

The Dragon Berry

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Trazer grabbed a clawful of the roasted meat before him and tossed the delicacies right into his open maw, barely bothering to chew as he gorged. The massive green dragon was sprawled across the central dais of his spacious personal chambers, his doughy gut wobbling with every bite. Lazy and decadent, Trazer rarely left the spot, able to eat, sleep, and order around his loyal contingent of kobold servants without needing to move. Such laziness was the main reason he preferred wearing a jumpsuit instead of anything more traditional or elaborate, the widening of his gut having always outpaced his wardrobe. Even for a dragon he could be obnoxiously spoiled, and lately he'd demanded the kobolds scour the sector in search of new food for him to glut on, the space station rapidly starting to resemble an immense kitchen and pantry more than anything else; not that he cared. Trazer was content spending his days growing fat while admiring the views of space through the room's many windows.

As the dragon finished the last of the meat he eyed curiously a new dish being carried his direction. The mystery food was bright and spherical, Trazer soon realizing they were large berries of some sort, mostly orange and yellow in color and at least a foot in diameter. He knew enlarging produce was an easy task given the technology available—his army of chefs utilized it often to keep up with his appetite—but the selection in the bowl brought before him was nothing he recognized. Fruit wasn't his favorite food, especially compared to meat or pastries, and Trazer reacted to the offering with open apathy. There was a wave of noticeable unease amongst the kobold servers.

Finally one of the kobolds built up the nerve to address the dragon. “M-Master Trazer, these rare berries were secured from a newly discovered moon, where the plants grow to immense size! We guarantee they're the juiciest you've ever eaten!”

Trazer's interest hadn't increased much, though he wasn't the kind to turn down food. “I'll be the judge of that.”

While the kobolds watched on Trazer plucked a single berry from the bowl and tossed it in his mouth like it were a disagreeable mint unworthy of his attention. Once the juice splashed across his tongue, though, the dragon's expression changed in an instant to one of pure joy. Never in his life had he tasted a fruit so amazing. The flavor lingered on his tongue long after he'd swallowed the initial sampling, and Trazer was already wondering what incredible desserts and cocktails the berries could be used in. Sure they were incredible on their own, but the thought of them as pie filling made his stomach growl.

“This...this taste!” Trazer bellowed with a grin. “Send teams to gather more of this fruit immediately, I want the chefs putting them into everything they can think of!” He lifted the bowl up and began emptying its contents straight into his mouth, gorging on the berries in record time.

The group of kobolds appeared relieved, and bowed before swiftly leaving to enact the dragon's orders. More food arrived to take the place of the berries, but no matter what else he ate the taste of his new treat remained on his tongue, actually intensifying as time went on. Something odd was happening within Trazer's stomach as well. Shortly after finishing the berries his belly began to swell ever-so-slightly, unnoticed by the dragon who was busy eating and the kobolds who were busy serving. There was a faint bubbling and sloshing as the juice from the berries multiplied out of control on its own.

Eventually Trazer leaned forwards for his next course, only to realize his gut felt bloated and far heavier than it should've been, regardless of how much he'd been eating. He grunted and grumbled at the unexpected feeling, his shifting making the juices even more volatile. What had been a subtle swell turned into an expansion impossible to ignore. Trazer's eyes widened in fear, the dragon not having a clue as to what could possibly be inflating him. One-by-one the kobolds became aware of the situation, though they were just as baffled.

“G-get a doctor immediately!” Trazer roared.

A pair of kobolds closest to the doors sprinted away at the command, while Trazer frantically

brought up an automated diagnosis projected onto his stretching jumpsuit. Unfortunately the suit didn't bring up anything he didn't already know, merely providing a warning about excessive consumption along with a running display of his projected capacity. He made an attempt to stand but his sedentary lifestyle had done him no favors, and Trazer found himself pinned by the weight of his own growing gut. Again and again he tried, accomplishing little aside from wobbling and hastening his expansion.

The dragon was swiftly rising atop his ballooning middle, claws scraping at the dais till he was too big to reach it anymore. Around the edges of his jumpsuit Trazer's green scales were turning orange, a change that'd begun unseen around the same time as the expansion. Trazer could feel his hide stretching thin as he filled with juice, well on his way to becoming a creaking, immobilized sphere. Across the spreading canvas of his belly the warnings were getting sterner, flashier, alerting him to the threat of potential rupture if he didn't stop drinking. In a fury the dragon yelled at his suit that he *wasn't* drinking, wincing soon after as the pressure became uncomfortable.

"I need to be juiced, I need to be juiced now!" There was desperation in his voice. "Just start pressing against my gut until it's forced out!"

Still cowed by their Master even though he was a giant sloshing orb, the kobolds in attendance surrounded the dragon with haste, pushing with all their might against his swelling sides. The combination of their efforts caused a trickle of juice to leak from Trazer's mouth, but not nearly enough to reverse the process. Running out of options, Trazer cautiously poked at the holographic display of his suit, worried he might pop himself if he were too aggressive. His suit was the latest model, overloaded with too many features for him to know them all, and the dragon was convinced there had to be something amongst them useful to his strange predicament.

Fortunately Trazer was right. A few frantic clicks activated a program promising to enhance his durability, and almost right away he felt a relief in pressure. He was still expanding, though. The dragon's limbs and tail began to bloat slightly with juice, his wings the last part of him with any real degree of mobility. As he continued to swell in all directions the kobolds pushing at his massive form were forced back lest they be trapped beneath the expanse. His back and wings pressed against the ceiling and his swollen sides the walls, the suit alerts now joined by flashing lights and a klaxon far too subdued for enormity of both the situation and Trazer.

A stream of juice was pouring from Trazer's mouth, and he knew the end was seconds away. His body creaked and groaned ominously, pin pricks of pressure building all over him. Inevitably the dragon's wide eyes bulged as he felt the first devastating tear in his hide, not that he'd have a chance to express terror. With a thunderous boom that shook the room Trazer exploded violently, scraps of hide hurled in every direction as a cascade of orange berry juice gushed outward. None of the kobolds were able to escape the ensuing juice wave, dispersed to the far corners of the chamber. They coughed and gasped as they struggled to recover in the aftermath, their Master reduced to confetti and a pair of soaked horns.

There'd be no time to take in the strange events, though. Each had swallowed at least a bit of the volatile juice, and one-by-one the kobolds were discovering their own middles were swelling at an alarming rate. As expected there was immediate chaos. Some tried pushing at their growing bellies, but that proved as useless for them as it had Trazer. Those who attempted to flee in a panic soon became capable of nothing but strained waddling, then uncontrolled rolling, none reaching their destination. A dozen sloshing orange spheres, whimpering and whining as their hides were stretched to their absolute limits.

The sound of the first kobold popping caused an uproar amongst the rest, which was gradually drowned out by a steady stream of additional explosions. Once again juice and scraps rained down upon the room. The final kobold held together for a stressful few minutes after his last compatriot burst, having only gotten a small sip of the juice when Trazer erupted. He wobbled in place, holding onto hope till the very end that he'd somehow make it through; unfortunately he'd have no such luck. A gargled yelp preceded the kobold coming apart, just another barrage of scraps and an empty jumpsuit to

join the rest.