

Construction on the new spaceport was moving along at a steady pace. On the surface of the untamed planet, laborers and engineers worked to create a hub at which far-reaching spacefarers could rest and refuel, and where the crash-landers could find a way back to the stars. Up above, through a cover of sulfurous clouds, a massive starship hung in geosynchronous orbit above the hub. Supplies were shipped down at regular intervals, and the workers commuted to and from the ship, between work below and their home on board.

Today was Zeek's turn to work. The engineer had been eager to travel to this lonesome border planet since rumors of it had begun to circle across the system. He slid out of bed and stretched his green wings, the far edges of them nearly touching the walls of his dorm room. With a wide yawn he smoothed down his fur with his hands, starting with the green fur on his arms, and moving in to press down the yellow fluff that highlighted his chest and stomach.

Zeek, the self-named kitsuragon got ready for his day in the usual way. Uniform, protective gear, tools, and a quick breakfast before he joined the rest of the hired hands in the docking bay where all the small one-man spacecraft were kept. He smacked the side of one of the ships with his tail causing the cockpit to pop open so he could get in. Once he was strapped in and secure, he waited for the launch signal.

He deployed with the rest of his group, plummeting several yards before the ship's engine and stabilizers kicked on like they were made to. He turned and descended with the rest of the group, slipping down into the sulfur cloud. Proximity sensors pointed out the other nearby vessels as visibility was reduced to nearly nothing in the thick clouds, outlines of the ships projecting onto the fiberglass dome. That's when the red lights began to flash.

Warning indicators flooded the cockpit with red light as a computerized voice detailed the situation to him. "Warning. Engine intake filter offline. Engine has sustained corrosive damage from sulfur intake. Engine no longer suitable for flight."

"No. No no bad computer, don't say that!" he shouted at the console as he gave it a whack. The warning lights stayed on, and he could feel the craft shudder as it began to lose power. Not wasting anymore time, he grabbed the control wheel and headed for the surface. As he broke the cloud cover, he could see how far off course he was veering as the construction site began to shrink into the distance. The craft lurched and jerked him around, he pulled hard on the wheel, pushing enough fuel through the engine to slow his rapidly accelerating descent.

The engine groaned and bellowed smoke from the exhaust, the black clouds getting swallowed up in the sulfur above. He closed his eyes tight and gripped the wheel as tight as he could his entire body bracing from a rough landing. His space ship hit the earth and slid, grinding the bottom of it against the hard earth, ripping open a scar in the bright, almost pastel colored foliage. A tangle of vines finally stopped the ride, letting the scarred and broken metal ship come to a stop. The cracked cockpit hissed open, and Zeek tumbled out into a heap beside the metal hull, his limbs shaking from bracing so hard for that crash.

He caught his breath against the dinged hull as his pounding heart slowed, glad that he had come out unscathed. Once he was steady on his feet he leaned into the disheveled ship and switched on the distress beacon, which lit up blue and began to chime softly. He

twirled a few knobs and flicks some switches, trying to get radio signal. All that came through was static.

“Engine shot, comms down... Great.” He sighed, frustrated by the damage done by such a simple malfunction. He knew it wouldn’t be long before the mothership got his signal and came to get him, he just had to survive until then. He looked around, finally having a moment to appreciate his surroundings. The earth under his feet was a deep, cool gray. The foliage that sprung from the ground was low and leafy, and all colored in pale shades of orange, blue, and green. A pool of sulfur glowed nearby, the still surface as smooth as glass.

A humming grew in the distance, building in the air as he took in his surroundings. He looked to the sky and saw the silhouette of a large insect approaching. He pressed himself into the shadow under the wreckage, trying to stay out of sight. The buzzing of those huge wings grew closer, until he heard the thump of the creature landing on the metal. There was a skittering of limbs across the hull and a scratching of claws on steel. He held his breath as he followed the sound, eyes flicking and ears twitching to every scrape and bang. The noise fell silent too swiftly for his comfort, and he snapped his gaze forward.

He found himself face to face with an alien visage. Curious eyes blinked at him from behind bulging orange lenses, while a pair of fluffy orange antennae twitched on the creature’s head. His face was covered in a dark-gray, chitin-like material, save for his lower jaw which was wrapped in dull white bands of scales.

“Shoo! Go away!” Zeek pushed himself out from under the wreck and scrambled to his feet. His wings opened wide and he waved his arms around, trying to intimidate the alien creature that had fixed its eyes on him. It stared and blinked, tilting its head, before giving Zeek an excited smile.

“English! English! Hello hello!” The alien spoke, chiming in a light and friendly voice. He rose from his crawling stance and balanced easily on his two legs. He was easily over seven feet tall, and being perched on the ship only made Zeek feel smaller, despite being over 6 feet tall himself.

“What? Uhh... Hello? Who... Who and what are you?” Zeek lowered his wings, feeling disarmed by the almost childlike voice he was hearing.

“I am Bug! Wait no. Call me Bug. My name is Bug! I am Bug. I am native to this planet! In your words, the ‘dominant species.’ I am here to assist you, though! That is most important. I got your distress beacon signal!” Bug spoke every sentence with unfailing, and almost unnecessary excitement. Zeek took a good look over his bare companion, noting that he wasn’t carrying anything that could have picked up his signal.

“How’d you do that? Sure you didn’t just see the crash?” Zeek asked. Bug wiggled his antennae in response.

“These!” Bug’s antennae wiggled again as he hopped off the wreck and landed on the ground with a dull thud. “I was able to track the radio waves your beacon was giving off.”

“That’s cool, really cool actually. So, can you get my ship fixed then?”

“No no nope. I will need to escort you to the spaceport your people are assembling here on our planet. You will be able to receive assistance there! Are your wings still functioning?” he asked, punctuating his sentence with a flutter of his own membranous wings.

“Yeah, they’re fine. I can still fly.”

“Excellent!” Bug’s clear wings vibrated until they almost disappeared, and his feet lifted from the ground. Once he was hovering he ascended quickly, and gestured for Zeek to join him. Zeek crouched and pumped his wings hard as he leaped, launching himself into the sky. The pair of them soared over the washed-out looking landscape below, heading in the direction of a huge hive-like formation that bulged in the distance. Beyond that, the horizon was swallowed up by a swirling wall of sulfur clouds. Bug slowed down to fly beside Zeek.

“Apologies friend! I forgot to mention, a sulfur storm stands between us and the spaceport for the time being. Attempting to breach it would likely burn you alive! So. So so so. You will come to the hive until it passes! You will be safe inside it, with us!” Before Zeek could respond, Bug took a sharp dive and vanished into one of the many holes that perforated the shell of the hive. Zeek followed in a hurry, taking a dive and skidding to a stop on his heels just inside the tunnel entrance.

He found his tall insectoid guide waiting for him with his ever persistent grin still gleaming on his face. “Come come! Follow!” The kitsuragon did as he was told, leaving the yellowed sunlight behind as he descended into the hive. It felt to be made of a soft wood pulp, and as the light faded behind him, he could see various colors of bioluminescent moss and fungi glowing all over the circular hallways.

He was suddenly blinded as the cavern was flooded with orange light. As his eyes adjusted, he could see Bug emitting light from from his antenna, and from some fleshy orange spots on his legs and arms. Zeek’s lingering anxiety evaporated in the wake of the fascinated excitement that washed over him. “Y-you can glow! That’s amazing!”

“Ah, yes! Much of the organic life here has developed some level of luminance!” Bug replied with a smile as he turned down another tunnel. Other members of his species passed by, all glowing as well and they greeted their guest their guest with a smile.

Zeek spoke again after another several minutes of traversing the glowing caverns. “Where are we going anyways?”

“Food! You will need to eat to complete your journey. The storm might persist for several of your Earth hours. Your species tends to hunger after such expanses of time!”

“Thank you! That’s really generous of you guys.” The already wide hallway began to widen, opening into a yawning cavern. Bug wiggled his antenna, and the room ahead flooded with orange light as numerous alien insects woke from sleep and illuminated their surroundings. Zeek’s eyes widened as he took in the sight ahead. All of the aliens in the cave laid atop swollen midsections. Their stomachs were stretched to the point of immobility, and those huge pale orbs radiated light light dim, oversized light bulbs.

“Whoa. What’s going on in here?” Zeek asked as he stopped in the doorway.

“Food storage! Ah.... Your species does not do things this way, as I recall. We do not store fat! Instead, some of us are born to act as food storage for the rest of the colony. Overeating results in the production of what you would describe as a honey, and it is stored in a special organ, as you would say. I think. Nevermind! All you need to do friend, is offer a kiss to one of my friends here! Please, help yourself!” Bug gave Zeek a shove and smiled encouragingly as the kitsuragon stumbled into the room.

Zeek approached the nearest one with trepidation. Bug’s social structure was bizarre, but he didn’t want to be rude and refuse his generosity. Most of the aliens were still groggy

and didn't react much as he approached, aside from giving him a sleepy smile and leaning forward on their turgid guts. He pressed his hands into those glowing stomachs, feeling how full they were and how thick their contents seemed. He took a calming breath, sighed, and leaned up, pressing into a nervous kiss.

His mouth was filled with a glob of honey almost immediately. It was thick and warmed his insides as it coated the inside of his mouth and throat. He gulped it down, letting that sweet taste sink into every tastebud. His Adam's Apple bobbed up and down, and he could feel his uniform start to tighten around his middle. He pushed himself away, honey still dripping from the corners of his mouth as he instinctively grabbed his middle. His shirt was straining, bulging at the front and the sides. The buttons were pulled tight across the front, ready to pop off if much more strain was applied to them.

He sucked in his gut and hastily undid the buttons before pulling the shirt off. He blushed as he pulled his pants off too, but reassured himself that it was fine, as he was the only one wearing any clothes in the hive anyways. His stomach was even more noticeable with his shirt off. The bright yellow fur shone clearly against his darker greens, making that bulging yellow ball look larger than it was. He pressed his fingers into it, feeling it squish while the thick goo inside resisted, giving his beginning gut a heavy but soft feeling.

Zeek was feeling more relaxed now that he'd given the odd feeding ritual a try, and he was eager for more. He placed his hands on the plated bug gut before him, and leaned in for another sweet kiss. Honey filled his mouth once more, but this time he allowed himself to really enjoy it. He leaned his weight on his hands and let them push into the bug belly he was braced against. Each mouthful he gulped down pushed out his stomach another inch, and he could feel his furry stomach growing between himself and his feeder. He widened his stance to support the increasing load his legs were having to bear, and his tail whipped side to side with glee.

He reveled in his indulgence as his stomach pushed out, forcing him to scoot farther from his feeder until he was barely clinging to that kiss. Even as the honey bug's tank emptied, she wasn't shrinking quick enough to make it easier for the growing guest to keep clinging to her. She rolled forward on her stomach just enough to help lean into Zeek so she could continue her work. A small giggle escaped her mouth as she fed her eager patron, pushing honey up her throat and down into his.

The green and yellow kitsuragon shifted his stance again as his stomach now matched that of the lady who was feeding him. He took the liberty of using his distended belly as a small bed, resting his weight on it even as his legs and arms dangled past the edges of that thick, yellow ball. The bug gal blinked and swished her tail, seeming wide awake now as her feet met the ground for the first time in a long while. She grabbed Zeek's bulging cheeks and began to force the rest of her honey into him. He hardly needed to be coerced, and welcomed the increased volume of sticky sweet liquid.

His mind fixed itself on the feeling of stretching that pulsed across the skin of his stomach. He pressed his hands into his fur, letting his fingertips sense the outward motion of his skin as it moved under his hands. He could feel the pressure put on it by his elbows and knees, and he wiggled his toes as they hovered off the floor. Eventually his companion's tank ran dry, and she broke away from the kiss, leaving Zeek perched atop the gigantic yellow

globe his stomach had become. His body pressed it down, squashing that sphere down as he rested on it. It was engorged, with a diameter a couple feet larger than Zeek was tall, allowing him to rest comfortably on it like an overblown water bed.

Seeing that his visitor was finished, Bug walked over and clapped, attempting to show the Earthling that he was impressed. "Bravo friend! You did well! You are truly a master of consumption. I encourage you to have more, if you like! Help yourself!"

Zeek licked his muzzle clean and grinned, drumming at his sides with his hands. "I think I can hold a second round! Bring on the honey!"

Bug nodded and buzzed his wings as his antenna blinked, sending out a call for some extra hands to move their now stuffed guest to the next feeder. As he waited for help to arrive, he couldn't help but admire the kitsuragon's capacity and appetite, and he looked forward to seeing how much more Zeek could hold. One way or another, he already knew their already immobile guest would be in for a long, long stay.