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Sparky's Delivery Service

By Horatio Husky Commissioned by anonymous

Mission #657 Archive-1.0 : Festuna-219

Sparky felt the dense, heavy weight of the humid air passing in and out of her lungs as she respirated, steady and in control. Lavish vines composed of bountiful, iridescent green leaves cascaded down the surfaces of the cliffs that surrounded the fennec fox. Dotting the exotic cliff side, small trickles of water made their way over the surface of the ancient, noble stone faces and down into the rich earth to be consumed by the thirsty jungle tree roots.

Gnarled, knotted trees limited her vision whose mighty trunks supported a luxurious display of both flora and fauna. Small athletic rodents sprinted through the trees, their heads darting this way and that as they examined their environment with a suspicious curiosity. The air was filled with a throng of birds of paradise, crooning their music into the air in an almost comical display of concupiscent thrill.

Patches of sky were a deep green hue, dispersed relatively evenly between swathes of blue oxygen-rich atmosphere. The fennec fox taped the visor that ran from ear to ear in front of her forehead. Immediately, the device activated by displaying a pink holographic display in front of her eyes. Simultaneously, two small earpieces gently nestled themselves into her tall ears. A small chirp came from the earpieces, before a soothing voice began to warble through them while she paused beneath one of the larger trees, gazing up at the alien sky.

"System check. Running OS diagnostic. Vitals nominal. HP nominal. Establishing global positioning system... Assessing atmospheric conditions. Assessing terrestrial conditions. Assessing aquatic conditions, null. Local environment threat level beta. O2 saturation, nominal. Diaper usage, still dry! Hi Sparky!"

"Hi Annie..."

Sparky blushed, as she always did, as her personal navigator ended her startup sequence with a routine report on the state of her padding. The fennec fox was wearing her usual courier jumpsuit. A hexagonal pattern covered her chest and torso composed of dense fiber-reinforced polymers that complimented the blue bow in her hair along with her cut off jacket and pants. Beneath her pants a plush, soft white diaper swaddled her waist, giving her the sense of security and convenience that she so thoroughly enjoyed.

Annie, her personal navigator, spoke softly in her ear piece as she began to explain the patches of green that Sparky was still staring up at. Displayed on her HUD, she was able to read the oxygen saturation level of her blood, a topographic layout of her immediate environment, the distance remaining to her delivery spot, her current HP, as well as a small graphic informing her of the state of her padding lovingly added by Annie.

She and Annie had been friends for several years now, and the deer-mouse providing her with a near omnipotent amount of information found great pleasure in indulging the fennec by providing feedback about the state of her pants in addition to her environment in an almost maternal fashion.

"Those patches of green are aerial phytoplankton that provide the high levels of O2 you're breathing in right now, which is why you don't need a respirator on this planet. The green colors peak in visibility around this planet's solar noon, when the star's radiation is at its most intense. The aerial phytoplankton are a keystone species for this jungle, as the trees around you do not produce O2 as a byproduct but instead release heavier hydrocarbons that serve as sustenance for the local arthropodal populations."

Sparky nodded, a sense of wonder and awe blooming inside of her as she watched the clouds of green above her shift about in an ethereal fashion, showering the forest around her with air for the animals to breathe.

"This planet was seeded, right?"

"Correct, Festuna-219 was seeded with organic life approximately 16,000 solar cycles ago and has enjoyed relatively biological stability since then."

"Wow, this is our first Gaia planet, right?"

"It sure is, sweetie! This is one of those missions where I actually wish I had your job instead of mine."

"Right, but that's only because we don't have to deal with unpredictable geothermal vents springing up haphazardly like on Terra-69."

An echo of laughter sounded in the fennec's ear, she shifted her backpack holding the bundle of unstable isotopes she was to deliver and began to deftly leap from gnarled root to gnarled root. She twisted and sprung nimbly, spiraling through the air in an impressive display of agility hindered only slightly by the soft padding on her rear end.

"That's right! I still think they chose that number because that planet always seemed to blow up at the wrong moment..."

Annie giggled again and Sparky found herself smiling in turn. Despite being surrounded by one of the most marvelous displays of biodiversity she had seen to date, it still felt nice to have a familiar presence such as Annie there to keep her company. After all, after perusing the mission data file she knew that besides the lab crew beneath the planet's surface conducting experiments, she was the only sentient being currently walking on the planet's surface. Such a reality weighed down heavily on her, giving the forest around her a much lonelier visage than usual; rather than had she known that there were others there to enjoy it with her.

Arriving at a cliff face, she reached into her jacket pocket and withdrew a pair of what appeared to be white gloves. Pulling them onto her paws, a blue shimmer appeared on her paw pads before she pressed them onto the rock's surface. Testing their adhesive strength, she began to scale the rock with apparent ease with the assistance of her scaling gloves.

"So, it's just scalies down there? Why are a bunch of lizard people on this planet anyway?"

"Oh you know, dermatological studies. Apparently this planet does wonders for amphibian anthropomorphs! Something about the sap that comes from the trees apparently cleans out their pores like nobody's business."

"Cosmetic research, gotcha. So probably biological weapons of mass destruction."

"Most certainly!"

Sparky rolled her eyes, smirking at Annie's ever present tone of optimism despite their sarcastic topic of conversation. Seeing that her climb was almost over, she clicked her heels together to activate her shoe's sensors.

A green, spiraling circle appeared on her HUD as they booted up before a blinking check mark in the corner of her visor told her that they were ready to go. Bending her legs, she sprang upwards as the shoe's kinetic energy system kicked in. Her jump would have normally carried her only a few feet up into the air, but with the assistance of her footwear she sailed high into the sky, spiraling as she did so.

"Annie, engage air gliders."

"Engaging!"

A small bundle on the back of her jacket sprang open, unfolding until a set of bars appeared in front of her connected to a glider that shaded her from the planet's star. Grabbing onto the bars, she descended leisurely towards the direction of her checkpoint.

Taking a moment to enjoy the sensation, Sparky breathed deeply as the oxygen rich atmosphere seemed to almost taste like honey as it saturated her lungs.

What a paradise...

She thought to herself, as she steered towards an opening in the dense mixture of green leaves, violet and rose pink flowers dotting their surfaces and emitting a soft haze of pollen.

"Annie, run an antigen diagnostic."

"Running antigen diagnostic..."

A few seconds of silence followed as Annie watched the counter in the center of her head descend as she grew closer and closer to the ground. As swung around, heading towards the clearing as the compass display on her hood swiveled in response.

Her foot paws extended, she landed nimbly onto the ground as the glider once more retracted into the paw-sized container on the back of her jacket. As she did so, Annie spoke up once more.

"Antigen diagnostic complete; pollen consists of non-toxic organic substances designed for floral copulation only."

Feeling relieved, Sparky was about to turn around to face the direction her HUD prompted her to go in when she felt something tug on her left leg. Frowning, she looked down to see that her paw was lodged in a dense thicket of green roots and vines.

"Huh- hey!"

The Fennec gasped as she felt something grab her left wrist, firmly holding on to it as it pulled it down by her size rendering it almost immobile. Opening her mouth, she tried to cry out but was muffled as a dense thicket of leaves covered her eyes and mouth, stifling her as she felt herself sinking deeper and deeper into the earth.

Her earpiece warbled, a concerned tone in Annie's voice as she asked.

"Sparky? Hello? Your heart rate just spiked and your adrenal glands have activated, why are you in fight or flight? Hello? Your feed is cuttin-"

Static filled her ears before the sound feed cut off, her HUD switching off as well as Spark felt her heart sink down into the seat of her diaper. Her limbs flailed but were soon immobilized much like her wrist and ankle until she was tightly ensnared. She felt her heart pounding in her chest as her vision remained completely obscured by a dense layer of green leaves.

Just as Sparky thought that this was going to be the last thing she saw before being consumed by whatever carnivorous flora had managed to snag her, her vision cleared as a cavern dimly illuminated by green light was revealed.

She gasped, looking around frantically to see that she now appeared to be in a roughly circular space, the sides of which appeared to be composed of dense roots and leaves. Despite being in a state of utter panic, the realization that the chamber she was in appeared to be relatively untouched despite being on a few feet beneath the jungle's surface.

Sparky's vision soon focused on the center of the room. Her breath caught in her throat, as the glowing visage of the largest, most complex flower she had ever seen in her life bloomed right in front of her. She was transfixed, layers upon layers of petals seemed to flow and oscillate in an almost hypnotic fashion.

Her jaw dropped, hanging loosely as layers of pinks, whites, and deep, lush reds appeared in front of her in motions as fluid as water itself. Even as the effects of the sight in front of her consumed her attention, she knew that this was a sight she would not forget for the rest of her life.

However short, she feared, it might be.