

Glaztek: Origins

by collargogglebirdhorse

You could've heard him before you saw him, though not for lack of trying. The groans that accompanied each lumbering step, the breathless huffing of hard-earned movement still not entirely drowned out by the whirring of the accompanying drones. Rounding the corner in only a few minutes, Alex finally came to a slow and anticlimactic halt.

The cyborg hadn't left his house in months. Heck, he hadn't left his couch in months. As he had careened recklessly past 3,000 pounds any semblance of dexterous and controlled movement had become lost on him, despite his machine-hardened musculature and dense-as-steel bones, so he just stopped moving as much. By now he had pushed past 4,000; hardly able to waddle even with help and very much would have preferred not to move at all had Glaz—his old friend and occasional test subject—not called him over. It was important, he said, too important to not meet in person, and he had eventually managed to coax the bat to make the arduous 17-minute trek from the house next door. Luckily Glaz had always had big ideas and his abode was appropriately suited to

it. The wide front door opened automatically, Alex finally getting to relax a little as a travelator pulled him through a curtain of cool air and into the house's cavernous interior.

Glaz's home was the same size as Alex's, but the fox had the foresight to get the building hollowed out years before. It stood now same as it was then—essentially an oversized, under-furnished studio apartment. To be fair, there wasn't much room left for furniture anymore.

While Alex may have grown significantly over the last few months, Glaz had grown exponentially. The white and green fox dominated the room, at least twice Alex's size in every dimension and quite clearly immobilised by it all. He must've been 30,000 pounds, easily.

"Holy shit," Alex wheezed. He was still slightly out of breath.

"Language!" Glaz chided, smirking from atop his mountain.

"How the... Earth did... you get so *fat*!?" Alex puffed, pausing for breath more often than really should be necessary, "It's only been... months!"

Glaz's smirk widened, his voice somehow unbesmirched by his size, despite the fat features framing his face, "Yer know Fatway, th' sandwich place? Let's jus' say I know some'wun higher up tha' hooked me up with all-ah-could eat,"

He was obviously lying. He was doing that thing where his voice was higher-pitched than normal. He'd probably be doing some sort of exaggeratory arm or facial movements if those parts of him weren't completely engulfed by a lifetime supply of lard. Still, he had a long history of unusual stories with unverifiable sources and Alex had learned it was normally better to continue than to try and push for the truth when Glaz was concerned.

The bat huffed softly, breath finally starting to return to its previous, pre-exercise shortness. "So, you invite me over for a reason or just to show off your fat ass, fatass?"

"Actually, ah'm moving away," Glaz responded plainly.

"Oh," Alex responded even plainer.

"An' ah want yer to come with me," Glaz responded with an equal level of plainness.

"Oh?" Alex responded with significantly less plainness.

“Ah’m startin’ a company, see, technology an’ stuff, an’ given ah can’t get anywhere too quick ah figured ah’d just live in t’office. Got a nice big ‘un, too,” he paused for a moment before continuing, “Anyhoo, given it’s a tech company an’ all, ah figured me first ‘ire should be someone *made* ‘er technology!”

Alex pondered for a moment. “Okay, you have my interest. What’s this company do?”

“Make stuff fer people like us! Think, when wus the las’ time yer got a bus somewhere?”

“Well, I haven’t fit on a bus—“

“Exac’ly!” Glaz exclaimed, “Tha’s th’ problem Glaztek fixes! Yer know that conveyor yer on is th’ strongest one they make? Another thousand pounds an’ it’d crumble right under yer. How many buffet doors do we ‘ave ter get stuck in ‘fore society adapts? How many gainers must ‘old back gorgin’ ‘emselves ter avoid ‘arrassment? An’ how long until someone makes a bloody comfy couch!?”

Alex mused that there must be some rather uncomfortable couch wreckage under there.

“Ah want you ter be me ‘ead of research an’ development ter solve these problems, for us, an’ for everyone else who has ter deal wi’ this every day,”

“I dunno... I mean, my cybernetics patents make me enough to live on as is and I don’t even need to do anyth—“

“Yer salary would start at a hundred-seventy thousand,”

Alex paused. “Yeah okay, I’m in. Let’s do this. When do we start?”

Ultimately Glaz wanted him for more than his mind, that tidy salary was *very* generously supplemented by the purchase of a number of Alex’s patents, along with a significant amount of equity and a loan to relocate nearer to the workplace a little out of town. Glaz’s pockets were apparently as bottomless as his appetite. Any line of questioning about where it came from was deflected.

The R&D lab was beautiful. Clean and spacious, with adjustable height surfaces that could ascend high enough to be in range of Alex’s eyesight and insubstantial arm movement. A small army of lab assistants had been hired to accompany him to grab what he

couldn't reach, move what he couldn't reach, do anything else he couldn't reach, and just do whatever he told them to whilst he went to the company cafeteria and simulated new models and algorithms on his computer goggles over a third lunch.

True to his word, the building was spacious and adapted for the larger individual. The doorways were at least twice Alex's diameter and motorised walkways were present in all of the corridors. Despite all this, though, his coworkers all seemed so... small. Despite the mission statement that Glaztek produce products that make the incredibly obese's lives easier, it seems the vast majority of the people working there were comparatively lithe—no one else here had achieved, or seemingly even attempted, the devastatingly immense sizes that Alex and Glaz had spent years aspiring to. The fattest guy Alex spied in the first few weeks didn't even look to be 400 pounds; less than a tenth of Alex's ponderous girth and an insignificant fraction compared to Glaz's weight.

And it was that thought, whilst sat on his bespoke bench in the corner of the R&D lab, lab techs buzzing around him like bees, that he came up with an idea.

"Alex! How're yer doin'? Put on a li'l weight, ah see," Glaz beamed down. His office was somehow larger than his old house, though you'd hardly be able to tell with how much he filled it.

Alex grinned and gave his bloated stomach a hefty wobble as the travelator took him inside, “Must be something in that cafeteria food,”

“Ow’s th’ goggle project goin’ down there?”

“Going good! Basically just my existing goggle design with a new operating system in it. I decided we’d keep the nanobot injectors in there but keep them turned off, for now, just in case they come in handy. We outta be ready for mass production once we’ve got an RC for the OS,”

“Good, good... Ah guess yer din’t waddle all this way ter give me a project update?”

Alex smiled reassuringly, “I think I’ve got a concept for our next product,”

“Oh?”

“I was looking around the cafeteria earlier and I noticed just how... small... everyone else seems to be. After that, I remembered what you said about people *wanting* to gorge themselves, but being afraid of the repercussions, right? Well, what if we make something that *avoids* those repercussions?”

“What, you mean like they eat but never gain weight?”

Aled guffawed, “Psh, no! I mean they gorge all they like, just that *other people can't see them doing it!* I'm not sure exactly how yet, invisibility cloaking was my first idea but... have you ever seen Doctor Who?”

“A bit?” Glaz semi-heartedly wobble-shrugged.

“Well in Doctor Who they have these things called ‘perception filters’ which, kinda like, mask a person or object from being seen. Not totally, it doesn't make them invisible or anything, but it just creates like... an aura of ignorability. People just don't pay attention to whatever it is.”

“An' yer think yer can invent one?”

“Well... no,” Alex muttered, “But I think I can *change* what people's perceptions are. Like... masking the user. Like a hologram maybe?”

“An' yer can invent that?”

“Kinda? I could do that, but it doesn't stop the individual appearing to be fatter. It'd just be a small image on a large canvas, almost... Have you seen Star Trek?”

“No...?”

“Okay, well, Starfleet ships can travel through this thing called subspace by forming a ‘bubble’ of normal space around the ship, while the space outside of the bubble is expanded and compressed to accommodate it. So the USS Enterprise itself never changes size, but the size of time-space around it does,”

“An’ yer can invent *that*?”

“I mean... I think I can? In our case, it’s all about creating negative mass whilst carefully deforming spacetime. It’d probably look messy as hell, but we could try using something like the holograms to make it look correct again?”

Glaz blinked for a few seconds before finally speaking. “Well, bloody ‘ell, make it so,”

Personal log. Stardate... today.

It's been years since I kept a diary of any sort but the urge to do so again suddenly struck again recently. I guess my life has been a bit more eventful as of late, what with Glaztek work being a thing.

My mobility is finally starting to leave me for good. I can barely move my wings or reach the tables in the lab, and I don't think another repurposed drone will be able to resolve those problems. My transport between home and my office is being comped at least so I'm not missing too much at work, though I am basically spending the day sitting in my office running simulations and exploiting the unlimited meal allowance. I'm basically the company's biggest, least energy-efficient computer by now. Hah! Glaz probably planned that all along!

Speaking of which, our first real, tangible product—the Glaztek Goggles—came out a few weeks back. It's just my cyborg conversion hardware with a different OS, but he had the bright idea of marketing them as a “health accessory” of some description. Turns out hardly anyone else knows Glaztek's true purpose, which all seems a little... clandestine... but the sales have been good and quite a lot of our own employees have gotten them already. We'll reveal our true colours in time, he says, when the world is ready to accept it.

As for the Size Obfuscation Device—I call it the SOD—well, it's still early days yet. We've got a prototype belt constructed that we're doing diagnostics on, and theoretically we have something that should work; but at some point some poor sod is gonna have to put the SOD on and see whether it shrinks their external mass like we expect... or whether it pings them out of the solar system never to be seen again. It's like, fifty-fifty on that right now.

Glaz is hoping for a working prototype rather soon and, I think, so is my couch.

It was another few months before the kinks were worked out and all of the diagnostics checked out, and another few weeks on top of that before the necessary permissions were given to begin testing on actual people. The intervening time had been very generous to Alex, the bat's girth now topping 4,800 floor-crunching pounds and in spite of the immense impracticality of his incredible immensity he had insisted on being present to lead the first trial, despite needing an external camera feed to witness anything below the height of his half-buried head.

He watched quietly as the lab techs brought in the first subject, who Alex immediately identified as the heavyset fella he had seen around the building back when the travelators were still able to carry him. Notably, he (an otter) was now sporting a pair of Glaztek Goggles, looking to be a hundred pounds heavier for the benefit.

He was quickly directed out of sight to strip down and put on the prototype SOD. The otter soon returned shirtless, his obese, sagging gut on display for everyone in the lab to witness, his burning red cheeks shining as bright under the lab's white fluorescent lighting. On his middle, wrapped around the widest part of his stomach, was the SOD—a thick leather belt covered in exposed wiring and circuit boards. It was ugly and unwieldy, but at this point proving the concept was all that mattered. Everything else would come later.

“Alright,” he huffed when everything seemed set, “load the exotic matter,”

A lab tech covered in hazmat clothing slowly approached to insert a small orb into an empty slot on the belt, the other techs stepping back slightly. The otter looked suddenly mortified. One technician leaned up to Alex's ear to confirm that the guy had, in fact, signed the waiver forms.

“Run the negative mass sequence. Set it to... one hundred pounds, I think’s a good starting point,”

“Yessir,” a tech called out, keeping an eye on telemetry for a few seconds before responding, “One hundred pounds. Seems to be holding steady,”

Alex hummed in approval, “Let’s wait for a few more minutes, if it holds out we’ll try bending space and time a little,”

They waited; monitors around the lab scrolling furiously with telemetry data while the otter apprehensively stood there, looking around for any indication on screen or face as to what on earth was happening.

“Alright folks,” Alex stopped and wheezed, trying to muster up the breath for what he was going to say, “we’re gonna be attempting some crazy science right now, the kind that could completely change civilisation as we know it. We’re gonna warp spacetime, in some ways we’re effectively gonna warp our perception of reality itself, so stay focused, keep the bubble stable, and we might just crack this egg,” He panned his view camera around for a moment to see his employee’s faces. No obvious sign of any disagreement among their ranks. He held the silence for a moment longer before speaking, “Engage,”

A hum filled the air, one gradually increasing in pitch as the air around the otter seemed to shimmer. Alex had expected this—twisting spacetime meant altering the path of light through it, distorting the view of anything within or on the other side of the bubble. Things were looking promising right until the prototype SOD and its one passenger pinged through the ceiling faster than the speed of light, leaving an empty patch of floor space and a cascade of holes stretching through the centre of the building.

“Well shit...”

Personal log.

Trial forty-seven is today. I'd like to say I have high hopes, but forty-six failures make it hard to be optimistic about this one. We just can't seem to get the warp bubble right; it always seems to become imbalanced in some way or another no matter what we do with it. We've had the negative mass function sorted out for nearly a year, the holographic masking is performing well in tests and product design has already gotten a flashy looking mock-up that's way too optimistic on size—but we just need to sort out this one bit and we'd be golden. Just this one bit...

Glaz seems concerned about progress. We can't keep shipping Goggles software updates and minor enhancements for much longer, we need to prove we're not a one trick pony before consumers lose confidence, he said. I'm working as fast as I can, I said; not that he'd know much about working fast—he's gotten so huge his teleconference camera can barely fit his face into frame by now. He's just rolls billowing in every direction.

Speaking of which, I'm getting close to 17,000 pounds myself. Glaz's suggestion I hire a crew to deal with my food supply has been perfect in accelerating my gains and reducing my workload! Hell, I'd be spending every single day at home just eating constantly by now if I didn't really want to be in the room when we finally make that bloody bubble work.

Trial forty-seven. Alex had been trucked into the lab. Well, not the lab itself, the lab was getting too crowded with both him and the growing science team in there, so they moved his desk out of the way and put him up in his office. It didn't make much difference where he was really. He was too fat to see or speak properly anyway and a camera feed is a camera feed no matter where you're viewing it from.

Today's test subject was as thin as a rake, evidently not someone who had taken advantage of the free Glaztek Goggles they were entitled to (not a problem amongst the laboratory staff, evidently, many of whom now strained to fit in their lab coats.) Employees willing to act as SOD test subjects had been few and far between lately, the incentives for doing so had to be bumped up a few times over the last couple of months just to maintain the slow trickle of volunteers. People were probably getting wind of the injuries and disappearances that seemed to follow in R&D's wake.

The technicians prepared the willingly-signed-the-waiver victim without much issue. This was literally their forty-seventh rodeo and everyone knew the belt would work... up to a point. A point they diligently brought the experiment up to before pausing, looking to the camera for Alex to give the word.

"Okay..." the muffled, overexerted voice of their boss wheezed from the tinny PA system they had set up, "let's do... the spacetime warp... again,"

Heads turned back to the test subject, that now familiar hum starting to rise before rapidly dropping off as the subject careened into a cabinet and onto the floor. A few techs hurried over to help.

Alex cursed to himself silently. The simulations he'd been running came out fine! All of them had done! Why the hell didn't the theory work out in practice?!

"Everyone... in here," his voice rasped out over the PA.

It turned out that even that idea didn't work in practice, as only a handful of his newly obese staff could actually fit into the office whilst he was present. Still, he gave his rally over the PA so everyone could hear.

"Put belt... on me..."

There was a murmur of objection. "But sir," a nearby voice spoke up, "you're far too... significant... to wear it. It would take hours just to modify—"

"Wing," Alex huffed. Somewhere on his mass, a tiny, nigh-immovable paw wiggled. He was too fat for any belt—obviously—but his lard-loaded arm alone could outweigh many of his technicians, and it was just about skinny enough to fit the belt over.

"Sir we must protest, this—"

"Do it!" he wheezed.

Begrudgingly—be it for fear of their jobs or fear that he might crush them—the technicians slung the belt over Alex’s arm and recalibrated the belt to accommodate his size—with a test subject so large they would need all the exotic matter they had if they were gonna get anywhere close to the required negative mass generation. He remained mostly silent, working in his own ocean of calm as a flurry of activity moved around him, a swarm of technicians checking and double-checking the SOD’s systems and inserting the orbs that powered it were put into place; he meanwhile remotely patched his goggles into the SOD controls—shaping the spacetime distortion from within might just be the solution to their problems.

“We’re ready, sir,”

Alex nodded in acknowledgement, musing for a moment how no one present could probably see his face properly given how engulfed in lard it was. He grunted in acknowledgement too.

“Running... negative mass... Starting... a thousand...” The belt activated. Nothing much else happened, but that was what they expected. Telemetry was good. Negative mass generation was working.

“Upping... three... thousand...” Telemetry remained good. External sensors were now pegging him at a chubby 13,796 pounds—a weight he had actually passed a few earlier.

“Eight...” He was just shy of 9,000 pounds now. To an outside observer, nearly half of his entire body weight had just vanished into the æther.

“Twelve...” 5,000. He was very nearly the same weight he was when he started working here.

“Fifteen...” He rushed past his prior weight, pulling himself below a ton for the first time in literal years, all despite still being the room-filling immobile blob that he had grown into since. There were scattered whoops and cheers around the lab, but this was nothing worth celebrating. This part was easy; it was the next bit that was hard.

“Starting... bubble...” he called out gruffly, the low hum already audible and rapidly getting louder. Nothing seemed to be happening at first, but it only took a quick look at the office camera feed to see the shimmer and distortion of light taking place around him. Turns out the effect wasn’t visible from the inside. He just

waited, the incessant hum droning in his ears, watching for any warning that the bubble might careen off and launch him through a wall and into another galaxy. Nothing came.

Cautiously, he began the next step, the one they hadn't even managed to try yet: "I'm... shaping... bubble..."

Slowly the shimmering shield began to shrink in size, his careful computations gradually narrowing the X and Z axes of the bubble into a smaller form. From within there was still no perceivable difference—he was as huge and as heavy as ever—but outside the bubble more and more people were gathering, filling the space Alex once occupied to applaud, shake hands and generally rejoice at their success.

Beaming to himself, he continued to reduce the bubble as much as he dare. It wasn't drastic—the bubble still wider than it was tall—but it was a radical difference compared his almost office-smothering dimensions just moments before. He even managed to move around by deforming the field slightly in one direction, the bubble sliding from side to side a few inches as he did so. Overall, a rousing success!

He continued to test the limits of the apparatus for a while longer; managing to shift his mass a few metres in each direction, the crowds of techs parting like the Red Sea to let him through. It had been a long time since he was “only” 1,890 pounds and “only” six feet wide, and here he stood, at the precipice of practical mobility for everybody, regardless of how fantastically fat and gluttonous they had gotten!

He did a little spin on the spot, and it was at this point that something, somewhere decided to shoot a splurt of sparks everywhere; the bubble burst; and nearly a dozen technicians were flattened by the spontaneous appearance of fifteen thousand pounds of bat blubber.

Nothing could ever just work, could it?

Such a breakthrough warranted a face-to-face. That is, as much as a face-to-face was possible when neither could see much more than their own largesse. Glaz was filling the vast majority of his once generous office space; the rest of the room occupied by PAs and a healthy abundance of personnel whose only job seemed to be to keep the director of the facility well fed. Stood opposite Glaz

was Alex, returned once again to an amorphous blobular mass of fatbat after the trial; a few more PAs were tending to him and making sure he was comfortable.

Despite being in the same room they conducted their conversation via the chat function on the goggles. It was just easier, allowing Glaz's serving staff to liberally fill their mouths with food and drink without slowing the meeting to a gasping, gnashing, belching crawl. Despite this consideration, it always took some seconds before a response. Food was just... too distracting.

ALEX: It just came to me suddenly. The reason the previous trials failed was because the test subjects were just too thin.

GLAZ: Oh?

ALEX: We're producing negative mass, right? That's a very imprecise process. We can't be sure of exactly how much negative mass is created.

ALEX: With the test subjects, the SOD would generate so much negative mass that the bubble destabilised and would spin out.

ALEX: But I'm so heavy that even the entire lab's supply of exotic matter couldn't create that much negative mass; so I figured we should try it.

ALEX: Ended up overloading it completely with that much power. I'm surprised it didn't burn out sooner.

Alex moaned as he was distracted by a rope of deep fried sausages being unravelled into his mouth by an assistant. He wasn't even aware those were a thing!

He was summoned back by an insistent notification pinging.

GLAZ: Wouldn't the simulations have predicted that?

GLAZ: And how is anyone else supposed to use the SOD?

GLAZ: Hey

GLAZ: Lardass

ALEX: Sorry!

ALEX: I... only ran simulations on people as large as us. It seemed like a sensible baseline at the time.

ALEX: And we can make it work. If we reduce the quantity of exotic matter to the bare minimum we can predict the negative mass generation to be 1,350 pounds—give or take another 50 or so.

ALEX: But that means our absolute thinnest customers will need to be over 1,500 pounds to avoid ever spinning out.

GLAZ: That seems a bit much. Hardly any of our customers have gotten that large yet.

ALEX: Yet.

ALEX: Give it a few more months.

ALEX: In the meantime, think of them as beta testers.

Three months later a lithe Glaz—literally the thinnest Glaz he'd ever seen—was on stage, announcing to the world Glaztek's newest innovation: a refrigerator! Albeit a refrigerator that perpetually restocked itself by resequencing waste into food, ending world hunger and bringing about a new age of prosperity, but Alex's attention was elsewhere.

Right now, as he sat here watching Glaz work his almost hypnotic charisma, the new Glaztek Bracelets were being shipped out to some of Glaztek's most loyal and scale-smothering Goggles customers. A little reward for keeping up their health routine—they say it makes the weight seem to just melt right off.

As he stood up the chair behind him shifted and warped back to normal size. As he walked away the aisle widened, pushing the stage and audience aside so that he may pass. The doorways and corridors to the bathroom backstage bowed outwards as he passed through them. In the mirror before him was a 489-pound bat stuffed uncomfortably into a too-small tuxedo, smiling confidently; inside the bubble was an incomprehensibly large mound of flesh, grumbling and moaning loudly for its hunger to be sated. His presence was to be expected at such an event, but no amount of free champagne and nibbles could stunt his desire to get home and just sit in front of the prototype replicator fridge they'd boshed out in six weeks and gorge himself up to his current

50,000-pound goal. His mirror self rolled up a sleeve, revealing two sleek, chrome bracelets wrapped firmly around his arm, their exotic matter pods glowing softly blue.

The world wasn't ready to know about the bracelets, not just yet. There was still a lot more work to do with public perception, but now they had the replicator fridge to tackle resource scarcity and the bracelets to alleviate physical restrictions for society's largest—there was no reason a person couldn't gain as much weight as they desired, or beyond. And indeed, the world might soon find it had little choice in the matter if Glaztek got their way.