too much horse met too much deer, and a lot of wolf and canine—only for a final rumble to break through as Gosha simply *became* their stage.

Far, far away, a rising reptilian head beamed, half-delighted, half flummoxed, making even the huge Yahya gawk as a scaly muzzle consumed their view. Far off in the opposing direction, a bogglingly titanic shaft loomed on and on, bobbing ever-up through the cold regions of outer space. Everyone lurched higher as they rode the swell of Gosha's infinite chest, slipping down between trembling pecs as the centers both kept blowing larger, higher.

“G-GOOD HEAVENS!!” the old reptile boomed, gasping.

Legoshi was suddenly as big as Louis, only for Jack to outclass them both as he whimpered darkly.

“Gah, puh-pardon! Sorry!”

“Sorry, Louis!” Legoshi added, the two huge dogs fumbling against the growling buck.

“Whatever! Just move back, move back! Melon is still he—”

Right after, Louis erupted even bigger, his erection punching through between Legoshi and Jack, the tip ramming a clutching Melon directly out into Yahya’s abs. Louis seethed happily as he spasmed and hissed, billowing loudly as he rose to 10,000,000 miles, spreading the others back, only for Yahya to reciprocate and explode bigger into him.

In less than a minute Melon had not only lost all advantage, but his good humor. The toy-sized behemoth found himself at the mercy of rampaging muscles of all scents and heats and softnesses at once, pushed and beaten and rolled like agitated dough.

“J-JUST...KEEEEEEP HIIIM...INNNN,” Yahya ordered through gnashing teeth, tremble-blowing up to 20,000,000 miles in another horrendous gush of growth.

Melon thrashed and groaned, clearly saying something that was repeatedly battered down by the four surging males’ sheer growth.

“You t-think this counts as r-resistance, for huh-him?” Jack pondered, the golden god rumbling up to 16,000,000 miles.

“N-NOT LIKELY,” Yahya huffed, his pectorals swelling out bigger at every deep word, never once receding down. **“I THINK WE GOT HIM! HAHA! WE GOT YOU, YOU LITTLE CREEP! AT LONG GODDAMN LAST! WHERE’S ALL YOUR NIHILISTIC, PRETENTIOUS CLAPTRAP NOW, PUNK!?”**

“AH, AHAHA...DID WE ACTUALLY JUST WIN?”

the looming Gosha politely asked, still far, far larger than any of them.

Legoshi alone dominated Melon, easily twenty times his size at 18,000,000 miles. Jack remained slightly bigger at 22,000,000, with Louis looming over the both of them at 60,000,000. Yahya had grown unthinkably bulky at 100,000,000 miles, with Gosha still so big that they all celebrated on top of his belly, the old lizard having rocketed to a stunning 850,000,000 miles.

Legoshi was nearly a fiftieth of Gosha's size, making his beloved Grandad a veritable mansion in comparison, were the wolf at normal scale. He could even see himself, Jack, Louis and Yahya in the scales! *God, they were all huge...*

Somewhere in all that mass, he could faintly make out Pina and Cosmo wriggling out between them, squeezing free and drifting back like motes of relative dust. If they had any feedback, there was no way to hear it at their increasing sizes.

"N-now what, sir?" Jack rightly asked, as they all kept their bulk pressed in together, diamond-tight. "I can feel Melon, so I know we have him surrounded now...but ah, we can't really do this forever, right?"

"Sure, true," Yahya rumbled, the much bigger horse humming in thought, forcing himself to come back to the moment and address things. "We need to work out some ongoing containment, here. We're all likely still getting bigger, much faster, thanks to the rock we ate in the pinch, so we'll need to account for the overall timing as weGHHGH—"

Yahya was already exploding bigger. The booming horse shuddered up and out, pumping violently in every direction as his bulk overwhelmed the others with no warning. Entire planets, long since thrown out of orbit by the fighting, began to pull helplessly inward as Yahya's body kept growing, and growing, gulping in mass as his back muscles towered over his bulging neck and booming shoulders, forcing his pectorals down between crushing huge biceps.

Even Louis, spurting up to 200,000,000 miles, was getting buffeted back by too much horse as the heaving male's expansion accelerated even more. Legoshi and Jack fell back against Louis' bulk as the deer shoved into Yahya, knitting his brows in renewed impatience.

"Timing, huh!?" Louis snapped, his oceanic muscles rippling bigger as he pushed.

Even the great Gosha began to feel his bulk pulling down as more and more of Yahya billowed up over it, the horse now a third his size, then *half*.

"S-SLOW DOWN, YAHYA," Gosha soothed, his tongue flick-flicking nervously as his old partner knickered hotly, shook, and *detonated* bigger yet, overflowing atop the surprised lizard with a greedy, gross heave. "S-STOP—"

"We can't hold, if it's this chaotic!" Legoshi howled, holding on as he burst to 70,000,000 miles against a 400,000,000-mile tall Louis.

“No kidding!” the deer sourly shot back, as planets only somewhat larger than comparative cells clung to their swelling fur, their bodies measurable in Astronomical Units now.

Earth itself already would have been only a few times bigger than one of Legoshi’s own cells, had he been his old size—and he was still getting larger and thicker around. That they had once been small enough to exist together on the same dwindling globe was laughable now—the problem was, it was getting too much, for even them, all at once.

Gosha struggled helplessly against Yahya’s bulging rump, his shaft riding up between the horse’s billowing black orbs and pendulous member, which inflated beyond all pain as it widened into a massive spire. The vast lizard was now a third of Yahya’s size, and Yahya only shook harder—*harder*—

The self-inflicted chaos only grew worse as, in one smooth, shattering blast of confusion overtook everything, a singular mass blowing up so large that the entire party—at its many tiers of size and scale all—went flying back through space, scattered.

Legoshi only saw a forearm interrupting everyone else’s forms. He blinked.

That forearm was gone—replaced only by a melon leaf bigger than he was.

OUTER SPACE

MELON, 10:02 PM

There had been walls of so many types smashing and crushing him that, in a way he hadn’t anticipated, Melon was almost in a state of delight—not insofar as being happy, but being so beaten and wracked that his body rejoiced in several new plateaus of abuse and pain.

With the rock chunk thrown into the mix—*well*.

In a single crash of one heartbeat, Melon stretched into new realms of godhood. He felt his borders expand terribly, wonderfully, pulling his fur so hard it nearly split as newfound armadas of muscle bloomed against each other. His shaft shoved the smaller deer back, a tit-for-tit that some far-back part of his brain logged as *remember for later*. Monumentally big globes filled the gap between his hulking thighs as his rear bumped the growing horse and lizard off of him, his pectorals growing until they billowed out of his biceps and over his abs, throwing them up and out as they neared half the size of his whole, throbbing body.

Both huge arms lifted, the apex of both biceps trying to escape from the nadir of swelling triceps, far below. His head hid more and more successfully as his raw neck bulk overtook it, forming a diamond of bulk between overloaded shoulders. Again, he cackled, only pumping his amplified mass up all the worse as he ascended beyond them all, once again.

“USELESSSSSSSSSS!! ALL OF IIIITTTT!!”

He spoke as much to his old self as to the little play-gods around his growing mass, the hybrid bursting up past the 5-billion-mile mark, and still rumbling up larger. Legoshi himself was nearing 2 AU tall (186,000,000 miles, 23,250 Earths), Jack 1.5 AU, Louis well over 10 AU, Gosha just shy of 18, and Yahya a staggering 40...

...and yet there Melon was, at *53 Astronomical Units* tall, and nearly twice as wide across with pure muscle.

The highest grade Horns tech rocket would have needed nearly 50 days—just over a month and a half’s time—to traverse *Legoshi’s* size. That’s how big the wolf was getting. Legoshi, in turn, was roughly twenty-five times smaller than Melon.

And Melon was shaking even harder, all over, his bulk broadening with each dooming chuckle as he flexed hungrily, thumping his thick, bulbous pecs, and *swelled*.

Yahya, momentarily large enough to get his muzzle just below Melon’s pectorals, had no chance to counterattack; Melon simply closed his eyes to smug, glimmering slits, snorted mockingly, and let him watch as he tripled in size, on the spot.

“I’M SURPRISED AT YOU,” Melon groaned, his chest violently bloating up over his sneering muzzle. ***“THAT WAS IT? THAT WAS ALL? RUSHING ME? PUHAHAHA! I’M HONESTLY A LITTLE INSULTED, AT THIS POINT. I THOUGHT...I DESERVED...BIGGER THINGS!”***

Yahya barrelled into Melon’s midsection, but the hybrid was simply too big for it. All the enormous horse bought for his trouble was an ungracious bounce that sent him tumbling back into a growing Gosha.

“W-what do we do!?” Jack howled, making Legoshi drift back as Melon consumed their entire viewpoint once more. “He ate too much of the rock, after all, look at him! We’re finished!”

“I...I-I don’t know,” Legoshi gulped, ears flicking back. Even as they spoke, both males expanded bigger and stronger—but against Melon’s growth, they were visibly shrinking. “That was it, that was all the rock we had to work with! If we can’t get bigger, faster, we’re sunk!”

“Quit whining, dogs!” Luis barked, the deer exploding larger with his raw anger. ***“Get mad, Legoshi, you stupid mumbling mutt! And don’t think I’m through with you, either, we’re having it out after this settles!”***

Louis was so large that his whole fingertip jammed rudely into Legoshi’s swollen chest, bumping him back. The deer must have been over 25 AU now, but the strain on his bulk was showing, and his growth was slowing, even as he blustered on—likely trying to forcibly blow himself up as much as possible, to the extent his anger would allow it.

Still, he wasn’t wrong.

“W-we all rush him, then! There’s nothing else we can really do!”

“WELL, STOP TALKING, AND DO IT!” Melon laughed, mockingly gesturing for someone to clock him in the face as he groaned even bigger all over, pumping beyond 100 AU. ***“BE THE HEROES AND KNOCK THE BIG BAD DOWN! HAHA! DO IT! I KEEP GIVING YOU CHANCES, AND YOU ALL KEEP BOTCHING IT, I SWEAR! YOU’LL TOTALLY WIN NEXT TIME, I CAN F-FUH-FEEEEEL IIIITTTTTT—”***

Melon roared the word out as he panted frantically into his pulsing chest muscles, shook tight, and erupted messily, his bulk overflowing into cosmic regions as he throb-burst past 200 AU, then 400, then 900, maniacally shrieking with laughter. By the time Legoshi, Jack and Louis rushed in, Melon’s pectorals rushed out, and harder, bumping them all back at high speed as the behemoth grew.

“NO!”

Yahya swelled clear up over poor Gosha, the reptile fighting to restrain the enraged horse as he spilled bigger, his black muscles overpowering his frame too quickly.

“Y-YAHYA, WAIT!”

“S-SHUTTTTTT UUUUUUPPPP-PPP—”

Again, Yahya exploded, some volcanic frenzy overtaking him as his bulk forced all 60 AU of Gosha off of him, the 300 AU tall equine lunging forth in attack. By the time he struck, he

was 700 AU, nearing Melon's monstrous size, and the impact was enough to knock the great beast back through the void. A right hook followed, cracking Melon's jaw and twisting the ever-growing giant back and away. A bruise big enough to be its own backdrop of space to some unsuspecting planet formed as Melon shook the hit off, and glowered.

"OH. YOU FINALLY GOT SO FULL OF YOURSELF, THAT IT MANIFESTED PHYSICALLY, DID YOU?" the hybrid growled, grinning lopsidedly. ***"IMAGINE IF YOU HAD BEEN THIS POWERFUL BEFORE TODAY. I IMAGINE YOUR PITIFUL WORLD AND ITS WOULD-BE ORDER WOULD STILL...WELL, BE. AM I WRO—"***

Yahya's fist blew up bigger right at the moment of contact, adding an extra push as Melon flew back. For an instant, impossibly, Yahya was *bigger* than him. The hybrid's skull shook with flashes of pain and light, his vision crackling out as Yahya's long face collided with his, bashing him straight down as they both grew.

"EVERYTHING ABOUT YOU IS WRONG!" Yahya doom-roared, shaking space around them as he quadrupled in size, spilling out in massive blasts of unhinged, heedless growth. ***"YOU'RE...EVERYTHING THAT'S WRONG...WITH EVERYTHING!"***

Melon sailed back, trembled hotly and hissed as his body billowed up to 6,000 AU, versus Yahya's 3,000. Hundreds of billions of miles of muscle moved as the smaller horse throttled Melon outright, crushing in against the leopard-antelope's widening neck.

"BUT MY WAY...IS THE CLEAR ANSWER, HAHA!" Melon shot back, as yet another, meaner rumble tore through his bristling fur and heaving bulk. ***"NONE OF YOUR SILLY HALF-MEASURES HAVE DONE IT! NOT ONE! YOU'VE HAD EVERY FAIR C-CHANCE TO BUH-BEEEEAAAT...MMMUUUUHEEEEEEEEEEE—"***

The mad hybrid flexed, and flexed, and *flexed*, throbbing lewdly against Yahya as steam began to pour off of his huge body, his tongue flopping out longer and longer over his pumped chest. Yahya caught hints of darkening coloration as Melon's very fur grew richer, deeper, heat pouring off of him. Something was happening, internally. Something *not good*.

"YOU STILL NEVER UNDERSTOOD," Yahya seethed, clutching Melon's upper and lower jaw, and pulling more and more. His body exploded bigger, again and again, the horse forcing it all out as his will butted against Melon's, booming to 7,000 AU as he flowed over him. ***"IT WAS NEVER ABOUT PEACE, AND CUDDLES, AND SINGING AND HUGGING—NONE OF THAT GARBAGE! ORDER WAS THREADBARE! WEAK! HINDERED! RUINED BY GNAWING INSECTS LIKE YOU!"***

Melon's eyes grew milky-white as they rolled back, his breathing growing more and more animalistic, his horns stretching longer, thickening as they darkened deeper. The steam was rising everywhere as Melon's huge body rippled and shuddered in surreal waves, an unknowable chain reaction finally igniting within as the horse pulled harder. Melon's jaws widened beyond all reason, his huge tongue flopping out as his eyes bulged madly.

“IT WAS PERFECT BEFORE!” Yahya raged, his muscles finally dwarfing this body, veins booming out against stretching horse fur, great black strands cascading off his mane, down over wild eyes. ***“GOSHA AND I HAD IT! WE HAD THE WORLD! IT WAS WRONG ENOUGH TO NEED FIXING, BUT IT WAS STILL FIXABLE! AND WE WERE THERE TO DO IT–TOGETHER! BUT IT ALL WENT WRONG! SCUM LIKE YOU KEPT FLOATING UP, TO TAKE YOUR OWN MISERIES OUT ON EVERYTHING! AND WHAT HAPPENED, THEN!? WHAT!? THE WORLD WAS DRAGGED DOWN, AGAIN AND AGAIN, UNTIL IT BECAME WHAT YOU KEPT SAYING IT ALREADY WAS! YOU MADE THIS WORLD, NOT ME!”***

Through it all, a hideous gurgle of laughter bubbled up from Melon, uncaring. His form spasmed deeper under Yahya's bulk as Gosha finally managed to impose his smaller self between the colossal hybrid and the even-bigger horse.

“CONTROL YOURSELF!” Gosha roared, shaking the larger equine as Melon's body twisted and tensed. “YAHYA! I'M STILL HERE, WE'RE HERE!”

A huge hand grabbed the komodo's arm, hard, and with a simple tug Melon had him off to the side, like a punished child.

“THE HORSE CAN'T HEAR YOU, OLD-T-TIMER,” Melon boomed. His darkening muscles swelled oddly, pumping in and out, as though his form were gasping in panic. ***“HE'S GONE INSANE–CRAZIER THAN I, MAYBE! WHAT DO YOU THINK? NOT F-FIT TO LEAD ANYTHING ANYMORE, IS HUH-HE!? LOOK AT HIM! HE GETS IT! HE FINALLY, FINALLY UND-UNDERSTAAAANDS!”***

“GRAH!” Gosha snarled, using all his power to push Melon's crushing hand wider apart.

“HE HATES REALITY...AS MUCH AS I DO! MAYBE MORE! AT LEAST I CAN HAVE SOME FUN WHILE I'M HERE–HEAR THAT, HORSE? THE SCUM KNEW BETTER ALL ALONG–”

With that, Yahya replied. He pushed all the way, and Melon's jaw snapped.

All 11,000 AU of Yahya held it in, then shuddered out a long, horrible sigh. The vast male shook and bit his lip...before pushing Melon off into space, and smoothing his endless mane back to its usual position, his ears flicking back up. When he looked at Gosha, his eyes were as cold as the void.

“THOUGHT HE WOULD...HAH, NEVER SHUT UP.”

Gosha weighed a great many final, important things in what his life had become. He gulped, flicked his tongue a few times, and nodded solemnly.

“HE WOULDN’T HAVE, OTHERWISE. NO.”

Yahya nodded as casually as he could, looming over the 2,000 AU reptile.

“THE OTHERS?”

“NO IDEA.”

Yahya held the thought a moment, but let it out:

“YOUR GRANDSON?”

“NO IDEA.”

“HRM. I’M SURE HE’S FINE. TOUGH SORT, I NOTICED.”

“HRM.”

“EXTREME MEASURES, GOSHA,” Yahya added firmly, flatly. “YOU SAW. I DIDN’T HAVE THE HEART TO TELL JACK, BACK THERE, AT SMALLER SIZES. HE’S THE KIND SORT. WOULDN’T HAVE ACCEPTED THE END RESULTS.”

“THE END. RIGHT. WELL, WHAT NOW, THEN?” Gosha calmly asked, the komodo dragon rumbling quietly as he blew up to half Yahya’s great size. “THERE’S NOT A LOT LEFT TO PROTECT.”

“YOU’RE JOKING,” Yahya panted, sniffing back a slew of emotions. “NO, LOOK OUT THERE. IT’S ALL OF SPACE, GOSHA. MORE TO LOOK OVER THAN EVER BEFORE—”

An ocean of steam blasted through, knocking both giants back as a dull throb beat through the region of space. It was of such a magnitude that Yahya and Gosha both winced, drawing back through zero gravity as it grew deeper and deeper, more and more overpowering.

“WHAT IN BLAZES IS—”

Through the rising clouds of prismatic vapor, a silhouette swelled, bigger and bigger. The pulsations increased to the point where Gosha’s responses were entirely drowned out, the steam growing thicker and hotter as something alien guttered in the vast distance, all-consuming.

When it cleared, there he was—but more. *BIGGER.*

“WHAT!?”

Melon’s sheer bulk broke through the swirl of his body heat, his loosened jaw carried by the brunt of his bulging neck underneath it, cupping back up into place. What little blood there was had been dammed tight by internal pressure, which only increased as Melon’s muzzle consumed their entire field of vision—then *more.*

A great shadow befell Gosha before a hand snatched him up whole, so big that the lizard was just a gecko against it, at best. A gargantuan thumb pinned the struggling giant against growing fingertips, holding Gosha in place as the other hand found Yahya and grasped tight.

His whole, rotten life, despite all his rage and cynicism, Melon had to admit it at last: there had indeed been *some* kind of order. Some structure to which he attached his antics, his outlet. The horse’s point had not been missed.

Gosha’s body grew faster, the more he fought, the dragon angrily billowing to 20,000 AU against Melon’s 15,000 AU wide hand...but that hand just crushed in harder, until Gosha cried out and curled in on himself, unable to stop it.

Yahya writhed with so much muscle that entire planets would have shaken from a single twitch of one cord; yet, as he blew up to 50,000 AU, Melon’s thumb pressed into his neck, harder, and harder, and harder...

He had had his own rules too, hadn't he? Melon, the terror of the city. *Puh*. Had his vision still been so small? Guns? Knives? Psychological warfare? Why? Why had he wasted words on these quarks, these blips of sentience? It had seemed funny before. It really had.

Yahya beat pointlessly on Melon's fingers, but the hybrid just kept getting bigger, darker, his body groaning as a sickly shade of blood red filtered through. The chain reaction the Owl had spoken of, unknown to the giant god, was indeed happening—but not in the good way. Not at all.

“I TRIED TO SHOW YOU ALL,” Melon growled, through his clicking jaw. ***“BUT EVEN I WAS WRONG, IN THE END. I THOUGHT I KNEW WHAT I WAS PULLING EVERYTHING DOWN TOWARD. I THOUGHT I KNEW THE ABYSS THAT THE WORLD WAS. BUT IT WASN'T ME VERSUS YOU ALL, JUST TO WIN. THERE IS NO WINNING. YOU DIDN'T WIN, EITHER. I WANT YOU BOTH...TO KNOW...THE FULL EXTENT OF YOUR FAILURE. LOOK. LOOK AT IT.”***

Gosha spluttered as the pressure mounted. Melon's hands wouldn't stop growing bigger.

“YOU FAILED YOUR GRANDSON, HANDBAG. WHERE IS HE, NOW?”

His eye grew and grew, filling space, until it was all that a terrified Yahya could see.

“YOU FAILED THE WORLD. AND THAT'S ALL. IF YOU'RE FINE WITH KILLING TOO...THEN I GUESS THAT CINCHES IT.”

Melon's vast, enormous eyes closed into gentle slits, suddenly, and the beast, now darkened-ruddy and impossible to see at 5 light years tall, made one last soft-spoken utterance, one last, terrible iron-cold bit of sympathy:

“BECAUSE LIFE IS FAILURE—AND IT'S JUST NOT FUN ANYMORE. NOW...IF YOU'LL BOTH EXCUSE ME...IT'S BEEN A LONG, LONG DAY.”

Both parties struggled, even as things began to break. Not that it mattered.

Melon's mouth extended open again, and in they both went.

THE MILKY WAY QUADRANT

With the last possible opposition removed, Melon held the transformation one last moment...then let it all happen.

He had grown so insanely huge, in under one day's time. All told, at the moment of surrender, Melon had actually blown up 25,866,667,000,000,000 times bigger than his normal size—nearly *26 quadrillion times*.

A Horns ship would have needed 80,000 years to go from side to side of Melon, without ever stopping to refuel, even for a second. Even the speed of light would have needed 5 years.

That 5 light years of muscle rampaged to 500 in a blink, blowing Melon up into a small, smoldering dot against the outer regions of the system. That dot strained against itself before exploding bigger again, and again, torrents of hot growth pushing leaf-patterned sinews out into the pitch in waves of release.

The initial moment of mental disconnect—the instant of complete abandonment of all reason and sense—wasn't just good. It wasn't just terrifying. It was *miraculous*.

5,000 light years of muscle mass tickled, trembled and quaked, power compounding on power. His volume exponentially boomed, all scope of self lost as pleasure and agony collided, overflowing out, washing his miseries away in a burning rush of white, giddy terror. Pectorals over a thousand light years wide stretched beyond sanity, pulling Melon's thoughts in a billion directions, punishing and rewarding all at once as he detonated to 100,000 light years across in mass. In a monstrous heartbeat, Melon had become over a billion AU in size—and the pinhole his surrender created was ripping open, wider and wider, letting more out as he hiccupped bigger than the entire Milky Way, the next. One of the most fantastic things in creation, and it hadn't been given the time to save itself from his growth.

The great disc of light shattered in waves as his bulk crashed through it, mindless and wild. Intelligence remained, but it was resigned, careless, curious only as to the finality of throwing himself off that last mental cliff—just to see what happened.

His body gladly answered. It had only been waiting his whole life to.

THE LOCAL GROUP

Melon's bulk swelled ceaselessly, clumsily, tumbling over itself in a rush to become everything. His mouth hung open as he felt his breadth expand faster, wider, heavier, lighter, getting away from him by greater leaps as he blew up past 700,000 light years, then 3,500,000. The once-great galaxies were suddenly cute frisbees, nervously glowing in his stretching shadow as they shrank to baubles, then specks.

Each part in the tesseract of the Laniakea Supercluster broke loose, every tiny mote of light stampeding uselessly through space as Melon's body severed and broke the influence of dark matter. Everything was summarily caught, then absorbed, Melon's 90,000,000-light year body raging with escalating panic.

His horns darkened more as he throbbed meanly, his teeth growing thicker, his eyes glowing brighter. His shaft stirred the mess of the upset clusters all the further, thousands, then millions of insignificant fireflies protesting an uncaring god's wrath.

It had taken so much to put his own dent in the city, back in the old life. It had taken a bit of work to overtake the Milky Way. Now, it was effortless. *Funny.*

Had he only had this power, this size, from the start. Had Melon only burst out of his room as a kid, burst out of the the damned complex he and his Mother had been in. If only he had blown up bigger than the city and just crushed it all, right away. It would have been so simple. It *was* so simple, wasn't it?

If only.

If only.

But he was here, now. Oh, he was.

And this wasn't just fun, anymore. It wasn't some tantrum, some fussy, rebellious diversion until an unnoticed death atop of gigantic machine. No, no. He was the machine, now. He was the giant. It was so blessedly simple. Life was officially out of the equation, at last.

Existence had had its fair shot. *This was completely fair.*

JUST...G-GROWWWW...

Every iota of Melon's keen mind, every busied, frantic, cool, level thought he had left focused in on it—on the reason he was here. The reason he was even born.

It was his call, now, his alone.

OVERT-TAKE...CONSUME...IT ALL...

Why not, after all? This wasn't just a measly supply closet at a beat-up hospital. This wasn't catch-me-if-you-can, rule-thumbing play dates with the law. This was everything.

No more back-and-forth, no more machinations on any side. No more arguments. No more bullets rattling or pandemonium or noisesome civility or equality, no more sound, no more sight, *no more anything*—

Melon's body trembled in joy as it painfully swelled, his erection plowing boundlessly through the void, scattering clusters of regular, smaller clusters about its pulsing head. Half of the mad pressure kept funnelling hungrily into his member, a place he still had no real experience with, in terms of genuine pleasure. That beast was now over 50,000,000 light years long, from tip to bloated base, with veins so huge that each throb boomed through the nearest clusters, throwing all life into berserk panic with each reverberating impact. Entire realities were scooping into the tip, tickling through, adding fuel to the madness that even Melon had no idea what to do with.

Years of tasting nothing, feeling nothing—and now, lo and behold, he was feeling everything, all at once—sensory overload of the highest and most grotesque order.

Everything he could ever do, but had wanted to, or told himself the reverse growing up—all of it welled into a great mass inside Melon's shaft, pleadingly swollen and round as his sacs ballooned down through a google of frightened, tiny worlds.

GOOD. BE AFRAID. CRY OUT. FEEL ME GROW OVER YOU!

400,000,000 miles? Astronomical Units? Cute.

Melon was 700,000,000 *light years* tall, and nearly *a billion* wide. His biceps swelled beyond his sight, his nose wrinkling as his abs bowed forward, his lats inflating up under impossibly-sized triceps.

His tongue kept creeping out as his fangs swelled in time with his curling horns. His pectorals crept higher, unstoppable, rabid and insane as he surged to 1.5 billion light years, blowing the entire Quipu Supercluster apart as he hatched out of its bounds.

Nothing was stopping him. Haha, nothing *could* stop him.

It was as exhilarating as it was paralyzing with fear. He was doing it. He finally found a way to take it all to the extreme, and have it, and own it.

A city had tried to destroy him, and now he was destroying it all, instead. Turnabout was fair play, after all. Now, the biggest galactic supercluster couldn't contain him, and he wasn't even trying anymore. Thoughts of that moronic horse trying to stop him and failing only made Melon's erection flare out, doubling its frightening span as it began to quiver and shake on its own. His pectorals bulged so far out that their furry curves still managed to reach and tap and touch his engorged tip, pushing Melon's pleasures too high to stand.

Something foreign rumbled up along the fattened base of his cosmos-sized phallus, stretching the hot skin as his sacs boomed bigger, wider, heavier, pulling him down through the cloud-like structure of the nearest galactic filaments.

The great strands of existence snagged his bulging length, snaring and tickling and squeezing it, driving Melon a kind of wild he was still trying to understand. His pillar billowed larger, tearing and popping the fabrics of known space with no trouble, bobbing it up and down as his humongous body snapped another, and another, and another still, on and on.

GOOD, he thought-boomed, his growing skull vibrating with power. ***YOU DO THAT, REALITY—YOU FIGHT BACK. COMPLAIN. WHINE. YOU'RE NO DIFFERENT THAN THE WORLD, AREN'T YOU!? IT'S NO DIFFERENT A-AT ALLLLLLL—***

The final filaments snapped away as Melon's 6 billion light-year tall body erupted even bigger, even faster. *6 gigalight-years tall, and 15 wide.*

No...22 Gly tall. 80 wide.

It was really happening: Melon was filling the known universe. Replacing it.

BECOMING IT

The idea, the subsequent notion of all those pathetic other giants stuck and struggling within him, and him alone—the idea that he was becoming the absolute one thing that no one could argue with—it made him tremble so terribly that, at long, long last, it happened.

A thundering blew up through his billowing erection, making it jerk and sway as it burned in bliss—then fired off.

A bestial god-hiss ripped through a dwindling universe as Melon let it burst out, wave upon battering, crashing wave. Pure wet heat tore through reality as the roaring demon somehow expanded even faster, as though one last precious inhibition was cut away.

In a moment, Melon was suddenly so big that his 93 Gly-tall body impacted something, a straining, unseen membrane. In another moment, Melon was stretching it to two hundred trillion times its prior size. He panted and bellowed into his pectorals as his sacs contoured up along it, his unloading erection filling what tenuous scraps of space his raging growth permitted.

He gushed harder, swelling so big that his own mind collapsed.

He grew bigger than that, still.

He grew BIGGER THAN THAT. *STILL.*

MULTIVERSAL FOAM SEA

The membrane of the universe itself had spent so long steadily expanding that time didn't register as a construct. That didn't stop the next minute from being absolute hell for it.

Its overtaxed boundaries expanded mercilessly, the free floating orb of reality distending out into other orbs, other realities, nudging and pushing and bunching with them all at once, wreaking incalculable existential chaos. From the overgrown one there finally came a puncture, as Melon's tip blew clear out, tearing the great shell like a bubble as he burst into new boundaries of being.

His growth had forced the universe to reactively swell to over 500 Gly, just to survive—but as soon as Melon was out, the beast was already well over 1.8 teralight-years in size, and growing bigger, quicker. Instead of burning anything off, Melon's existence was becoming a thing of factorial lunacy: lightyears no longer worked after just two seconds of Melon's groaning eruptions, his body expanding through an entire sea of multiversal orbs, then whole superclusters. Within what he once knew to be half a minute, Melon was growing

superexponentially, shaking and booming out of all control. His biceps were practically separate entities, each competing with the other to outgrow his tidal pectorals, his back muscles spreading in self-inflicting terror as he grew everywhere in the next few, hammering, godly, demonic heartbeats.

He could almost form full thoughts as raw power crushed his mind, even as it expanded wildly. Melon was a god, after all.

No, bigger than that. Melon was becoming what gods had to exist *in*.

BIIIIIIIIIIIIIGGGGGGGGGGG

Even his thought shook a teragoogolplex of realities, as power no soul was meant to ever even fathom pumped into Melon at top speed. The living universe—no, multiverse that he was becoming operated beyond thought, beyond anything.

NOTHING

He was getting bigger than thought. Bigger than reason. And that was the final thing, the thing that made Melon climax even bigger and deeper, orgasm riding atop screaming orgasm—the thing that finally, *finally* made him feel. It was like arriving back at the start, really.

He was pointlessly big.

And that was the entire point.

Where was everyone now? They could never catch up. Who was that wolf, even? Or that dog, or sheep, or okapi, or that stupid handbag? Where was the horse now?

Whatever lingering remnants of Melon's growing consciousness he had carried that same blackened sentiment as he felt himself filling up the entire multiverse, stretching it again and again: he hoped, despite it all, that they weren't dead. That seemed a real waste.

He wanted them to feel him grow, and grow, and grow—an eternity of battering impacts, hammering foul reality down, so that it never once forgot that now Melon was in charge. Melon was everything, ever. The End. Melon was The End.

The endless hybrid-being expanded with a fiftieth climax, then a hundredth, his growth going hyper-exponential as time began to warp and his muscles billowed into only themselves, more and more, with no other possible sign of anything else being left to fill.

The living existence of darkness smiled. There was simply nothing else. He was it.

Melon was everything, and everything was Melon. What was a Beastar, compared to being all of reality?

The question posed the last sentient thought ever inflicted upon existence as Melon trembled and moaned deeper, feeling with hideous joy as the internal process that had mistakenly blown him up into his new state hiccupped. Something horrendous rumbled anew, and the process started all over again—only much, much worse.

It was enough to smash what was left of his bedevilled mind. Melon came again as he felt himself pouring into himself, shaking and rumble-booming faster than ever before, outpacing himself trillions of times over as the last withering bits of sanity he stubbornly possessed finally, *finally*, ***finally*** broke.

And it was about damned time.