

## Blueberry Pool Toy

By: IndigoRho

“This is such a dumb idea.”

Rho, the orange-striped zebra captain of the freighter *Zephyr*, shook his head. He'd been enjoying lunch in the small room grandiosely designated as the ship's “mess hall”, but now he was trying to figure out how much effort to put into discouraging the foolish antics of one of his crew. Standing next to the food replicator on the opposite wall was a goat-shaped pool toy. He was rather lean for someone full of air, his limbs and small tail being the only real puffy parts of him. His black-and-white vinyl hide was just translucent enough to see through.

“You're just worried I'll prove you wrong,” the goat said, poking away at the replicator's control screen.

“No, August, I just don't want my pilot turning into a big creaking blueberry. Though having a berry boyfriend to tease *could* be amusing.”

“Ha, no chance of that! Pool toys definitely can't become blueberries,” August insisted, giving his vinyl middle a hollow, creaking slap. “Sapphire Geyser might be some of the most volatile berry juice ever brewed, but I'm a hundred percent certain I could chug a whole keg of it without swelling up in the slightest! I might end up a little sloshy but nowhere near spherical.”

Rho scoffed. “Pool toys aren't as immune to everything as you think.”

“If you're so sure then how about a bet?” August grinned. “When Sapphire Geyser doesn't affect me *you'll* have a drink yourself. A blueberry Captain would be fun.”

“I'll take that bet. Though no complaining once your seams are getting stretched!”

“Same to you, future zebra berry.”

August retrieved a hose from the food replicator and stuffed it into his mouth until the nozzle was dangling over his throat. A quick push of a button caused the replicator to gently hum, the hose wiggling as juice flowed through and out. The stream was visible from the outside, and Rho watched with curiosity as it splashed and slowly pooled within August. Steadily the juice level rose. Once half of August's hollow body was filled he turned off the replicator and retrieved the hose.

August shook his middle so the juice sloshed about, muffled crashing echoing out. There wasn't any bubbling or swelling; the goat might as well have drunk water.

“Well would you look at that, I'm still a regular old handsome pool toy,” August laughed, disturbing the juices within him. “So are you ready to ripen up now, Rho?”

Rho frowned, unable to believe his boyfriend actually *had* been immune to the berry juice while transformed into a pool toy. He didn't want to imagine how long August would keep him stuck as a bloated berry once he was forced to take a drink himself. The goat was rather fond of inflation, and had used him as a wobbly mattress for days on end in the past.

As the seemingly-defeated zebra stood to accept his fate, though, he spotted something strange going on. The normally black vinyl surrounding August's navel valve was an unmistakable shade of blue. Rho's gaze lingered long enough to confirm the color was spreading outwards in all directions, fast. His frown turned into a grin, much to August's confusion.

“You know what, August, blue vinyl's a really good look on you,” Rho said, before giving the pool toy goat's middle a poke.

August looked down and let out a distressed bleat. “It's just a color change, that doesn't mean anything!”

The goat's black-and-white coloration had shifted entirely to shades of blue. Despite the bravado his confidence had obviously drained away, and August was obsessively looking himself over for any other signs of change.

“And I'm sure all that bubbling doesn't mean anything either?” Rho teased.

Sure enough August's internal juices were visibly acting up even while he remained relatively

still. The juice level abruptly started rising again, and all August could do was watch in dismay as his body was filled. Then the swelling began. His relatively small middle steadily ballooned outward, prompting a chorus of creaks from his stretching hide. On instinct the pool toy pressed down against his new belly with both puffy paws, though of course his efforts were never going to slow his expansion.

From then on there was a constant stream of squeaks and creaks, along with the occasional slosh. August was forced to widen his gait as his middle swelled. He was able to shrug off the building sensation of pressure initially thanks to his frequent experience with inflation, but he knew it'd overwhelm him eventually. Even *he* hadn't spent enough time spherical to endure the pressure daze that accompanied it.

Rho couldn't resist poking and prodding his boyfriend as he turned into a creaking vinyl blueberry, delighting in every small frown and wince. The goat had been a bit too cocky lately, and Rho hoped the embarrassment of losing his berry bet would humble him. If not then at least the zebra would make sure to have plenty of fun teasing him.

August's belly was round and heavy, now his most defining feature. Small trails of juice were trickling from his valve as the pressure threatened to force it open. Rho made sure to push it back in place any time he felt the leaks were getting too much, and he always pushed just hard enough to make his boyfriend blush.

Once content to remain in August's middle, the juice eventually spread to the rest of him. His limbs puffed up, along with his tail, and even his cheeks were getting rounder. He struggled to handle the considerable weight of the pool of juice bubbling inside him. Inevitably his legs gave in and he slid onto his massive belly, rolling slightly forwards after.

Though the bloated pool toy had done his best to hold it together, he was beginning to groan and lose concentration more and more often. His body was an expanding ball, sucking in his limbs and head inch-by-inch. The creaking of his hide was longer, louder. Constantly drifting in and out of a daze, August worried that the obscene amount of Sapphire Geyser he'd originally drunk would simply cause him to explode in the end; he felt bursting might actually be more appealing than ending up a berry at his boyfriend's whim.

Rho kept a careful watch on August's eyes, seeing exactly when the pool toy fell into a steady stupor. The aimless gaze, the mindless bleating, the rare incoherent mumble. He doubted August even realized where he was anymore. Pressing a hoof against his taut creaking sides only seemed to intensify the daze and bleats. Perfect.

As far as Rho could tell his boyfriend had stopped swelling, so at least he wouldn't have to worry about mopping up a juice flood and patching up an overstretched pool toy. He took a step back to admire the results of August's silly bet. The goat was a brilliant blue sphere, his puffy paws just barely poking out from his immense body. If he poked August's middle the goat would let out an instinctive bleat in protest.

"Alright you big berry balloon, I should probably get you back to our quarters," Rho chuckled. "Autopilot should be able to handle the rest of the trip back to the station well enough, and perhaps once we're there we can enjoy a nice vacation. How do you feel about spending a month as a berry?"

There was only a woeful bleat in response.

Rho gave August a firm push with both hooves, managing to get the goat rolling with some effort. He smiled at the bleats and wiggles that ensued, especially when he had to force his new berry through the mess hall doorway. He'd need to encourage August's recklessness more often if the results were always so...delightful...