

The Mystery of Karo-Karo Island

A dark sky. A blackened sea. A flash of lightning across the sky. An island. And a shape moving through the water, landing on friendly shore. A whale shark fishman, finding solace in a terrible storm. Huddling under the nearest tree, he waited it out through the night, finding solace in orange kimono as he drifted off to sleep....

He didn't dream, except of his beloved crew swimming through a dark ocean, with the setting sun behind them. It brought him no comfort, so soon he dreamed of nothing but the night, and the dawn that would hopefully come after.

The air filled with colourful chirping, the trees of the island filled with tropical birds of countless breeds and many colourful plumages. And in the warm sunlight of the morning, Jinbe awoke. The fishman captain yawned loudly, itching his side through his sun-dried kimono as he took in the sights. Whatever island he had landed on last night was an expanse of soft green grass, of a kind he had never seen before. It was a pity his crew wasn't there to see it, but their scattering had been necessary for the moment, and it would be two weeks until they would gather at their rendezvous point. Yawning loudly, Jinbe moved out from under his shaded tree, his tired eyes widening at the most peculiar sight: All of the trees bore food. Not fruit, actual food. Okay, there was fruit as well, but he was fairly certain that meat on the bone wasn't a fruit, nor were apples the size of bowling balls. A coldness ran through the fishman, for he had heard tales of the Stomach Barons of the Boin Archipelago. Plants gargantuan enough to be mistaken for islands; they tricked their prey with trees made of delicious foods, and supposedly a river of ramen. And when their prey succumbed to the gluttony, the Stomach Barons would devour them after they had become too fat to escape. However, it was also said they were somewhat raised into the air, their edges guarded by monstrous insects. And as he turned, Jinbe could see a low beach with the ocean far beyond it. Whatever this place was, it couldn't be the Boin Archipelago. Relaxing immensely, the whale shark looked back to the many delicious trees. "Some breakfast will do then, provided nothing here attempts to have me as theirs" he said to himself, straightening his kimono.

Moving along the grove, Jinbe casually reached up and plucked whatever he saw fit from the trees. A piece of meat there, an apple..., a pitcher of milk, strangely. He actually stopped, inspecting it carefully and smelling it. It, unsurprisingly, smelled like milk; fresh milk at that. He took a few more choice food items and settled down on the soft grass for a little picnic. It had been a while since he had gotten to eat so much, at least not without having to share. All that food provided by Warlord Hancock, and Luffy devoured it all without any aid. The only thing more monstrous than that boy was his appetite! But with a feast just for he, the fishman made sure to take his time, enjoying the meal this remarkable island provided.

The food wasn't incredibly delicious, but the flavour was certainly appealing and the food was quite filling as well. Jinbe only wished there had been a tree with bottles of sake for him to enjoy, but he was more than happy to wash it down from the jug of milk instead. Sighing loudly, his broad body jostled as he unleashed a devastating belch, powerful enough to rustle the trees and dislodge a few of the oversized pears growing from it. The fishman eyed the fallen fruits as he licked a bone clean and discarded it, alongside the milk jug from before. A small pile of scraps appeared behind him as he finished off his little feast and got to his feet. Patting his drum-like middle with both hands, another belched squeaked out of Jinbe as he regarded the nearby sea. "I hope my crew are doing well, wherever they have gone" he said wistfully.

With little else to do he looked for the scraps to dispose of, only for there to be nothing there but the plain green grass. The former Warlord tilted his body curiously at the missing garbage, especially when he looked over to the grove and found the fallen food was likewise gone. "Disappearing food? What a strange island" he remarked, plucking a large apple from a tree and chomping on it.

Apple juice trickled down his front as he wandered away from the shore, catching sight of another peculiar sight: It was a river, though a contained one. It ran with abnormally clear blue water, the kind you'd see on a child's drawing. What was even stranger was the river's flow, as instead of running downhill towards the sea, it was flowing uphill instead. "This island is very strange indeed" Jinbe repeated, stroking his squishy shin.

Following it along, the fishman would occasionally see fallen food items flowing along the river, just bobbing there even though some of them, like the milk jugs, logically should be tipping over. It was all too odd, and clean about it; paradises just had that way of being too perfect to be real, or genuine. Jinbe absently reached out and plucked a sizeable peach, gently chewing on its soft flesh as he investigated further, catching sight of a river intersecting the one he was following. It was a perfect cross shape, though, now that he noticed, the materials making up the river wasn't dirt or any kind of soft material like that. The fishman grunted as he awkwardly knelt down, feeling at the oddly smooth and hard surface of the river. "*Could this be man-made?*" he wondered.

It stood to reason, what with how scenic and perfect this place was, even with the oddly flowing rivers. If that was the case, then, as someone of his position, he was going to need to find whoever had made this place and offer his thanks for their bountiful food. Straining to get back up, the former Warlord awkwardly readjusted his kimono's sash, finding it a little snug in the middle. Pulling it tight, the fishman followed the newest river, still absently reaching out and taking food as he went, not even realising he was doing it. He was oblivious even when he plucked an enormous turkey leg and sucked the meat right off the

bone, swallowing and belching loudly as he tossed the bone away. It was odd to have someone adept in Observation Haki to be so oblivious to his own actions, nor to the queer **gurgling** of his stomach. It wasn't a sickly feeling, though it was definitely odd, to say the least. And yet Jinbe continued to follow the river until he found a curved bridge that he crossed and resumed heading towards the centre. The new and increasing foliage here served as a good distraction for his pace weakening as he went uphill, the fishman feeling unusually tired as if he was in dire need of a good nap. Shaking it off, the former Warlord helped himself to a single large banana, inhaling it as his legs began to ache. *"Could the owner of this island not want me reaching the centre?"* he wondered as fatigue built.

Huffing, the stubborn whale shark continued on, spying more unusual kinds of trees, including one with enormous meatballs growing on it. And so many of them were by the river, where their bounty fell into the running water off to who knows where. At a crossroads, Jinbe followed the direction of the water, before looking back to where the middle of the island was. "I could follow the river," he said to himself, "but I will be able to see where it goes from the island's peak" he figured.

Staying true, he wandered over another grassy bridge, which lowered noticeably as he walked over it, his footprints in the grass a little deeper than before. And though he tried to stay the course, Jinbe could feel the strange exhaustion gnawing at him, trying to bring him down. But he couldn't rest yet, not when his senses told him he was so close. Huffing loudly, he reached out to another tree, finding it abnormally easy to reach and pull off the overblown watermelon with just one hand. This time, he paused in surprise. Yes, he was a big fishman, but should he be palming a large fruit like this so easily? "Hmm?!"

Actually looking at his free hand, Jinbe recoiled at how pudgy and plump his webbed fingers were. Tracing them up, he lifted the sleeve of his kimono, revealing chubby arms when they were supposed to be thin and limber. Swallowing, the former Warlord undid his sash slowly and then- **BUWORP!** "NGH?!"

His kimono had flung open of its own accord, pried apart by a tidal wave of a belly **blorping** out. It was undeniable that as a whale shark fishman he was destined to be on the stout side, but it was an entirely new development for a boulder belly to roll over his fundoshi sash like an avalanche. Jinbe was taken aback by the sudden roundness of his middle, and the softness which gently wobbled like jelly when he poked it. He was almost expecting a "buyobuyo" sound effect to accompany the ample bounce of his gut. Even crazier was that he had developed quite substantial moobs, each one pouring out of his hands like a champagne tower. He was so incredibly tubby, the sweet "buhi" snort of a pig echoed in his mind as he tried to process what had happened to him. "By the sea, I've spent so much time

with Luffy I've started to become like him" he remarked in awe, his face twisting into raucous laughter.

So engrossed by his new assets he completely failed to even notice why he was slowing down so much: It was simply just the sudden weight, but also the corpulence of his formerly toothpick-like legs. His supposed march had become a hefty waddle on two stacks of pancakes that could charitably be called his legs, ending in his puffy fat feet! The former Warlord of the Sea and the captain of the Red Sun Pirates was a big fat fatty, and he hadn't even noticed until now. "No wonder I've been so tired carting this around" he remarked, pressing his hands into the side of the belly and bouncing it. "But how...?" he thought, looking at the trees.

GURGLE!

Looking back down at himself, Jinbe's oni-like expression tightened as he observed his belly properly this time, and was uncomfortably aware that even while standing there, he was *still* getting fatter. Holding a hand out as a measure, he carefully tracked the slow pace of blubber adding itself to him, his round middle developing a crease along the side as it shifted forwards, and also slowly downwards. Gravity was most unkind to him as he seemed to be gaining an inch every twenty seconds or so, meaning that in a short while, he was going to have to move around the place by rolling. "The food" he said suddenly.

Of course! It was all too obvious now! He had eaten that filling meal on the beach, and he must've been snacking during his entire dang journey! "Huh?" he grunted, scraps of apple falling from his mouth.

Realizing he had just bitten into another bowling ball apple, the fishman threw it away, the half-eaten core landing on the opposite side of the river. And then, the most unusual thing happened: It was as if the land was made of water, pulling the fruit under until it had never been. "*So that's what happened to my scraps*" the former Warlord realized.

He also realized that ever since he had started thinking, he had gone up a bra size, his sun tattoo squishing into the cleft of his chest. "This *HAS* to be the work of a Devil Fruit user. They must have a cure for their fattening food" he guessed, and headed towards the centre of the island again.

Whatever this food was, it certainly wasn't very energy-intensive, as the fishman found himself struggling to climb what was a pretty gentle incline. Granted, that could just be the fact that all the food was going anywhere except as energy, his fundoshi wrap pulling inwards as his big blue ass pushed outwards, becoming squishier and rounder by the minute. It jostled about as he struggled to keep his march from becoming a waddle, which was difficult when his thighs were rubbing together as well as his knees beating on his drum of a belly. It was a race against time and Jinbe was feeling the pinch, though maybe that was his underwear digging into the softness of his hips. Hard to tell sometimes, especially when he had to keep changing direction to match the increasing amount of strange rivers that kept appearing. It was just chewing up more time when the fishman would rather be chewing the fat with his own crew, and the weight of all his troubles was adding up. But with some relief he was nearing the peak, although he'd prefer it if his sudden influx of flab would keep it quiet. He sounded like the content of a jug of milk being swished about, almost drowning out the gentle flow of the river.

His pace slowed to almost a crawl as he waddled up the last rise, finally making it to the top of the island, and his wide face twisted into a wide O of awe. It was like paradise up here, with numerous small trees about the place, with so many small rivers criss-crossing like it was some kind of majestic garden. But, where was the owner? Logically they'd be up here, where, now that he noticed, the strange river seemed to originate. The water flowed down from here, catching some of the small fruit and taking it downhill, probably to grow new trees at the base of the hill, or to even seed the fruits into the ocean. Jinbe waddled about slowly, until he caught a flash and looked down, straight into a river. The former Warlord grimaced, his jaw and face stretched wide from his pudgy it was. He twisted it from left to right, frowning as he caught sight of his shoulders, his gills having risen high enough to be level with his chubby cheeks. The fishman sighed loudly, tearing his view from the water so he didn't have to look at himself. It wasn't that he was embarrassed for being so fat, it was simply shameful to have let himself go like this. To have mindlessly snacked for so long and... what is that? Finding the epicentre, Jinbe walked over one last grassy bridge, which damn near collapsed under his incredible weight as he found himself on some kind of platform, or maybe it was an altar? Whatever it was, there seemed to be some kind of raised pedestal in the middle of the area, where from each side of the large column gushed the rivers of the water. "That explains the unnatural water, but what is the source?"

Waddling closer, Jinbe leaned in as close as he could, noticing how the grass somehow went vertically up to some kind of root-based bubble at the top of the altar. Peering in, his sharp eye spotted, in the middle of the bubble, to be some kind of strange fruit coated in more of the odd grass. It all made sense now! Pulling away from the odd fruit and looking to the ground, the fishman stretched out a thick foot as far as it could go, and rubbed it roughly on the ground. The "grass" came away with ease, revealing the same odd material that made up the riverbeds. Jinbe couldn't help but laugh, the secret of the strange island finally revealing itself. "IT'S MOSS!" he cackled loudly, his belly slapping at his knees.

The strange grass was moss! No wonder it had been so soft and comfortable! Which meant that.... "Some moss is a Devil Fruit user!" he exclaimed, guffawing heartily.

Truthfully he had heard that some weapons had "eaten" Devil Fruits and became hybrid animal and weapons; so really, why not some lichen? Jinbe shook his head in surprise and amusement, a fat hand to his chin as he mulled it over. "Whatever this Devil Fruit is, it must be responsible for all this fattening food. The moss must be using it without even realizing it is, or perhaps, it does? There would have to be a reason for it, and the material it's growing on is the key. And I'm almost certain I know what the answer is."

Waddling over another bridge, the fishman yelped as he nearly fell in, his fat foot busting a hole in the hardened moss. Panting cautiously, Jinbe looked down at his corpulent form, and he sighed. He had fought hard to maintain his figure, as round as it was, and that had been laid to waste in a single sunny morning. Fishman Karate was going to be really different with his doughy arms and blobby legs, especially when his thigh fat was spilling out over his knees and calves, which in turn spilled out onto his puffy feet. He was going to need to adjust his balance to account for his new stature, and width, and the interminable jiggling of the rest of him. If only there was a mirror there, so he could assess the damage properly; cause if he did, he would see the absolute cascade and thickness of his stomach, which actually widened his already wide body immensely. It plunged downwards like a waterfall, reaching below his blobby knees and utterly burying everything in front of it with the overhang. There was a deep tuck in the middle, forming a makeshift navel that spread out into four cardinal creases, the deepest being the ones running up towards his broad and tucked sides. It rocked like the oceans he called home, and almost sounded like them as even the slightest movement would send a wave out across his expanse. Jinbe glumly slapped the side with his thick hand, just to experience the ripple run across the entire width of his belly, and upwards towards his cushion-like moobs. His sun tattoo was half-lost in the dark and sweaty depths of the cleft, with the rest spread wide across each of his lardy, sack-like moobs. He was an utter sea pig yes, but he still had matters at hand, ones that demanded his attention.

At least walking down the hill was much easier than climbing it, and there was a nice pleasant breeze blowing on him, dealing with some of the sticky sweat coating him. It also blew along his open kimono, which to a keen eye, seemed to be hanging not at his ankles anymore, but more closely to his upper thighs. The flapping in the wind gave the casual observer a marvellous view of his behind, which had engorged so much around his fundoshi wrap it had devoured it. His ample blubber spilled around the waistband as if it was devouring it, only the barest hint of the yellowing fabric visible between the deep tucks of Jinbe's flab. The rest of it vanished into the ocean trench of his flabby cheeks, no doubt

buried at least a foot deep from just how wobbly and flabby those buns of his were. They just hung off him, merged with the backs of his thighs and jutting out so far. It was actually sorta amazing he didn't notice the insane wedgie he was experiencing, but with what the strange island's food had done to him, that was maybe for the best. It let him focus on his march downhill, following the flow of all the rivers. No matter which direction they started, they all went in the same direction, and gathered more and more food as they went. *"But who is it for?"* he wondered, though he did have an inkling.

Passing by some dense foliage he towered over, Jinbe finally found what it was he had been searching for. All the rivers converged into two larger ones that ran towards the end of the "island", where they funnelled into two grooves on a large and scaly neck. The former Warlord couldn't help but smile fondly as the rivers flowed into two holes in the jaw of a colossal turtle. Finally this puzzle had found its last piece. The moss and the Devil Fruit were at the centre, growing food across the entire expanse of the sea turtle's shell. It produced the river to carry the food to the sea turtle, in some kind of beautiful symbiotic relationship. The moss could thrive, and the colossus would never starve, not when the food was so rich in calories and nutrients to sustain that giant form. *"The majestic creature must be eating non-stop"* Jinbe remarked, leaning on a tree and causing it to bend.

If he could take a guess, the turtle must've been much smaller until the arrival of the fruit and its host. Perhaps it had been left there by accident, or maybe by sheer chance a piece of fruit had been stuck to the shell that would then become the reborn Devil Fruit once its user perished. Conjecture at best, but it did explain why some simply snacking had turned Jinbe into a big fat blob fish. The food simply wasn't for him; it was just far too many calories for an average-sized person to take. Cause if that turtle needed to be eating constantly at that size to maintain itself, what hope did his metabolism have? *"What a fool I've been"* the fishman said to himself with a wry smile.

To think he had thought his difficulties had been the island rejecting him, when really it had just been his own body burning out in a desperate bid to do away with all those empty calories. Still, he sort of wished he had remembered to offer thanks to the odd moss, which had provided this unusual bounty. Placing a hand to the tree, Jinbe's brow rose as he suddenly realized that he was level with the trees that had, most definitely, been taller than him when he got here. Fearing for his sanity the fishman looked towards the sea, wondering where his crew was as a distraction. *"I hope they are safe, though I know I can't linger here, lest I end up as massive as the turtle. I don't know if you can understand me strange moss, but thank you for the meal"* he uttered solemnly.

Enjoying the sights of the island one last time, Jinbe looked down at the food-laden river, and he couldn't deny, he was feeling a little... tempted. Yes the food had apparently made

him a Pig-Model Zoan type, but it still had been tasty enough to mindlessly snack on it for hours on end. And the river was right there, with a free flow of food. There was so much food around him, and what was a little extra weight when he could eat well for the rest of his life?

What could it hurt?

Shaking his head, Jinbe hastily attempted to tie up his sash, but his bulbous gut made it an exercise in futility. Allowing his kimono to flutter in the open winds, the more whale than shark fishman went to the edge of the turtle shell and plunged into the sea. And though his corpulence impeded his progress, he made haste to get as far away from the island as he could, for fear of doing something he may live to regret. And it was a long swim to the meeting point, so at least he could swim off the extra pounds; almost made him wish he had at least brought a snack with him, but whatever was on that island err turtle, was best left there. So Jinbe set off, swimming through the ocean blue as he realized he'll never forget his short time on Karo-Karo Island.