

“Hey, can you grab me another pack of batteries while you’re out? The ones in the cabinet are almost gone!”

Hershey saw his roommate, Charlie, wave in acknowledgement before closing the door. Off on her hours-long who-knew-what. Some “personal project” he never got to hear about, really. He just chocked it up to some side hustle he never heard about, maybe to help her pay for college.

He didn’t exactly want to think about the alternatives.

With a huff, he sat back on the couch, turning his undivided attention back to the game. He was replaying Portal 2 on his old Xbox, a game he deeply loved and had played enough times to have gone through it fully blindfolded. Truly one of the best games ever created, in his opinion. And as he placed portals, knocking over sentient turrets with giant metal cubes, he couldn’t think of anything else he’d rather be doing with his time.

Right now, though, was where things ramped up. Down in the bowels of Aperture Science, listening in as Cave Johnson slowly deteriorated along with his company. Oh, yeah, and GLaDOS was a potato, but everything was fine! She could run on 1.35 volts, and the Portal gun has slightly conductive metals in it!

All in the name of *Science!*

He was feeling a bit thirsty, though. Using brain power was decidedly taxing, whether or not he was the one actually doing the science. Pausing the game, Hershey stretched, marvelling in the way the late afternoon light danced off the miniscule dust particles floating around the room. He didn’t even know what time it- Oh. Almost four. Charlie had been gone a couple hours already. Wonder what she was doing right now?

His stomach grumbled, grabbing his attention back. Right. Guess he was adding something to eat along with that drink.

He always hated the kitchen lights. Bright, glaring fluorescent that bounced off the tiles, counters and cabinets, nearly blinding him. Didn’t help nearly every surface in the damn apartment was painted white. Part of him wished he could blame his roommate for that, but in all honesty, even if Charlie was a neat freak the apartment had already been like that when they’d moved in. Stark white walls, off-white tiling through the entire thing, especially here in the kitchen. Hershey’d talked to her about replacing that light with something softer, especially since he’d started his treatments and started getting bad migraines again because of them. But alas, they didn’t sell warm lightbulbs in that size.

Oh, well.

Hershey rooted around in the fridge, moving aside a few takeout boxes to see what his options were. Week old Mexican street tacos shoved way in the back? Starting to smell, he went ahead

and threw that out. There were some boxes left over from that meatloaf Charlie's parents had made for the holidays, but he really didn't care for how much ketchup they always slathered on those things. Pass.

Moving aside a few more boxes, he finally got down to the days-old pizza box everything had been stacked on.

*'Eh. Might as well, nothing better in here to eat.'*

But when he took the box out, carefully threading it around the other Tupperware and styrofoam containers that lined the inside of the fridge, he noticed something else. Something he didn't recognize. Setting the pizza box down on the counter, he reached back into the fridge, pulling out a clear covered cup, filled with some unknown liquid inside. It almost looked like a milkshake, with several different colors mixed in. Pastel blues, greens, oranges and purples. Maybe a punch flavor of some kind?

Hershey peeled the Post-It note off the front, clearly in Charlie's handwriting.

*Made this for you! Trying a little something new, thinking you might like it!*

*-Charlie*

Huh.

*'So... she's trying cooking? Would explain why she's been gone for a while, if she's taking classes. Might as well give it a try, if she made it for me!'*

With that all together, Hershey went back to the pizza box. Supreme, Charlie always ordered supreme. He *hated* the onions and peppers, though, and always picked them off. Which didn't change now, as he rummaged around in a drawer, pulling out a fork. A few flicks later and all those pesky peppers were down in the sink, along with the onions.

Now it was ready.

Hershey downed a couple slices, hardly even stopping to inhale. Pizza so good, who needs to breathe?

Pushing the box aside, he picked the weird milkshake back up, popping the lid off. First impressions still held up, it even smelled like a milkshake. He took a cautious sip.

Hm. Not bad, actually.

He'd gotten an orange bit, and it tasted a lot like an orange creamsicle. Not bad at all! Next sip was blue raspberry, then mint, then berry... each sip was a different and distinct flavor, yet none of them clashed with each other, surprisingly. Before long, he'd gulped the entire thing down.

*'Damn, pretty good! Charlie knows her stuff, then. Wonder if she's getting ready for culinary school or something?'*

But when he went to rinse the cup out, he noticed that even though he hadn't even tipped the glass up all the way, not even a trace of the milkshake was left in the glass. Besides where he'd put his mouth on it, it was just as clean as if he'd taken it out of the cabinet.

*'Huh. Weird.'*

Must have been one thick milkshake.

It didn't take long for him to clean up, just simply set the glass in the sink and the box back in the fridge, moving the Tupperware back on it.

There! Dinner fulfilled.

Flopping back down on the couch, he gave a comfortable sigh. Even though it hadn't been much, he'd still walked away from it full.

Maybe a little *too* full, actually.

His phone buzzed. Flipping it over, he could see it was a text from Charlie.

*[Leaving now! Should be home in about 15 minutes]*

He shot back a text saying *[Cool, cya then]*, setting the phone back down. He was starting to get a little bored of Portal, which meant he had to get back up and shut both the Xbox and the TV off.

As Hershey hauled himself back up, his stomach growled. Was it just him, or was he feeling *really* full? Like, *abnormally* so? He put a hand on his stomach, a little concerned at how tight and bloated it felt. He wasn't having an allergic reaction, was he?

Hurriedly shutting his console off, he managed to make it to the kitchen counter before his stomach growled even louder, forcing him to stop.

No pain, weirdly enough.

Ok, he was *definitely* bloated. And as he desperately tried to remember what cabinet they kept the Pepto-Bismol in, he felt his stomach bloat even further.

*'Wait. Wh-'*

Before he had a chance to finish that thought, his stomach gave the loudest rumble yet, and it *swelled*. He tried to hold it back, desperately pushing against it as it bloated and puffed outward with renewed gusto, popping the buttons on both his pants and his button down, but his hands just sunk in, almost as if it was made of some gooey substance. And indeed, as he then tried to wrap his arms around it to keep it from swelling any further, he could feel some unknown substance start to ooze from his stomach as it continued swelling, changing color to a light cream- bigger than a beach ball now and puffing out through the cracks his arms couldn't hold back.

Within seconds, his stomach was significantly larger (and heavier) than it had been just a few minutes prior, and a pleasant creamy white. Trying to hold it up felt like trying to hold up a giant ball of Jell-o as his hands kept sinking in, complete with the slime oozing from it to double the experience. He was forced to sit down on the tiles to stop his legs from hurting, now panting from the exertion of holding up his own stomach. It plopped down with a wet *slap*.

*'What the... hell... what the hell was in that milkshake!? This isn't an allergic reaction, what is this!?'*

He tried to think, tried to come up with any rational explanation for what was possibly happening... but instead groaned as that fullness, only getting stronger, spread into other parts of his body. Chest, thighs and arms all simultaneously felt squishier, and his clothing creaked against the growing mass that was *him*.

Hershey's clothing stood no chance. The rest of the buttons on his shirt popped open, but even that wouldn't be enough, as his arms continued to bloat and swell, growing squishier and slimier as the seams began to tear, allowing his rapidly softening arms to balloon out through the rips, widening them even further. He tried to grab onto the oven to hoist himself up, but only succeeded in slapping his gooey hands against the front panel, fingers rapidly fusing and swelling into borderline unusable mitts almost as big as a dinner plate.

Pressure. Hershey's entire body was under intense pressure, not from the outside, but from within. Especially on his limbs, as his hands and feet continued to balloon outwards into giant gooey paws, but as his thighs and legs picked up speed, rapidly tearing through pants that simply couldn't hold on any longer, the growing lump at the end of his spine required his immediate attention. He tried to wiggle away from the cabinets, giving his tail time to decide what it wanted to do before it too, swelled and took shape, a vaguely triangular mass with no real definition, dripping more of that unidentified ooze.

His own body was fighting itself for space, taking up half the kitchen floor in a blob of unknown slime and mass. And it continued growing, adding more of the slime to him, as his neck stretched like taffy, taking his head with it with a pitiful whimper. His entire lower half was a swirl of pastel colors mixed together, entirely made of the strange ooze as he felt his head succumb last.

*'Oh god oh god OH GO-'*

It felt like his head... simply *melted*. All sight, all hearing, all motion in his head simply blinked out, leaving Hershey stranded in a void of black nothingness.

He started to panic. Couldn't even form coherent thoughts, just a whirl of emotions and half-formed fragments. He couldn't even open his mouth to scream. He couldn't even breathe. *He couldn't breathe*. That fact alone only sent Hershey into even more of a panic.

Then, suddenly, sound! He had to strain to hear it, but he heard *something!* A gentle hum, some appliance he couldn't immediately identify. And as he focused on it, it got stronger, and stronger, until all at once, sweet sensation returned.

He gasped, eyes flinging open, and finally, his panic started to die down.

It took a moment, but he finally calmed down enough to register the situation. It seemed as if he'd stopped swelling (finally), which left him taking up nearly half the kitchen, bloated arms, thighs, stomach and tail squished up against the cabinets and appliances. He cautiously poked his swollen stomach with a puffy mitt, watching the ooze drip off his arm only to be recollected by his rotund middle.

What... *was* he?

He didn't know.

What he *did* know, at least right off the bat, was he was now made of the very same goo that had been in that milkshake, and he was the same colors as it, too. Pastel yellow front, swirls of pastel blue and purple down his arms, legs and tail (and he presumed his back and head, too), with light orange spots thrown in. He now had to look down at himself, compensating for a neck that was several feet long, and the blob of color at the end of his vision told him he had a snout now, some misshapen mound on the end of his face that moved when he opened his mouth.

*'What in the actual... What... did Charlie...?'*

Groaning, Hershey managed to get a hold on the counters on either side of him, pushing the rest of his swollen, gooey form up. The height difference gave him a headrush, leaving him dizzy, but luckily he didn't fall over. Rubbing the base of his neck, he gave himself a more thorough example.

Yep. The color scheme went just as he thought, pastel purple and blue with light orange spots down his back. Some sort of green frill donned his back and the top of his tail, which felt vaguely rubbery when he poked it.

He couldn't even stand up to his full height, or else he'd hit his head on the fluorescent light. Which, for some reason, was no longer giving him a migraine. He didn't know why, but he'd take it.

The front door lock clicked.

*Charlie was home.*

Panic renewed, Hershey tripped, falling over with a loud, wet *splat*. He tried his best to squish himself back into the cabinets as he heard the front door open.

"Hello...? Hershey? You alright, man?"

Charlie set her purse down, concerned. That thud had been loud, hope he didn't hurt himself...

Sounded like it came from the kitchen. The TV was off, guess he'd gotten bored of whatever game he'd been playing. Taking her jacket off and setting it on the couch, she couldn't see anything immediately wrong in the kitchen, but the counter was blocking half her view.

When she saw what had happened, she gasped.

There, on the floor, was a giant, gooey lizard... *thing*. Not even she'd fully fleshed out what the effects would be when she'd made the shake, but he was... *perfect*.

"You found the shake I left you! It's been a couple days, took you long enough!"

Hershey narrowed his gooey little eyes. "Yeah, I have *more than a few questions*, Charlie. What the hell!? Why me? Why a shake? And WHAT THE HELL IS THIS!?"

He gestured to his new form, sending a few droplets of slime at the cabinets. Charlie quickly butted in.

"Yes, yes, I promise I'll explain! But first-"

No thoughts. No hesitation. She simply *jumped*, landing face first in the pile of slime that was Hershey's stomach. He grunted in surprise as she flipped herself over, looking purely content.

"Ooooh... You're like the best waterbed ever made... I'd say this batch was a success."

Hershey went to make another comment, but Charlie cut him off.

"Explanation, I know. All those times I disappear? Including today? I work with potions. Ever since all that magic stuff started popping up on the news, I wanted in on it. Never tested them out on myself for *obvious* reasons, but I figured, I knew what you've always wanted! Might as well chip in!"

A moment of silence as Hershey thought that over.

"You... a potion maker? Really? Where'd you learn to do all this?"

"Self-taught, really. Figured if I can cook, I can brew. Oh, yeah, I'm also going to culinary school next year, dropping college. Figured if I'm gonna go all in I might as well go *all in*, right?"

"But why didn't you *ask me first*? You know, *maybe I didn't want* to end up a big stinkin' pile of glop!"

Charlie giggled, still giddy that her potion worked. "Look at it this way! Now you don't have to pay for HRT anymore, you got to skip all the way to the end!"

"... True. Plus, I'm really squishy-"

"Damn right you are! Best waterbed EVER!"

Charlie flipped over again, giving Hershey a hug, and after a moment of surprise, Hershey obliged by returning the favor. Charlie partially sunk in, and the two shared the moment together.

"... So. I still don't know what I *am*."

Hershey let Charlie back up, and the two stared up at the fluorescent light.

"Y'know, I don't exactly know that either. The potion was specifically to turn someone into a *goo creature*, I guess this was just how it manifested for you. Good thing is, I made sure to make your goo only stick to you, so now we don't have to constantly keep cleaning up!"

And as Hershey glanced around, he did indeed notice that, despite him having touched a great deal of the kitchen, it was just as clean as when he'd gotten his snack earlier.

Just like the glass.

"Are you really sure you wanna..."

"Oh, I'm more than sure. Something about seeing those two dragons on TV, I wanna help more people live like that. Being human is so *boring*, let's spice it up a bit!"

Silence.

"Just make sure you actually *tell* the people you sell potions to what it does. I doubt everyone's gonna be as happy as me to end up a gooey- thing."

Charlie laughed. "Of course! You were just a test run. Plus, I needed to test it in a completely controlled environment, no input from me other than the potion. I didn't know if me saying anything would affect the results. Also, I'm not *only* going to sell ones for goo creatures. I just wanted to do a hard one off the bat to make sure I got the hang of it."

"... You know. That actually makes sense."

Another moment of silence.

"I still think you should have asked."

"Fair enough."