

10.

Even in space, surreal as it had all been, there had been light. The stars and the Sun cast across the void, a glowing panoply, an ocean of cosmic coloration blooming into different hues. It had been frightening to see, but also beautiful and commanding. Majestic, even.

This, though...this was just *dark*.

Figment waited, and waited, figuring sooner or later his eyes would have to adjust, only the time never came. Maybe they were waiting on him. Whatever world he had entered into, it didn't seem hospitable in the slightest; worse, still, it didn't seem *anything at all*.

"Ah," he started, the dragon's swollen bulk shifting a few blind degrees. "Huh-hello? Spyro? Cynder? Toothless, are you...Bartok? Anyone? Heh."

The darkness answered with silence. Out went Figment's huge arms.

"Ahem."

With nothing better to say, he tested the waters with his throat, and again, no results. Figment's thought processes whined away nervously, a shrill note sustained, as he felt for any sign of anything. The alternating between desperately wanting to feel something and the terror of actually feeling *something* wore on him quickly, and he switched mental gears:

"The uh, the absence of light...suggests a cavern system, only I'm not echoing...there's no running water, or any wind currents...so...where else would be this dark? An empty room? Anyone? Any takers?"

With his hands finding nothing but black air, Figment sent the order to the backup team, and his feet grudgingly moved forward. In seconds, they bumped into a cylindrical mass (it had to have been, given how his foot slipped one way along a smooth surface), and a jolt of pain stuffed itself into what was already a fairly unhappy dragon.

"Gah, bother!"

A moment's relief snuck in, through the irritation. *This was not an empty room.*

"Alright, then, okay..." he muttered, leaning in, his paws brushing the edge of something, atop the cylinder. They swept up, then back down, eventually grazing a flat, wide surface. *A table? Then, this was a room...but, a room in where?*

Light snapped on, overhead, making the unprepared Figment wince and thrash backwards.

"Ah!"

His thick back muscles bumped into something. Figment's eyes fluttered angrily open as he adjusted, seeing a counter of sorts. It stretched out, hugging a curving wall; when Figment turned to

follow its curvature, he finally understood. It was a room, a circle, like the inside of a large, sleek sphere. No cabins, no woodlands, no rustic charm. This was cool and sleek, and for a moment, flashes of the futuristic world they had passed by before returned. The pain and confusion melted into a sudden well of excitement, as Figment's scientifically-trained mind leapt on it.

"Well!" he gasped, rubbing one eye at a time, so he could still keep looking about. "Metallic walls! No...oh, no, some sort of...alloy? Surely, some synthetic...plastic? This much of it!? Gracious!"

He cast out a hand, and let it brush out over the wall, grinning widely.

"It must be! But to manufacture such quantities...and there are no structural flaws! My, my! I imagine they don't even have such materials in Spyro's..."

His eyes widened, and he spun about.

"Spyro!"

The room was his, and his alone. Entirely *alone*. The counter wrapped all the way around what was indeed a large, circular table, interrupted only by what appeared to be some high-tech ice box or refrigerator. On the other side of the table, the counter framed a large, crescent-style padded seat, like a booth. There were no windows—and no doors. Cold fear overtook Figment's enthusiasm, and stayed.

"Oh, no," he murmured, biting his reptilian lip. "Oh, no, no. Cynder, Tooth...where is everyone? We've ended up a modest distance apart, geographically, certainly, but...an entirely separate place?"

He rushed over to a section of the wall, which was easy to do (the room was hardly more than a bedroom in size, after all), and rapped on it with his knuckles. The echo was hollow.

"Thin walls," he whispered to himself, before knocking again, harder. "Hello! Anyone!"

No answer. He had hoped for cellmates, if a prison he was in. Still:

"Spyro! Cynder! Anyone, next door?"

Nothing. Figment's enormous thigh muscles surged in and out as he took to pacing, doing multiple laps around the chamber, eyes open, looking at nothing.

"Think, think. Think! No doors, no windows. No entrance, no exit. How did I get in here, then? The portal wouldn't have opened, just here, just for me, we all went through. It couldn't have. So, logically, we wound up somewhere, *first*. This surely happened after. Which means...I was put here."

It made the most sense, currently.

"Which means...there had to have been a manner in which I entered. There must be an exit."

He looked overhead, seeing the rounded rise of the ceiling, a single light fixture glowing up at its zenith. He reached, then reached on tiptoe, but his fingers didn't manage to even approach the upper curves. He went back down on flat feet, then snorted, the way Spyro usually did.

Bother!

"Did the same happen to the others, then?" he finally wondered. This made him stop altogether. Fear for his own self shifted violently to his comrades. Every world, they had entered together, a team, a crew, a family of big, big dragons. Despite all the muscle and power he had accumulated so far, Figment suddenly felt unbelievably small. "Wait!"

He checked, and the bag was still there, lashed tightly around his bulging pectorals. He sighed, then opened the top flap quickly, reaching into the remaining cluster of candies.

"Blair would have thought and done what I had just thought and done, I think," Figment chuckled, anxiously, as he pulled out a candy, covered in a swirl of dark, rich green and pink. "I can't force my way out, like this. Thinking only got me this far. Maybe, I ought to approach this more like Spyro would..."

It was either be proactive, or wait indefinitely. It didn't take long to choose.

"Stupid, it is, then," he laughed, as he let the candy settle on his tongue, then crunched on it hungrily. That he had grown fairly ready to eat something, anything, did contribute a bit more than he would have cared to admit. The moment Figment swallowed, it hit, and hit hard.

"OOH—"

Was all he managed, before the purple dragon's pink-slatted pectorals exploded out before him, blowing up so large that their upper swells butted up into his chin, swelling up over either side. His chest boomed out over the topside of the table, with a stretchy, heavy *thump*, as his shoulders blew up on either end of his blimping neck. His tail shot out, forced into a slide against the counter, as Figment's horns surged out, his noggin bumping up into the curving ceiling, pushing along its contours as he groaned and shook, then ballooned even bigger.

His belly, in particular, expanded the fastest, inflating wider and fuller, his scales pulling rather pleasantly tight as it overtook the table, filling half the room, then all of it. His bulging thighs and feet were pinned near-instantly to the sides, crushing the counter into segments, then bits, then dust.

His whimpers caught and remained between both booming pectorals as they pinched his muzzle tighter, the entire space consumed in seconds by Figment's rumbling belly and massive muscles. Both seemed to expand faster, and faster, his neck blowing wider against his shoulders, which trembled and burst even larger, in response, along with his thighs and his still-exposed maleness. His man-like appendage and sacs mashed tighter and tighter to the walls as he huffed, trembled, and swelled even larger—yet, the room didn't give.

A flicker of outright panic flashed through his quaking form as he felt his belly balloon much, much bigger, forcing the rest of his swelling mass to flatten even tighter and harder against the sphere, until every other thing within was crushed to nothing, leaving only him. And he was still growing!

"HMMMMH!"

Come on, then, break. Break open!

There had to be an aperture, a flaw, somewhere. Any fraction of weakness. Any sliver of space.

Again, impossibly, Figment grew bigger; his muscles boomed so frantically huge that they managed to crowd one another, aggressively swelling out wider, even as his belly overtook everything more and more, forcing even their mighty bulk back flatter. The walls held, astonishingly, and Figment's fears redoubled.

Imagine it opening. Imagine it opening! It'll open! The door will open! The lock...I'm, ah...too strong...I'm too strong for it! I'm TOO BIG!!

The swelling dragon's body only seemed to grow more excited at the idea, and yet again, Figment managed to grow, and grow, until his billowing belly seemed to be all that there was to him. Still, horribly, the room didn't budge on iota—

CLICK

There, suddenly, it was. Muffled by raw bulk, to be sure, but it *was* there.

Yes! he thought, huffing hotly into his ever-growing, pink pectorals. *I'm much too powerful a creature now! I...I'm practically a god! This...little...ball...cannot hope t-to hold me...I'M GROWING...UNCONTAINABLE!*

Figment's body believed it entirely, and with a last, desperately tight, crushing spurt, it erupted bigger—so much bigger, this time, that something snapped around him, and with a rush of displacement not too unlike hopping between worlds, Figment found himself slamming hard into a different wall. It was sheer, metallic, and actually rather tall, for the moment.

When he opened his eyes, despite having to stretch his massively over-thick neck to see past his chest, Figment saw the makings of another interior. This was more the rectangular sort, dark and underlit, industrial by design. His bulk rumbled hotly as he shook his head, then rose onto all fours. There was only a moment's time for him to take in what seemed to be stacks of racks, each one loaded with some sort of small sphere.

Before he could comprehend anything more to the space, Figment's body continued to grow, and the wide-eyed dragon gasped as he shook and quivered harder than before.

"Goodness, I thought I was d-done w-"

What in the world

Figment heard the voice, without hearing it, and a moment's shock overtook him, only to be beaten out as he rumbled and blew up even larger. His belly, now considerably bigger than the rest of him, exploded out, swelling unstopably larger. Its sides and front and back blew out into the racks, jostling them, as his arms and neck and head pushed up, up, up into the ceiling, starting to dent it in seconds. He was already three times larger, now, though he had no points of reference to glean any useful numbers—and he was still growing bigger.

Wait

His muzzle stretched out along with his horns as his physique, already so powerful and wide, doubled in mass, stretching and groaning in all directions. He moaned and shook even harder, as the growth just kept coming, blowing him up and out; his belly contacted all four sides, warping the large rectangle out (and this time, it was easily done).

S-STOP

The materials to the ceiling dented and strained, loudly tenting up and up, as Figment's growing head pushed nonstop into it. His belly flattened tighter to the warping side walls, forcing them out more and more, until the entire room bulged out far, creaking, splitting, starting to shake as it gave way. Something tiny wriggled against Figment's stretching scales, finally registering through the vibrations and bulging, just as the entire room blew apart.

Light spilled in, organic and clear and sharp, as the massive Figment's belly blew free, obliterating the walls and roof. Warm Summer air flew in as he felt himself rocketing up bigger, and bigger, and bigger, and bigger, his undersides and swollen thighs and rump and sacs crushing the floor down into the cracking earth below.

The light cleared in Figment's vision, leaving him with the rising view of a large, lush forest, a winding dirt road, and blue skies beyond. The view sank lower, still, and Figment twisted about fearfully as he continued to expand larger—or rather, the attempt was made to do so.

"OH!"

His newly-inflated belly made moving considerably more difficult as he sat there, measuring out what must have been an impressive 70-foot height, only to rumble and wince as he erupted even bigger, booming noisily up past 80 feet, then 90. His stomach and sides and back had rounded into a smooth, scaly sphere of its own, much as what had happened to others who had taken pink candies. His massive haunches and swelling feet resided wide apart down on the ground, his over-muscled, hulking arms and neck and head separated far up beyond by a building-sized mass of belly. The pink plating strained out, taut and creaking, pushed to parodical sizes by the sheer girth of his midsection. He blinked, then experimentally, thump-thumped his upper belly's curves with both soft paws, getting a fairly enjoyable drum beat out of them, as he closed his eyes and snorted, then blew up past one hundred feet in size.

"Haaaah," he huffed, shaking off the strange rush of it all. He had finally stopped, it seemed, at roughly 120 feet in height, and even more than that in width. Figment's rounded body wobbled as he tried to adjust to its new dimensions, going so far as to force himself into an awkward stand. "Ho, goodness...that is considerably different than the other ways, isn't it!"

PLEASE

Again, the voice called out, begging, and again, Figment jolted in surprise.

"What...who said that?" he asked, looking around, trying with mixed results to simply turn his bulk around. "Hello?"

GET OFF

How a voice could reach him from so far below, so clearly, was about as baffling as there being a voice, at all. It was more in his own head, than anything. Figment gulped, then with some measure of effort managed to waddle off of where he had landed moment earlier. A sigh of relief flooded his thoughts, just as close as it had been, even with him moving his gigantic bulk away.

"Are you alright?" Figment asked, looking around, having no luck seeing over his monstrously huge belly and massive pectorals. Everywhere he looked, there was muscle now. He had been bulky and thick before, to be sure...but now, he was monumentally muscled! He could have outdone even Spyro's huge mass! "I'm quite afraid I can't see you, friend!"

DOWN HERE.

Before Figment could repeat his predicament, a very small, very soft, gentle tap came, at his looming foot. A paw the size of a pinprick was petting politely on it, and Figment resisted the urge to move from shock, lest he hurt whoever was below.

"Ah! I mean, eh, ah! H-hello! I...think I'm a bit too bulky to see you, sorry! Could I...bother you to climb up me?"

He only needed wait a moment, before a soft tickling responded. The tiny being clambered up, up along Figment's leg, up onto his belly, and as he waited, trying not to laugh, he stole glances of the periphery. A large city loomed off to the left, and mountains to the right; up far ahead, beyond the forests, was a massive...facility, of some sort or other. The road they had been on certainly appeared to lead straight to it.

Hello, there!

Figment's attention returned, and he pushed his chin down into his neck bulk, looking at the vast plain of his pectorals, and the alien creature atop them. It rested there, a blue-black sort of...canine? It was roughly humanoid, with a white spike jutting from its chest—no, there were two more, as well, one coming out of the backs of both hands. Patches of cream color interrupted the overall-blue body, with a dark set of bulges rested out behind its head and perked ears, almost like hair.

"Oh! Hello!" Figment laughed, making the creature wobble in place as deep vibrations thundered out across his chest. "I'm terribly sorry to have pinned you like that! I just...you see, I wound up somewhere terribly strange, and couldn't get free, so I—"

A pokeball, yes, the voice returned, feminine and confident.

From where he was, at his massive size, Figment had trouble confirming something: it didn't seem like the creature's mouth had opened, when it responded. It didn't seem to move, at all, in fact.

"Er..."

*Yes, I'm speaking to you, in your thoughts. Don't be afraid! I haven't seen a mon like you before, especially one so big! No wonder your pokeball couldn't contain you for long! The balls compress you small, so you must have gotten really, really, **really** big, to break out of one! I didn't know dragon types had a growth ability that powerful!*

"Gracious, a...telepath!" Figment gasped, his huge tail wagging, though it was partially pinned under tons of bulging, rounded backside. "I didn't think such phenomena was real! And, excuse me, but...a mon? What's...a mon?"

The tiny creature, unfazed til now, finally looked baffled.

A pokemon. You must be one. You don't know what a pokeball is, either. Hmm. Well, pokeballs are meant to capture or contain pokemon. Humans use them to recruit mons, for battle or for companionship. Pretty standard, really. That building, far down the road? That's Devon. The Devon Corporation. Rather, it's one of their hidden facilities.

Figment looked back to it, then down to the creature.

Yes, we were headed there. Scientific research. Those things around you in that truck were all pokeballs, and each one held a captive mon inside. I snuck on to break them free, but you beat me to it.

"Then...I was captured!" Figment finished, furrowing his massive purple brows. "I had friends with me, when I arrived here, so they might have been...with me..."

If they are, I can get them all to safety, don't worry! If you'll help, we can get everyone off this road, before any other Devon trucks show up. They own this tract, so no one else should be driving or wandering by.

"R-right, of course!"

Ah, thank you! Uh...

"Figment's my name, heh," the huge balloon-dragon answered. "Pleasure to meet you!"

Figmon? You must be from a very far region! I've never heard of your kind—and I know quite a few dragon types, too. But yes! Pleased to meet you, too! We had better move away from here! There's a dip in the valley, but the taller trees hide it from the road...you could probably fit down there, with me! Come on!

Relieved on multiple accounts, Figment grinned wide and nodded, letting the creature start to climb back down.

"Oh! But, what's your name?" he asked, having almost forgot.

Lucario!

It smiled back, before sliding just-as-ticklingly down the massive slope of his chest.

"Feel free to slide down on the straps of my bag," Figment offered, before realizing he'd outgrown the bag by a wide margin. He felt himself over, then relaxed, and called the bag back with his summon chant. "Bag, return!"

The moment Lucario landed, she looked back up, and saw it all happen, gasping in awe.

"I think we just have to wait this out," Cynder sighed, taking her seat on the crescent-shaped cushion below. Her breasts tapped down on the smooth tabletop that separated her bulky self from Spyro, who stood facing the spherical wall around them, testing it, his thick tail lashing in agitation.

"Nah, there's *got* to be a way out, here," he huffed, indignant. "Who ever heard of a room with no exit? Even if the door's shut, there has to be a door. Maybe they sealed it behind us, before we woke up? Right?"

Cynder cocked her head, more collected and quiet than her counterpart.

"Either way, I don't see how we're getting it open, on our own," she sighed. "Sit down, come on. Take a breather, for once. Let's talk."

"You sure are handling this great," Spyro laughed, turning to face her, his violet bulk impossibly huge and thick, in the overhead light. "This really doesn't bother you?"

"It does, but it could be worse," she offered. "At least we're here together."

Spyro fought against a wide beaming grin, stifling it down to a little crooked smile.

"Sure, yes. But I worry about Fig and Toothless and, I guess, Bartok. You think they're okay? I mean, even Baba Yaga got sucked in with us..."

"I imagine we'll find out what's what, soon. Sit, you."

She patted the other end of the seating, her hand ridiculously gentle, despite her overwhelming bulk. A secondary flick of her muzzle in that same direction sealed the deal, and Spyro cracked.

"Yeah, okay. For a minute."

His massive muscles still crowded against her own as he sat, even though both of them occupied the farthest reaches of the seat. The watched each other a moment, before Spyro's blush grew noticeable, and he made a cute cough.

"What?" he asked, getting unusually close to bashful.

"Just seeing the sights," Cynder said warmly. "I'm to understand that's a good thing to do, sometimes. There's nothing wrong with a moment of quiet, after all the insanity we've gone through."

"I'm not against a moment," Spyro huffed, scratching his thick pectoral idly. "Just the circumstances around it. I don't love prison scenarios that much."

"I don't disagree."

Oddly, for the first time in so many worlds, and so many adventures, the two of them settled into an awkward silence.

"It's a nice prison, at least, I guess," Spyro muttered, trying to mask it as a joke.

"The more I'm with you, the more different you are from him," she said, out of nowhere. There wasn't any judgment in her tone. "I wonder how he and you would have gotten along."

"Who? Your Spyro?"

"Well...he wasn't *mine*, I mean, I didn't own him," Cynder laughed, looking away. "He was just...a bit more quiet. Serious, I suppose."

"Meaning, I'm a big loud goofball," Spyro figured, though he was grinning.

"See, you get it."

Spyro's smile went down, then back up.

"Fair."

"I like goofy, I'm finding out," she soothed, her tail thumping down over his, under the table. "Don't undersell it."

"Undersell? I'm awesome!"

"Hehe! I think you'd have gotten even him to laugh. He was serious, but it was...I don't know, a more serious world, if that makes sense. Darker. Your world was lovely, and bright."

"Our world," Spyro added, nodding. "It's yours, too."

"That's nice of you, but—"

"Hey, no. Seriously. It's your world, too. You're a dragon, you belong there."

Cynder just went quiet, visibly holding back.

"...I wasn't a good one, Spyro. My past loomed so high, it took forever to get out of its shadow. He helped me do that. He saved me."

"He's a Spyro, of course he did," he laughed. "We're awesome. I can repeat it all you like."

"He was, yes."

"Are you...sure...you know..."

"I don't really know, now," Cynder interrupted, looking up. A long sniff followed. "I, ah...lost him. That's the best I can put it. He's just, he's gone. After saving our doomed world, there was a great blast of light, and I woke up with you, in your world. For all I know, he's waiting on me to return."

Silence.

"...Figment, he could probably..."

"Maybe. I'd like that. To know that he's okay, I mean."

The offer had been ongoing, but even this Spyro knew to let it where it was, and not push.

"If you need any traveling partners, when you do find out, just say the word."

"I like being here, too. With you, I mean. I think it's...I want you to know that, Spyro."

Spyro took a long breath, his bulk swelling a little bit. He held onto the moment.

"Yeah. Yeah, you too."

Cynder was up against him in a blink, leaning in close. Not to embrace, or to kiss, but just...to lean on him. A column of support. Likely, she had been more fearful and uncertain than he was, but was handling it better. Spyro just let her, and rested his chin on hers. The moment was there, so at long last, they had it.

"So," Cynder eventually began, trying to snuffle as quickly and quietly as possible, "I think I know how to get out of here."

"Yeah?" Spyro asked, just before Cynder grabbed his head on both sides, and pressed his muzzle to her scaly cleavage.

"Fire me up."

One moment had passed into another, and Spyro was ready faster than he should have been.

"Hold onto something," he growled, taking in a deep breath.

She squeezed him, and only him. Spyro continued welling up, his raw bulk pumping larger, stretching loudly, inflating out as he took more and more and more air in; he held, tensed in against Cynder's bulk, and blasted a hot, monstrous streak of flame, which tore into her skin harmlessly. No smolder, no smoke—only her dark scales starting to gratefully quiver and quake, before she roared and burst larger, heaving up in a sharp, rising rush of pure growth.

Her massive muscles detonated wider, thickening with power, her biceps bulging into her breasts, making them swell into tight mounds against Spyro's muzzle as he kept on blowing hot. The fire fed her faster and faster, his humongous thighs slipping and pressing against Spyro's outer form as they swelled bigger, stronger. Her horns stretched out, scraping the upper curve of the ceiling, as she grit her growing teeth, baring them in a pleased, unembarrassed snarl of bliss.

"H-haaaah! G-good, goo-ood! More!"

Spyro's tail looped dumbly about, wapping and thumping around behind him, as Cynder's feet swelled past him, each one as big as the huge Spyro's torso, and still growing. The counter top and table complained as her broadening lats and hips bullied into them, her bosom ballooning so large that it began to swallow Spyro's head as he blew and blew into her.

Cynder's fingers swelled as thick as Spyro's wrists, each on scratching and digging against the durable inner walls, as Cynder's tail hugged the back half of the sphere, taking up more and more room. Within seconds, she had boomed up three times larger than even Spyro, and she was only getting larger, faster. Spyro's massive, bulging arms wrapped affectionately around her growing torso, snuggling in tight, as he blew more and more flame into her body, feeling her abs burst bigger and fuller against his belly. Her wings flattened against the wall on her side, as she inflated too large for the room, pushing Spyro back against the opposing side of the ceiling, as she kept growing and bulging.

His back crushed up, up into the curve of the topside, forcing more air out, but Spyro persisted, almost pathologically, determined to make her as big as she wished—plus, break free. Sure.

Bit by bit, Cynder's body swelled on, stubbornly increasing against the confines of the sphere interior. Which one would win out was anyone's guess, given how the walls didn't budge at all, even as she took up every inch of space with throbbing, dark muscle and scales...

We're here! Come down the ridge, Figmon!

"Figment," the huge dragon gently corrected, as the trees warped and branches snapped in his passing. It wasn't so hard to notice the vast purple hill bulging up through the parted forest canopy, but on the plus side, no one had driven in on the roads yet, to see it happening. Inch by relative inch, Figment had rolled, tugged and dragged himself along, his immense, ballooned-out belly and sides making progress rather...*interesting*.

It was advantage and disadvantage when Figment cleared the ridge, then rolled uncontrollably down, down along the decline, crunching over the dirt and rock and bushes like a living boulder.

I live down here, Lucario telepathically began, moving a sheaf of stitched bamboo and reeds to reveal a cavern hole at the base of the slope. *We'll have to work outside, freeing all the pokemon, but if you just wait here, I can bring out some berries and AAAAAH!*

120 feet of inflated dragon rumbled and thudded down, Figment rolling downhill with escalating speed. Lucario leapt into her home, just before Figment's belly crashed into the cave wall, shaking the canopy overhead briefly, before the mania and panic died off into daytime quiet once more.

"Sorry," Figment sighed, the blushing giant coming to a rest against the lower portion of the slope. His belly rested into a soft dimple against the turf, as Figment caught his breath, closed his eyes, and tried to shake off the lingering disorientation. "Is your home alright?"

Haha, it was a bit of a shock, I won't lie, Lucario thought, trying to calm her own heartbeat down, as she used the latticed reed door to corral dozens of pokeballs into a group outside of her home. *But no harm done! Alright, now...in order to release these pokemon, we'll need to push every one of these buttons in the center, see? I'll line a bunch in a row, and you can slap them all with your tail, and save me a lot of time! Ready?*

"O-of course," Figment chuckled, blinking off the nausea. "If it helps me free my friends, as well as help innocent creatures out, then by all means, line them up!"

She did just that, as Figment watched her work.

When all was finished, Figment counted about 68 pokeballs, all lined up into a modest grid on the soil. Each one had been pushed into the dirt just enough, so that the chances of them rolling off were as reduced as possible. It could have been some high-tech garden of sorts, a thought which further sparked Figment's own imagination as he watched her dust her mitts and step back.

Alright, just give them all a light thump of your tail, please!

"Step back," Figment asked, as she did so. "Here's to it!"

His massively bloated tail lurched up off the ground, Figment's tongue sticking out in a deep-focus blep as he took aim, waited, calculated, then let it *whump* down onto the full lot. A series of snaps rose from under his tail's bulk, as dozens of latches were undone, and the makings of a collective flash of light blazed along the borders of Figment's tail, before it died away.

Lucario watched, her hands up over her slender muzzle, as Figment lifted his tail gently, to find dozens and dozens of small pokemon clinging in fear and shock to its underside.

"Did it work?" Figment asked, unable to see from his sheer size.

Yes! Yes, this is great! Lucario thought, with a joyful mental tone. *Thank you, Figment!*

From up high upon the slope, Figment observed one, then five, then twenty tiny creatures shambling off from his tail, shaken and shocked. Lucario was there immediately, growling soft little grunts and ushering more and more of them into the cave. Some stopped to gawk up in awe at the humongous dragon, who waved sheepishly, before Lucario soothed them an extra little bit.

Do you see your friends anywhere? she asked, as the last ones wobbled indoors.

"Not yet, no," Figment sighed, newly concerned. "Was that all of the pokeballs?"

Yes, from the looks of it. You're sure they weren't in the crowd? You're pretty far off, given your gigantic size, and all.

"They were just as big as me, actually, we were...kind of a party of giants, I suppose you could say, heh. You mentioned this Devon company, they own this area? So, they have many of those vehicles, those trucks?"

Lucario had peered into the cave, to double-check on everyone; she did a quiet count, then turned back to Figment, nodding.

That's right, many trucks. And yes, you're right, Figment...they could be on any of them. Hunting parties and patrols are regular here, around the clock. I can't tell you how many times I've had to move my operations to free other pokemon. They've caught me, what...four times, now?

"Goodness," Figment balked, cocking his huge head. "You've escaped five times?"

Heh, Lucario huffed, folding her arms proudly. It gets a little more difficult, each time. Those humans aren't stupid. They just underestimate pokemon, thankfully.

"Then, you would know what kind of a company they are..."

They do good, in the world, but that comes at a cost, Lucario explained, her thoughts going dark. They aren't evil, exactly...they just don't let good stand in the way, when it comes down to it. They've experimented on countless pokemon for research, and that can turn...ugly.

"Ah, I see," Figment murmured, unsure what to say. "But you look unscathed, thankfully!"

Why, thank you!

Figment had questions, to be sure. He wanted to ask if her telepathy was resultant of experimentation, if other pokemon communicated in the same manner (none of them verbally thanked her in any language he recognized); he even wondered if they were variant fauna of other animals in this world, animals that were purely feral. Were all pokemon tantamount to animals?

But, at the moment, only one question truly mattered:

"Do all of those captured pokemon go to that center, in the distance? Would my friends have wound up there, you think?"

Every captured pokemon in this region ends up here, yes. Why? I hope you aren't planning on a direct confrontation, Figment! They are smaller than you, but they have very advanced machinery and technology. I wouldn't cause a direct fuss with them. You're big, but you aren't big enough for that!

The thought of a mad Figment on a rampage was actually funny, very funny.

"Heh, heavens, no! I actually would like to ask for your help."

Lucario looked him over.

Me? But...you're so big!

"I thought my size didn't matter."

Now, Lucario was blushing, outright.

Well, no—I just mean, if YOU can't take them all down, what good would I be?

"You're clearly smart enough to get out of their lair over and over," Figment reasoned, "so it stands to reason, you can get back in, too. Can you show me a way to enter, without being noticed?"

But, she began, rubbing her head over in confusion. Again, you're huge! I know pipelines that funnel into the storage and waste expulsion units, sure...but you would never fit...

"True! About that..."

Figment closed his eyes, letting Lucario watch quietly. As she did, the freed pokemon all gathered at the cavern entrance, watching on, wide-eyed. Figment let out a deep breath, then spoke:

"I'm quite small. I imagine I'm roughly your own size, Lucario. Yes, just your very size!"

At first, nothing happened. Lucario shook her head partly, her mouth open, but the words weren't ready. Then, she noticed it: Figment...*was* smaller. Not by much—he must have slipped down to about 90 feet, but it was a visible difference.

What in the world!?

"I'm...just as small...as you are..."

Well, I wouldn't call myself...small, per se...

"I'm a humble little size, I've contained all my giant size down into a trim, little tiny form..."

Lucario furrowed her brow the slightest bit.

Could you not call me 'little', Figment?

Yet, it was working, and more and more quickly; Figment had dwindled down, down, shrinking from 50 feet down to 30...then 19...then 10...in less than a minute, he had somehow *willed* himself down to her size, at a much more manageable four feet in height. Throughout, Figment was clearly focusing intensely, and by the time he was her own size, the dragon was openly sweating. His massive belly had compacted down to a much more slender, regular shape, and even his fantastic muscles seemed forced into a more normal physique.

"There...s-see?" Figment panted, clearly straining to maintain his imagined state.

That's incredible! Lucario growled, looking him all over, as the other pokemon just watched in complete stunned silence. *How did you manage that? You can grow and shrink?*

"I...hehe...I'm a creature of imagination!" he chuckled, his belly starting to bloat out again. He refocused, and it slipped back into place. "I can imagine myself and other things, and change them...well, somewhat. I'm getting a lot stronger with it, lately!"

But you're...real.

"Indeed! Ah, I can explain myself better, as we move. Focusing all my attention on this alteration is...a bit difficult, I should say! Haha! Would you show me the way in, please? While I can, ah...maintain this?"

Oh...oh, o-of course! Yes! We could free...we could free everyone in there! With your powers, we could...oh, that would be incredible! Come, come, follow me, Figment!

The little dragon nodded gladly, following her into the cavern, the onlooking pokemon all parting politely for him. He thanked them as he passed, before the small reptiles and mammals and insect creatures all murmured to one another with single-word responses; they turned and cheered the pair on, rather abruptly, as they moved to the back of the cavern system.

As they neared a small underground lake, Lucario pointed out across it, at a series of pipes feeding into the far end.

This is what you want, Lucario began, motioning out over the water. This leads to the expulsion units and cleaning tanks at the back end of the sanitation ward. Just follow me in, I know which line connects to the R&D section at Devon.

"R&D?" Figment repeated, as his muscles bulged out bigger again, and he willed them in line.

Research and development.

Of course it was. There was so much that made sense here, scientifically, yet so much he didn't know. Frankly, it made the laser of Figment's focus part out and split, and again his body began to grow back to how it really was. The purple little dragon's bulk exploded hotly, his eyes rolling back as his chest burst larger, and his belly began to expand out into a stretchy balloon of girth. Lucario stepped back as Figment quickly blew up to 20 feet, looming over her, before he compacted yet again, with more strain than before.

You're sure you can control this? Lucario rightly asked.

"I can, ah, yes," Figment wheezed, nodding. "It looks as though I'll really have to concentrate, though, so...I might stay quiet and keep focusing, while you l-lead. No offense."

Lucario growled and nodded, offering up a smile of solidarity.

No, none taken at all! Okay, then, follow me! Let's save your friends!

After half an hour of being wedged in tight between Cynder's bosom, even Spyro began to feel that something likely needed to change, soon. The mighty dragons had matched wits and bulk with the strange sphere, and remarkably, the sphere was winning. He had long since stopped his efforts to pump Cynder up any larger, simply because there was no room to grow into anymore. She was already much too large for the interior, as it was. Her every grunt, her every little twitch, Spyro felt it all. Again, he wasn't quite complaining, just...the expectation of freedom usually followed close to growth.

"Bit cramped," he sighed.

"I know," Cynder moaned, flush with humiliation. "I thought it would do the trick!"

"Same here."

Again, they waited.

"Hey..." Spyro started.

"What?" Cynder huffed, her bulging body creaking softly. "What is it—AH, STOP! AHAH!"

From either sheer boredom, or the onset of sphere fever madness, Spyro had begun tickling on Cynder's huge lats, scratching and playing away freely, with what sliver of mobility he had. She

squirmed uselessly, her thick abs bulging into him as she laughed and thrashed here and there, shifting the entire sphere. Again, it didn't bend, break, or anything—but it *did* shift.

"DON'T YOU DARE SPYRO NO"

He tickled even harder, and the wheezing giantess thrashed again, jerking away from something she couldn't even remove herself from. Again, the ball shifted, the center of gravity slipping right, then hard left, then forward, until their entire world fell into a spinning tumble. The sphere struck something hard, on the outside, and with a sudden *click*, everything changed.

There was a flash, not too unlike the portals, and then, both Spyro and Cynder were on the floor. It was metallic and hugely wide, something like a strange silo or grain barn. Storage, perhaps. Huge smoothed-over boxes rested in stacks against the far wall, its angles and ceilings much more familiar to the two dragons.

"It worked!" Spyro shouted, proud of himself, before Cynder bopped his head over with her wings, harmlessly battering him with unrestrained wrath.

"Don't do that again!" she seethed, before snorting out a thick cloud of smoke.

"Sorry, sorry," he offered, as he slid down her much-bigger body, setting down heavily to the floor. Now freed, Spyro must have stood a good fifteen feet tall, and his muscles remained thoroughly intact. In comparison, Cynder sat up at a whopping forty feet in size, meaning she likely would have stood about 70 or 80 feet, easily. She stopped shy of doing the deed, however, as the ceiling nearly impacted her head. "I figured it would get us out, though, so don't be too mad."

"I'm not mad," she huffed, angrily. "Just...wondering where we are, now. I don't see anyone."

"Fig!?" Spyro hollered, his thick voice booming and echoing out over the interior. "Toothless? Bartok? Anyone?"

"So, we did get separated," Cynder moaned. "I was hoping they were...I don't know...next door."

"They could still be here," Spyro said, rebuilding the positivity. "Let's see what we—"

A very large doorway lid open on its own, vertically rising in segments up off the floor, far away. The two giants turned to see something stepping through, from the darkness of the adjoining room. It was, of all things...a dragon!

"Hey, how about that," Spyro said, smiling wide. "Alright! A fellow great!"

The dragon stood only about seven feet tall, but it didn't look too frightened of either of them. It was a male, had to have been, mostly orange, with a big patch of lighter tone for his belly. Two medium-sized wings rested at his back, a long neck leading up to a long muzzle, two lengthy stub-horns, and an intense set of eyes. He snorted firmly, starting daggers, but Spyro kept on:

"Hello! Heh, you must be in charge, here. Name's Spyro, pleased to meet you!"

"A talking dragon," a smaller voice started, just as a human stepped in from the dark. He was

clad in full gear, some sort of...fabric-like armor, the likes Spyro had never seen before, in his world. He glanced back to Cynder, who shrugged her huge arms. "I never thought I would see this before. You said your name's Spyro? Well, I'm Anders, chief of Devon Corp. security. You're trespassing here. What, did you escape from R&D? Did those lunatics make some new hybrid pokemon, or something?"

"Poke-what?" Spyro balked, cocking his head. "Look, we're dragons...we're uh, not from here."

"We're from another world," Cynder started, when the smaller orange dragon bellowed, seemingly angered at all the talking.

"You got that right, Leon," Anders barked, the tall human patting the taller dragon on the muzzle. "They're super-suspicious. I'll call for backup, buddy...you, take them down, and shut them both up."

The dragon nodded, snorting out a small plume of fire. Spyro just guffawed, and loudly.

"Sorry, pal, but we're not up for that. And your buddy here isn't up to my chest. Just let us be on our way, before we have to shove through. Okay?"

Neither the dragon nor his human seemed remotely fazed, which fazed Spyro.

"I was kind of hoping you'd resist," Anders said, as he fished something out from behind his tac gear. "Ready, Leon? We're gonna test this bad boy out, at last! Enjoy yourself!"

Leon seemed overtly enthused, slamming his tail on the floor as he nodded. A large burst of fire hugged its tip, making Spyro squint in surprise at it—until Anders brought up some sort of large ball, big enough to overfill his open palm. It glowed bright pink, almost neon.

"What's that?" Cynder whispered. Spyro threw his bulky arms up.

"I don't—"

"Okay, Leon!" Anders shouted, rearing back, as though he was going to throw the thing right at this partner. "Dynamax...**activate!**"