

Space Cherry

By: IndigoRho

Aster sighed contently as he finished off a slice of cherry pie. He'd intended to only sneak a single bite before he performed his space walk, but the taste had proven too good, and now the tin was almost empty. Of course the plump black cat was rather prone to such "accidental" gluttony.

He was eying the last slice when a chuckle interrupted him. "I know I'm usually the last person to tell you to hold back on the dessert, but at this rate you're gonna outgrow your spacesuit before you manage to head out!"

A hefty gray lion was partially suited up nearby, going through a checklist on a console.

"August I could be as wide as I am tall and this suit would still fit like a glove," Aster insisted, pulling at the material on his sleeve to show off how stretchy it was. "You've tested that with your own plenty."

August blushed briefly. "Alright, you've got a point. I assume the pie was delicious, then?"

"One of the best I've ever had! Using those cherries we found while exploring that moon was a great decision." Aster had grabbed the strange fruit on an impulse once he'd noticed they could apparently grow larger than watermelons. Much smaller samples had been used for the pie, and the cat was curious if the full-sized ones tasted even better.

"I may need to have a bite myself now that we know it doesn't cause any odd allergic reactions." August snickered at the glare Aster shot his direction. "But for now why don't you handle that engine check so we can plan a celebratory dinner."

Aster relented, securing his helmet over his head and an oxygen tank on his back. He entered the airlock and closed the inner door shut behind him while August set up a connection to his helmet camera.

There was a loud siren as the air was vented from the airlock and artificial gravity disabled, and Aster felt himself become weightless.

The sound of August quickly swallowing something down came over Aster's comms, prompting the cat to roll his eyes. "I'm not even out of the ship yet and you've already pounced on the pie? No wonder you're so fat~"

"Just remember Aster, I used to be slim too before all this replicator food caught up with me. Bet you'll surpass me in no time~"

Though August couldn't see Aster's face from his console, he was certain the cat was blushing. Connecting a tether to his belt, Aster finally opened the outer airlock and floated out.

Right away Aster's view was dominated by the tropical moon their ship orbited. It was beautiful at a distance, and he couldn't help but look back towards it frequently.

"Imagining being as round as that moon one day?" August teased.

"Not as much as you're imagining being as big as it!" Aster said back, returning his attention to the engines.

Their banter continued as Aster performed the inspection, everything seemingly routine.

Unseen, however, were some rather suspicious changes occurring to Aster. His normally black fur was taking on a reddish hue, subtle at first but quickly becoming unmistakable. Of course the shift in color was hidden while he was suited up.

When the cat had become entirely shades of red the taste of cherry suddenly returned to his mouth, while a muffled bubbling arose within his stomach. Soon Aster was starting to swell.

Weightlessness allowed the juice filling Aster to go as unnoticed as his color. The strong taste of cherry on his tongue was odd, but easily brushed aside as Aster focused on his work.

"That pie has one heck of a lingering aftertaste," Aster mumbled. "I wonder if soda made from those cherries would be the same way?"

“We’ll just have to make a whole keg and have you test it out!” August said. “I’m sure a single one of those fully grown cherries would keep you drowning in soda for weeks.”

Aster shook his head in amusement, and for a second his helmet camera had a clear shot down at his middle. By sheer luck August had been paying attention to the feed then, and he swore Aster seemed rounder than usual. That shouldn’t have been possible, of course. More likely that August simply wasn’t used to seeing Aster from that angle.

“Aster you always say I look massive from below, but you totally look just as large from above!” August said as he skimmed the data he was receiving on his end.

“Huh? What do you mean?”

“Oh don’t be coy. You looked down earlier and you looked like you had a ball gut at least!” August said. “Though I guess it could just be the spacesuit.”

Confused by his friend’s claims, Aster took a look for himself. To the cat’s surprise he didn’t have a ball gut but a full blown balloon belly. He was wider than even August, and still growing.

“Whoa, dude, you’re inflating!” August stated the obvious.

“Yeah, I kind of noticed that!” Aster pressed down on his blimping middle, feeling how taut it had become. He was finally aware of the juice sloshing in zero-g within him. It didn’t take long for the cat to guess his situation. “It’s juice, I’m swelling with juice! No wonder I can still taste the pie in my mouth, I’m turning into a giant cherry!”

Back in the ship, August nervously looked towards the empty pie tin, thinking of the slice he’d snuck a short while ago. He hadn’t eaten nearly as much as Aster, but sometimes all it took was one bite to end up spherical and creaking.

“Ok, ok. Just head back into the ship and we’ll roll ya to a juicer.” August had begun obsessively checking his paws for any signs of color change.

“Oof, easier said than done!”

Aster was quickly rounding out all over, his arms spread out awkwardly. Controlling the small movement thrusters of his suit proved impossible, and he couldn’t reach the tether to pull himself in, either. Thankfully his oxygen tanks hadn’t snapped off while expanding. He was still stuck, though.

“You’re gonna have to come and get me, August! And hurry before I end up as a moon for real!”

August swiftly put on the rest of his suit, wincing as he noticed his white paws were turning red. By the time he’d left the airlock and begun floating towards Aster his own middle was just starting to swell.

Despite the circumstances, August couldn’t resist snickering one he saw Aster. The cat was almost completely spherical, floating helplessly at the end of his tether. His spacesuit had dutifully expanded along with him, though his round cheeks had made his helmet a little more cramped than usual. They pressed up against the glass, making his frown more comical than serious.

“I think I could get used to you looking like this. Maybe we’ll put off the juicing until later, like a week later~” August said, grabbing ahold of the tether and turning back towards the airlock, Aster in tow.

“Don’t you dare, I could end up like this permanently!” His blushing contrasted his grumbling. He could see August looked rounder, too, and remembered the lion finishing off the pie. “Though if you don’t pick up the pace we’ll *both* be enjoying new lives as sloshy cherries!”

August had been trying to ignore his swelling, his gaze focused on the airlock entrance. “I’m hurrying, I’m hurrying! You’re not exactly the lightest produce I’ve ever transported, you know!”

“B-Being filled with juice doesn’t make me produce!” Aster insisted. He’d finally stopped swelling, though his hide felt overstretched. It was hard to *not* feel like a giant water balloon...or a cherry.

“I bet the market would disagree! *Mrrmmph.*” August grunted as he floated into the airlock, pulling Aster in shortly after.

With Aster fully inflated and August well on his way the airlock was fairly cramped. Using the little room he had to maneuver around in, August managed to nudge his blimped up friend against the floor, ensuring he wouldn't fall and pop the second artificial gravity kicked in.

Fresh air hissed into the sealed airlock, and suddenly both felines were experiencing gravity again.

Aster's eyes widened as his body wobbled and sides bulged, the pool of juice within him swirling around. August lost his balance completely, rolling through the inner airlock door just as it opened. He let out a fearful yelp as a crate brought him to an abrupt stop, the corner digging into his taut sides briefly. Too round to get back up, the lion could only flail helplessly as he rounded out completely, transforming into a massive cherry just as Aster had.

Not eager to be stuck in the airlock, Aster was forced to slowly shuffle out of it an inch at a time. The effort was exhausting, but eventually he succeeded, meowing as his tail narrowly avoided getting stuck in the closing airlock door.

"Well, I guess neither of us are gonna get juiced any time soon," Aster sighed. A smile slowly crept upon his face. "But at least I won't be the only cherry on this ship~"

August scowled, despite the fact Aster couldn't see his face. "You probably planned this, didn't you! I'm gonna make sure you stay big and juicy all the time, just a permanent cat sphere until everyone else assumes that's your normal shape! Because it will be!"

As weak as the threat was, it still made Aster blush. "Who says you'll be the first juiced? If I get rolled in first then you'll never even get a chance to slim down, even temporarily! I'm sure a lion cherry would make a comfy bed to snooze on—you just gotta hope I don't swell up and burst ya while I nap."

With nothing better to do, the two wobbling cherries came up with increasingly grandiose plans to make the other a permanent orb. At the rate they were going, though, it was likely they'd *both* get their wish...