

The Purple tang, with their namesake violet scales complete with sunny yellow fins, did little to detract from the beauty of their environment. If anything, they perfectly enhanced it, the colors perfectly blending in with the rocks along the bottom of the tank; all different hues of dark blue, and the kelp's wavy green figures. A work of art in motion, yet none of the fish within the exhibit were even aware of how their own beauty had transfixed all those who had laid eyes on them.

Particularly of a certain red kobold, whose breath was fogging up the glass.

Alan's horned snout pressed firmly against the glass wall, watching with unblinking eyes the fish swimming in lazy loops before him. Just as the Purple tang were unaware of their own splendor, Alan was equally oblivious to the eyes he had drawn to himself, looking like an unattended child due to his very short stature. Even so, he was so drawn to the sight before him that he completely phased out the reflection of the glass from his peripheral vision. He just couldn't take his eyes off for a moment, watching, watching...oh, how he wished he could *join* them!

A firm palm clamping onto his shoulder brought him back to reality, the startled kobold uttering a muffled 'eep' as he glanced up at the familiar brown dragon looming beside him. "Ya know, Alan, the janitor's gonna make you clean the display case if you keep rubbing your nose against it."

"A-ah, yeah. Sorry, BLK." Alan's ear frills folded back, the kobold using his arm to help clear the fog. "I, uh, got caught up for a sec."

The large dragon chuckled. Yeah, that was pretty much apparent. "Hey, there's no need to apologize. I'm sure the staff will take the kobold cheek marks on the glass as a sign that their grand opening was a big success."

Alan sheepishly smiled at that, waving a dismissive paw at BLK. "I can't help it, B. There's no way I can actually properly explain it without sounding crazy, but I just... fish are just so *cool!*" As he spoke, the kobold was drawn to yet another exhibit of tropical fish, his snout once more hovering towards another display case like a magnet.

It wasn't strange at all, for BLK. Well, the mannerisms were, he figured, but not the reasoning behind them. The dragon had been told countless times from his kobold friend about how he came from a coastal settlement, where fishing was a chief export. It made sense the little lizard would be obsessed with fish; it must have made him feel at home. The orange ear frills adorning the scarlet head weren't just for so; Alan was a good swimmer.

“You know, we don’t have to go to an aquarium everytime you want to look at fish, Alan,” BLK suggested, trying to pull the eager ‘bold away from the glass. “The pet store down the street has plenty of fish to-”

“I can’t *own* a fish!”

Goodness, BLK wasn’t expecting an outburst like that. Even Alan looked surprised at his own reaction, glancing down while nervously rubbing index fingers together. “I-I just can’t, B. I’m not responsible enough.”

“Sure you are!” The dragon scoffed. “There’s the time you...erh...” BLK placed a claw to his chin. “You, erh...Oh! You watch the house for me while I’m at work!”

“There’s more to caring for fish than there is for a house, B!” The kobold exclaimed, frowning. “There’s feeding them the proper food, checking the pH of the water, cleaning the tank regularly, monitoring their swimming patterns to make sure they’re healthy...there’s a lot that goes into it!”

“Al...”

“Not to mention I’m not sure I even have the time! I-I still gotta finish those balloon potions you wanted me to make, and I still gotta keep the house clean while you’re working, like I promised. And I’m just...so scatterbrained, I don’t think I can do it!”

BLK’s goat-like ears lowered the more Alan spoke. He was so used to his small friend being so full of energy and confidence, and hearing him lamenting about being both overwhelmed and underqualified for a fish was genuinely heart breaking. Especially when he saw how longingly Alan looked at the fish in their displays; the kobold *really* wanted a fish, too. That much was evident.

The dragon gently rubbed his friend’s ear fins. “For what it’s worth, I think you are very mature, but I can understand if you don’t want to add more to your plate. Tell ya what; why don’t we buy a yearly pass for the aquarium? That way you can come back whenever you’d like?”

Just as it broke BLK’s heart to see Alan so sad, it warmed his heart to see a smile spread across the kobold’s face. “Yeah...I’d really appreciate that. Thanks, B!”

“No problem,” the dragon smiled, a completely different plan forming in his head. “No problem at all.”

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The more BLK thought about it, the more he was certain Alan was overreacting. There was just no way owning a fish was as much work as the kobold claimed it was. The dragon remembered taking turns watching the class fish in elementary school, where they had to feed the fish once at 11 AM. That was it! Yes, Alan knew more about fish than BLK, but the kobold also had a bad habit of blowing things far out of proportion; metaphorically *and* literally!

No, he'd surprise Alan with a fish. And he'd help the kobold take care of it if he was so concerned.

Speaking of Alan, the little guy was practically attached to BLK's hip the entire walk home, hugging the much larger dragon lovingly. “Thank you thank you *thank you* for the pass, B!”

“Of course, Alan!” BLK chuckled, having to hobble a bit to return the affection. Alan was just that short...or BLK was getting that wide. He had been a little lax with his diet, admittedly.

Not that Alan minded, obviously, the kobold planting his snout into those cushy sides just as he did with the glass displays earlier. “Seriously, please let me make this up to you! I owe you for this big time!”

“Well...” BLK pretended to be deep in thought as they approached the house. This wasn't the first time Alan had asked to repay the favor since leaving the aquarium; he just needed for the two to be closer to home before he could enact the next step of the plan.

And for precisely that reason, he waited until they were practically at the front door before responding. “Alright, I got it. Could you run to the wholesale market at Charles Street and pick up a few things for me? There's a sale going on, but I'm, erh, feeling a bit tired of walking today.”

“Charles Street?” Alan's ear frills fell back. “That's...the other side of town.”

“Yeah, I know. We shoulda went after leaving the aquarium.” The dragon chuckled, bashfully rubbing behind his head. “It’s fine if you don’t want-”

“No no, it’s fine!” Alan perked right back up. “I’ll try and be back by dinner, promise!” And with that, the kobold practically dashed away fast enough to leave behind a trail of dust!

BLK smirked at the sight. “Where does he get this energy?” Just watching Alan run made the dragon crave plopping his rump on the couch right inside, but alas, like his kobold roommate, he had plans.

Only now was BLK struggling with a slight moral dilemma. Not only was he inadvertently dishonest to Alan, but now he was invading the kobold’s privacy by rummaging around in his room without the lizard’s knowledge. Sure, it wasn’t with any mischievous intent; he just wanted to give his best friend a present, but wouldn’t it have just been easier to buy a fish instead?

Eh, in for a penny, in for a pound.

Flicking his tail, the dragon waded his way through the kobold’s messy room (seriously, didn’t they clean this room like three months ago?) Propped along the wall opposite of the bed was a large wooden desk, half of it taken up by what appeared to be a child’s chemistry set, the other half a collection of colorful vials and test tubes, all labeled various things.

“Instant Weight Gain...Instant Kaiju...” BLK’s ears perked up as he read out loud the names of some of these. As tempting as it would be to sample some of these, he knew better than to try any of those here and now. Their poor house had gone through so many alterations due to their size-changing shenanigans, it was turning into a Theseus’s boat scenario: Was it really the same house if nearly everything had been replaced at one point or another?

“Aha! Here we are!”

There was only a single potion labeled “Experimental,” but given what Alan had said at the aquarium earlier today, this had to be the one BLK was looking for. At least, he hoped. He remembered accidentally shrinking due to a mystical artifact of Alan’s and having to use Denya’s help to return him back to normal, with the results being...fulfilling, emphasis on “filling.”

The dragon signed, looking at his apprehensive expression reflecting back on him with the test tube's glass. He *could* spend the next few hours debating with himself whether this was worth it or not, or he could just drink the damn thing and get to work on preparing an even better gift for Alan than a membership pass to the aquarium. "Bottoms up." He raised the glass, saluting the desk full of potions, and brought the potion to his lips.

He coughed, nearly gagging on the stuff. Good lord, this was *horrible!* The flavor was tasteless, as was the case with most potions, but the texture was *suffocating!* It was an effort to swallow the damn thing, which seemingly expanded the moment it entered his maw, taking with it every bit of moisture in his mouth. The viscosity was so thick, the dragon couldn't decide if he'd have better luck chewing on it first before swallowing!

After several more frenzied gulps, BLK managed to drain the potion and gasped, almost slamming the flask down hard enough to crack it. He didn't care about that at the moment, nor did he care about the gift he was supposed to be giving Alan; only one thought echoed around the dragon's mind.

"Water!"

He scrambled out of the room, leaping down the stairs and landing with a heavy *thud* that rattled the furniture the next room over. He didn't care. His mouth was so painfully, mind-numbingly *dry*, to the point where he became painfully aware of his own tongue sticking to the bottom of his mouth! The drake rushed into the kitchen, fumbling with a cup from the counter, and placing it under the running faucet. It didn't even fill up halfway before he brought it back up and drained the cup of every last drop.

"More!"

With some water in his system, he filled the cup yet again, this time withholding himself until it was nearly topped off before draining it. BLK didn't come up for air until he had consumed every last drop, heaving a heavy sigh before running the cup under the faucet again.

And again.

And again.

Five full cups of water later, BLK's thirst was quenched enough for him to finally think. That was, undoubtedly, the *worst* potion the dragon had ever drunk in his entire life! Outside of it feeling like trying to swallow actual Silly Putty, that feeling of intense thirst was actual torture! No wonder it was still under Experimental; there were still plenty of kinks left to work out before this could be deemed safe for consumption!

He sighed with relief, a shaky smile finally crossing his face. The fact he drank all that water and felt next to nothing proved it worked.

Regaining his breath, the dragon glanced down at himself, a claw gripping his belly. He'd always been a little round in the tummy region, but with five and a half cups of water residing in his stomach, he looked as though he'd swallowed a basketball. He gave that spotted, scaly gut of his a hearty pat, watching his belly wobble more than usual, his ears perking up at the subtle *glorp* he heard. Gently, he grabbed the edge of his jiggly tummy and pulled.

And pulled, and pulled, and-

BLK's yellow eyes widened. Admittedly, his arms weren't particularly long, having what Alan dubbed an "alligator's body," yet he shouldn't have been able to stretch out a chunk of his own flesh all the way to the limits of his arm's reach! Even more surprisingly, if his arms were longer, he could have kept going for sure, with no signs of pain or pinching! And...he yelped, releasing his own scales and causing it to snap back to place, ensuring even more jiggling.

He saw *through* himself!

Once recovered from the shock, the dragon chuckled softly, patting his stomach. The potion *really* worked!

He was a living, walking, talking balloon with scales!

The drake's tail was a blur as he tugged on various parts of his body, watching the rubbery scales stretch out and snap back to place in an instant. His arms, his horns, even his snout; all tuggable like a cartoon character! Ecstatic that everything was coming to plan so far, the dragon headed towards the front door. Part 2 of his plan was finished, now it was time for Part 3.

As...as soon as he drank some more water. He was still parched, after all!

Making a complete 180, and causing his upper torso to stretch comically to accommodate the sudden shift in weight and inertia, the dragon returned to the sink once more, cup in paw. Another ten or so cups oughta quench his thirst for good!

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*Ding-a-ling!*

“Ah, hello!” the sales clerk fox perked up upon hearing the front entrance bells chime, turning to face his newest customer.

And proceeded to drop his jaw to the ground.

Yeah...that was the reaction BLK expected. Not that he was too concerned with that at the moment; his first priority was just squeezing through the damn door! Why, oh why did he keep drinking after ten cups?

Gritting his teeth (or perhaps squishing them in his new rubbery form), the dragon pressed down on his sloshing body, grunting as he felt the water within him shift around, almost knocking him off balance on more than one occasion. C'mon, just a little more... He pressed down on his billowing gut, at least as much as he could reach. Harder, and harder, and hard-

*BLORRRRP!* His stomach shrank miraculously; BLK would have stumbled inside, if the weight of his enormous, jiggling tail hadn't kept him rooted to the ground!

And now he had to deal with the base of his tail getting stuck in the door, the limb now a solid 5 feet in diameter at the widest, but a good tug was all he needed to squeeze it through. Alas, the resulting shift in weight caused the water within said tail to surge forward, and consequently-

*BLOOOOORP!*

His stomach swelled out a good several feet, the edge of which was now well out of arm's reach.

BLK's cheeks were burning, as red as the sales clerk fox who was staring at him with the widest eyes the drake had ever seen. There was absolutely no way he could explain this to someone and prove to them this was normal. Sure, he could convince the group of stoners he encountered on the way that they were on the best high they had

ever been on in their life, but not the very sober, very alarmed vulpine who looked as though he were face to face with God himself.

“H-hello.” BLK waved shyly, his feet barely leaving the ground as he very slowly shuffled forward. He did not trust himself to make the entire trek to the clerk without knocking something over.

The clerk remained silent. Has he blinked once since he saw BLK?

“Um...” The dragon’s ears folded back. Sheepishly, he patted the sides of his billowing belly, hearing it blorp and glorp about. “This...is just water weight.”

“Uh huh.” The fox had yet to move. Goodness, was he starting to drool?!

“Eerh...” BLK was starting to regret this. “I’m gonna need you to not make any assumptions, cuz, uh...I’m here for the fish products?”

The sales clerk finally swallowed. “You’re not...you’re not gonna...eat the-?”

“That’s making an assumption.” BLK cut him off.

“Sorry! Sorry, you’re right.” The fox shook his head, before standing up from his desk. “If you’ll please follow me, sir, our fish are in the back room.”

BLK sighed. Of course he wasn’t getting out of walking.

Shuffle by shuffle, the rotund reptile followed at a meandering pace, arms wrapped around as much belly as possible to prevent any unnecessary sloshing. On the positive side, this walk was a fantastic workout for him. Water wasn’t light by any means, and he was carrying what felt like an entire bathtub’s supply within his belly (and occasionally tail). While the sloshing was rather cumbersome and annoying, it also helped the dragon work on maintaining balance without relying on his thick tail alone, straightening his posture and his spine, even if said spine was currently a rubbery noodle.

Although the biggest plus, to BLK’s embarrassment, was just how big and soft he felt, the edges of the drake’s lips curling up into a slight smile as he sunk his claws past their wrist in soft, squishy scales. He couldn’t wait to try this again, only in the privacy of his own home, and hopefully without the horrible texture of the potion to deal with.



“H-here we are, sir.”

BLK glanced up, hoping he wasn't caught playing with his own tummy. Right away, he was presented with an entire wall full of miniature tanks, all of which were home to a multitude of fish, the majority of which BLK couldn't even recognize! There were multiple different kinds of goldfish?! The dragon scratched his chin; he may be a bit over his head here.

“U-um...” He thought, not wanting to waste the clerk's time any more than he had to. “I'll take two Fantails, an Oranda, all the Black Moors over there, and let's see...”

The more fish he ordered, the more it sounded as though he were at a drive thru, ordering his meal. Which, unfortunately, wasn't too far off from what the dragon was planning. Halfway through his order, the fox stopped walking and just stared at the dragon in horror. “S-sir, I should...warn you that none of these fish will, erh...taste good grilled.”

BLK groaned. “I'm not cooking the fish!”

“Oh...” The fox blinked. “Well, if you wanted sushi, there's a hibachi grill down the street that-”

“I'm not...No!” The dragon face palmed hard. “Just give me the freakin' fish, please.” Both frustrated and humiliated, BLK felt himself heating up enough to worry that the water inside of him would start boiling, and steam would blow out of his ears like a teapot.

Thankfully, neither of those happened, and the rest of the checkout process went fairly smoothly. Along with over a dozen fish, the dragon purchased fish food, bowls, and even some filters just in case, although he wasn't sure how to install those inside something that, well, wasn't *meant* to be a fish tank. AKA, himself.

Few words were exchanged between the fox and the dragon afterwards, the duo both wanting to forget this ever happened as the drake lumbered his way out of the store. His arms were filled with bags of fish, requiring the use of his billowing belly to help balance everything, while his tail carried along the accessories as well.

Sheepishly, he glanced down at the cute fishies swimming circles in their bags. “Don't worry, little guys. I'll get you guys into something cozier once we get home,” he whispered, a coy smile spreading across his muzzle.

Unfortunately, as bloated as his stomach was, it still was still too opaque to properly see through. Not only that, but the dragon was feeling a mighty thirst in the back of his throat once again. Thankfully, he had the solution to both of these problems right at home, in the form of a backyard hose.

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Phew, Alan was beat!

Wiping a paw to his forehead, the kobold continued the trudge back home, arms laden with shopping bags. It would have been nice of BLK to at least give him a list of what to get, instead of letting the little lizard walk in completely clueless. Well, maybe it was Alan's fault for not asking. He was still too excitable it seemed, rushing in without thinking. He really had to work on that.

Thankfully, there were only a select few items on sale, which made it easy to narrow down what it was that BLK wanted. What the dragon planned on making with squash and zucchini was beyond him; a new bread recipe, perhaps? Alan couldn't wait to try it regardless. Bread would go great with the ice cold lemonade he had in the fridge; he needed *something* to cool off after walking around in the hot summer sun all day. The kobold's tail wiggled in anticipation as he stepped to the front door, reaching for the doorknob-

"Alan! Is that *bwub* you?"

"Huh?" Alan frowned. That sounded like BLK, only...deeper? That was also a very weird burp he just heard now. "Where are you, B?"

"Backyard!" The disembodied voice of BLK answered, punctuated with a very guttural hiccup. Was he drunk?!

Suddenly a little nervous, the kobold circumnavigated the large house. Something wasn't right here, yet BLK didn't sound stressed or worried; if anything, the drake sounded excited! Hopefully it wasn't anything that Alan couldn't fix here and then. Turning the final corner, he stepped into the backyard...and dropped the grocery bags on the ground.

Alan hoped for the best, and expected the worst, but he didn't, *couldn't*, prepare for what he saw sitting in his backyard!

Dozens of thoughts went off in the kobold's head at once like fireworks, ranging from "why are there so many glass bowls outside" to "is that a fish tank sitting in the backyard," although the thought "BLK has *really* let himself go" lingered particularly long. Yet even after staring for a good ten seconds, the kobold could only mutter a single word. "...What?"

"Surprise!" BLK beamed, pulling a hose out of his maw to wave at his roommate. The dragon was absolutely stuffed full of water, each part of him a rippling, jiggling blob! Wider than he was tall, yet even so BLK was taller sitting down than he was standing at his normal size, his torso a symmetrical squashed sphere nearly the size of a couch and the shape of a partially deflated soccer ball. Alan wasn't even sure BLK could even stand anymore; not because of his size or weight, but rather how bloated his legs and thighs were!

Some of the water wound up in the drake's limbs, making them look all the rounder and puffier, as though the drake had actually put on a bit of weight that wasn't, well, water weight. His legs were like barrels with two big claws attached, his arms looking like water wings, a very appropriate comparison now.

But that tail! Good lord, it was just absolutely massive, down to the tip! BLK could roll back and use it as a water bed if he wanted to; the kobold had no doubt that enormous bloated limb could support all that weight!

Yet it was apparent why he didn't; for with all that water stored within the drake's brown body, his scales had thinned out remarkably, enough for Alan to see right through his roommate despite the near-dozen feet or so of girth. And what did he happen to see swimming around his water tank of a friend, but roughly two dozen fish of various shapes, sizes, and colors, hardly perturbed that they're residing within a living breathing creature.

"You alright, Alan? You're making me feel a bit awkward, heh."

Alan blinked. "Sorry, sorry, thinking back to if I hit my head on my way home." The kobold reached back to pinch one of his ear frills. Yeowch! Nope, he definitely wasn't dreaming.

“H-hey, now I’m feeling more than a bit awkward.” The dragon blushed, nervously rubbing the top of his belly, a belly that was eye level with him. “So, I know you may have a few questions-”

“You bet I do!” Alan exclaimed, taking an anxious step forward. “What the heck did you do?! I-I mean I see what you did, you drank my potion (which, by the way, wasn’t finished yet and was a very reckless thing for you to do), drank a week’s worth of water, and swallowed up a bunch of fish! Jeeze, B, I didn’t think *this* was what you had in mind when you offered a yearly membership to the aquarium!”

“No, no!” BLK held his arms out, his upper torso sloshing forward with him. “They’re *your* fish, Alan! They’re all yours!”

“*What!?*” Alan felt the color draining from his face.

“Yeah!” The dragon nodded, sheepishly smiling. “See, I had planned on wrapping my belly up like a present for when you got back, but uh...when I got home and helped myself to a quick drink with the hose, I couldn’t fit back inside, so-”

“Yeah, that’s the other thing I was gonna ask about.” Alan walked up to the wall of belly before him, placing a claw along the stretched, rubbery surface. “Why...all *this?*”

“Well...” BLK’s ears folded back, the dragon shyly rubbing index fingers against each other...or at least trying to, with his watery chest getting in the way. “It’s been quite a while since we’ve had our usual, ya know, size changing shenanigans. I thought you’d like to see me all big and bloated, that’s all.”

Alan knew that wasn’t ‘all.’ BLK may not admit it, but he most certainly enjoyed the extra size to him. Heck, the kobold could see his watery friend’s tail tip wiggling excitedly, sending little bubbles throughout that thick tail. It was even empowering for Alan to have this giant, roly-polly dragon look so timid and anxious of a 3 foot kobold.

Despite the sheer absurdity of the situation, Alan couldn’t help but crack a smile at his sloshing, glorping roommate. “You know the potion doesn’t last forever. You should start reverting back to normal by tomorrow morning.”

“That sounds about right.” BLK shrugged, or at least tried to, those heaving shoulders. “Your potions usually last between 24 hours and a week.”

“And we can’t actually keep the fish. I hope you saved the receipts.”

The dragon chuckled. “I *did* go a little overboard on picking them out, yes, but you deserve at least a couple!”

Alan sighed. “I’ll think about it, or something. Now how did you plan on getting the fish out?”

“Oh! I was gonna...gonna...” BLK’s smile slowly faded from his face, his yellow eyes gradually widening. “G-give me a moment, I *had* a plan...gonna, gonna...”

“-Gonna ask me to get my fish net and literally dive into you to scoop them out?” Alan finished that thought, arms crossed with a brow raised.

“Exactly!” The dragon ginned. “See, you *are* responsible! Look at you, cleaning up after my own mistakes.”

“That’s...no, that’s not how...stop making me feel good about myself!” Alan snapped back, unable to keep his own smile off his face. He still couldn’t make up his mind on whether or not he should be upset with BLK about all of this, but he knew that seeing his roommate as a big, bouncy ball of squish did put a smile on his face. Seeing those fishes swimming around that tum was just...gosh, it was so *bizarre!* It completely caught him off guard, but knowing the dragon did it to make him feel better made it all the funnier to Alan. Still smiling, he turned to trek back into the house...

But not without finally turning off the hose first, not wanting BLK to accidentally spring a leak from overconsumption. Apparently he made the right choice; he could hear the dragon groaning in disappointment as he shut the door behind him.

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Scaling the watery drake proved to be more difficult than Alan previously anticipated.

BLK has had...issues with his weight in the past; yet those issues made it easy for the kobold to mount the large drake, as those love handles proved to be exceptional, well, handles! Here, however, BLK was far more squishy and sloshy than he’d ever been during his heaviest, not to mention the constant looming fear of...well, Alan kept his claws in check while carefully maneuvering atop that round belly.

Climbing was just as surreal of an experience as Alan expected it to be. Despite the scales, BLK really did feel like an overinflated water balloon; especially as the kobold was able to quite clearly see through the dragon's gut as he clambered aboard. It was far from unpleasant; if anything, it was actually quite cozy! Alan could easily picture himself curling up and taking a nap atop the squishy tum, especially with how warm it felt beneath him, no doubt thanks to sitting in the afternoon sun for quite some time. Hopefully the water inside was cooler than BLK was on the outside; none of those fish looked tropical, after all. Just various types of goldfish, even a few clownfish, some other smaller types that Alan couldn't quite make out...

"Yaaargh! I've sprang a leak!"

"W-what!?" Alan's face went as white as a ghost as his head shot straight up, swiveling. "Where? Where? Where?!"

What he found wasn't a hole in his dragon, yet BLK was wheezing as though he were leaking air. "I'm kidding, Alan, I'm kidding!"

It was a miracle Alan didn't faint on the spot.

After recovering from the sudden shellshock, Alan was only a few steps away from BLK's face, still moving carefully so as to not disturb the fish. The dragon smiled sheepishly at the kobold, looking oddly adorable with part of his long neck partially sunken into his blimpy body. "Well, uh, I guess this is the part where I swallow you whole." He chuckled bashfully, rubbery ears flickering. "My muzzle is pretty stretchy, so feel free to just...squeeze in."

"Yeah, yeah." Alan nodded, staring straight ahead.

BLK blinked. "Is everything ok? Do I have something on my face?"

"No, no! It's just...Man, how do I put it?" The kobold laughed, plopping onto his rump, bobbing up and down. "It's been so long since I've been able to go swimming with actual fishes! I mean, I don't know if you had planned on me having to swim around and fish them out, but still, it's just...really exciting! Like, this is way better than a year's membership at the aquarium."

BLK tilted his head as far as he could allow it. "So...I didn't have to buy the year's membership then?"

“C’mon, B.”

“I’m serious! That was expensive!”

“C’mon, B!” Alan laughed. Even BLK was snickering, despite claiming to be serious. Oh, what a strange pair they made.

But, there was no more time to waste! BLK opened his maw, and Alan poked his head inside, chuckling. “Phew, your breath is even fishier than usu- *gaaah!*” Oops, BLK did not appreciate that; the drake leaning back to send the kobold tumbling into that pond of a belly!

Once he surfaced, Alan snickered. “Smells even fishier in here!”

“Shut up!”

Thankfully, the water wasn’t as warm as Alan feared it was. Still, being able to swim around what amounted to a giant bubble in his backyard was quite exciting for the kobold, who found himself unintentionally propelling himself forward due to his wiggling tail. It really was as though he were swimming back home in the ocean; not just from the fish swimming about, but the salt watery feeling against his scales. The outside world had a slight brown tint to it, which was perfect for not allowing the setting sun to bother him too much. It was as though he were wearing sunglasses while in a pool! They *really* needed to do this again at some point, perhaps with even more water!

Ah, but he wasn’t here for a leisurely swim now, was he? With a fish net in hand, the little lizard dived down, carefully swimming towards the nearest fish, a large Black Moors, and scooped it up. Perfect, the little guy didn’t even notice! Shooting himself back to the surface, the kobold held out the net with the captured flopping fish out of BLK’s maw, the dragon quickly catching it to plop the fish into the bag of water it left the store in. Thank goodness BLK could still move his arms with all that water inside of them.

Soon, they fell into a rhythm of sorts. Grab a fish, set it outside, bag it up, rinse and repeat. It was oddly relaxing; despite feeling sore from carrying heavy groceries around town, Alan felt refreshed and rejuvenated from the dip into the BLK pool. In only half an hour, they had managed to scoop up roughly half the fish; they were making great time!

“Hey, B?” Alan asked, emerging with a standard goldfish. “I gotta ask: How does it feel having me swim around in your gut like this? I’m not giving you a stomach ache, am I?”

The dragon chuckled, causing little waves to ripple around the surface of the pond. “Believe it or not, I can barely feel you. I can kinda feel it when you kick particularly hard and make a strong water current, but that’s about it. It’s the same with the fish; if I closed my eyes, I wouldn’t notice there were any fish in me!”

“That’s funny.” Alan snickered, playfully splashing at the water. “So the fish are just like any other food to you then, huh?”

“Basically.” BLK shrugged those broad shoulders. “But, uh, that does remind me, there’s something I’ve been a bit concerned about...where are my organs?”

“Huh?”

“Where are my organs?” BLK repeated, slightly worried. “I...can’t see them at all in me. I mean, I can feel my heart beating, but I can’t see it..?”

“Eeeerh...” Shoot, Alan didn’t have an answer to that. It never even crossed his mind up until this moment. “I...think it’s best if you don’t worry about it for now, B.”

“You know that just makes me more worried, Alan...”

Alan decided the best way to continue that conversation was to ignore it, and dive straight down. He noticed a few fish were swimming along BLK’s tail, which thankfully was wide enough for Alan to swim through, a big watery tube twice as big as a hula hoop. But as Alan swam closer, he noticed the fish barely reacted to him, offering little more than a wiggle when the kobold brought the net down. He wasn’t sure why, either; the Angelfish gave up without a fight, Red Mosaic Guppy nearby floating lazily and-

Wide-eyed, Alan made a desperate scramble to the surface, not even bothering to regain his breath before blurting out. “Is this salt water, B?”

BLK didn’t get a chance to respond right away, as his mouth was quite literally full with kobold paws and a net of fish. Waiting until both were out, the dragon smacked his chops as he bagged the fish. “Yeah, I swallowed the packet of salt-water stuff. Kinda



wish I just swallowed the packet whole instead of pouring it in, maybe me *really* thirsty and-

“BLK, you have *freshwater* fish inside you!”

“O-oh!” The dragon let out a small whine as he grabbed the sides of his head, heart racing as he glanced around. “O-oh no, shoot! What do we do, Alan? I’m sorry, I didn’t- *gwrruugh!*”

Alan took the initiative to climb straight out of the dragon’s maw, pulling himself free and sliding onto the rubbery paunch. Wasting no time, he bounced and hopped his way down, and swung open the backyard hose to its highest setting.

BLK’s eyes went wide as he realized what the kobold was planning. “A-Alan, I’m not sure I can fit much more in me!”

“Well, it’s the only way I can think of to dilute the salt in you!” The kobold muttered, scrambling back onto the dragon’s belly with far less care than he did his first ascent. Making it to BLK’s head in record time, he offered the hose, huffing. “It’s alright, I promise. I’ll grow you from the inside so you won’t...go kaboom.”

BLK didn’t look very reassured at that, yet the kobold didn’t really give him much time to think it over before diving back into that stretched open muzzle. Moments later, he felt the torrent of the hose falling on top of him. Perfect, he was glad BLK went along with it.

Diving back under, the kobold ran his fingers along the innards of his friend, transferring a bit of magic into sizing up the dragon. Sure enough, the view of the outside started to grow darker and browner, as BLK’s body wasn’t stretched as much due to the addition of more dragon. However, that would quickly change; their hose was *very* powerful!

Fish after fish was brought up once again, and while the lethargic creatures were easier to catch, Alan found himself working slower due to the amount of water he had to traverse just to get them! His ear frills would perk up whenever he started hearing creaking or groaning, meaning it was time to dump a tad bit more magic into the draconic fishtank, who was starting to resemble an above ground swimming pool.

Five more fish left. Alan was starting to feel today's exercise's effects on him; his arms and legs were sore and heavy! But now was not the time to complain; he still had work to do!

Four more fish left. "Hurry, Alan!" BLK whimpered. The poor drake's arms had grown too round and sloshy to properly reach the hose anymore. It also meant more work for Alan, who had to stick his entire torso out of BLK's mouth just to drop off the fish.

Three more fish. Darn it, Alan wished BLK could take the hose out; the fish were starting to get more active, now avoiding the kobold when possible! Alan had to expend even more effort to grab the remaining smallfry; while the cardio was certainly good for his heart, all this water was *not* good for BLK's figure.

Two more fish, and then one. The kobold's heart leapt into his throat when he heard creaking noises *not* coming from BLK. A quick glance told him all he needed to know; that darned tail was pressing heavily into their backyard fence! Seriously, could they go a single freaking day without causing property damage?! With the last of his energy, the kobold scrambled after the last wiley Neontetra, who was giving even the aquatic reptile a hard time.

Until at last, he captured the damn thing, and could finally leave!

Huffing and puffing, Alan lazily crawled his way out of BLK's maw, glad that he no longer had to stretch the dragon's muzzle out in order to squeeze through. He plucked the hose out, and lazily slid down the drake's rubbery wet body, as though he were a large water slide. Finally, the last fish was bagged and saved, and Alan could finally shut off the hose, even if he had to wedge his arms between the house and BLK's gut to reach it. Sighing with relief, the kobold flopped back against his roommate, giving a shaky smile as he looked up at BLK.

And up...and up...

Safe to say that BLK was bigger than their house at this point, the drake's car-sized head easily poking out above the rooftops with a good view of the entire neighborhood. The entire dragon was shaped like a tear-drop, widening exponentially past the head to reveal a very, very, *very* jiggly body. The dragon could hardly bend his watery arms, or wiggle his squishy legs, perpetually bouncing slightly atop his own wavy figure. Thankfully, the tail never did break through the backyard fence, yet the fact that said fence was only half as tall as the tail was proof aplenty that the dragon was *huge*.

So huge, in fact, that Alan felt the need to clamber a bit higher along the watery reptile's body to get a closer look at his friend. "Erm...how ya holding up, BLK?"

"Alright *bwub* I suppose," the dragon laughed softly, lazily patting his watery sides. "Guess I'm plenty hydrated for the Summer, huh?"

"Heh, yeah." Alan chuckled, lazing on his side. It had been so long since he had seen his roommate so massive, and even longer since he'd done so without looking worried or anxious. It was a good look for the dragon; whenever BLK looked afraid, his hair always appeared the slightest bit whiter, as though the stress was draining its color further.

However, that familiar crease on BLK's forehead appeared as the dragon's brows furrowed. "The fish are safe though, right?"

"Yeah." Alan nodded. "Should be fine for now. Don't need to change their bags for a while."

"That's a relief." The dragon sighed. "I'm really sorry, Alan. I wanted this to be a fun surprise for you, but I ended up causing more harm than good. I really didn't mean to put you through so much, and-"

"B, B! It's ok!" Alan laughed. "Outside of the scare at the end, I had a ton of fun!"

BLK blinked. "Really?"

"Really!" Alan smiled. "I'd take swimming with fishes inside my friend's giant belly over a year's pass any day. But, next time let me know in advance so we can plan around it instead, alright?"

"Heh, alright." BLK returned the smile. With a grunt, he rolled his thick arm forward, able to just barely graze the top of the kobold's head with his claws. "It was never my intention to scare you, but I hope you've learned that you're much more mature than you realize. You took initiative during a crisis and solved it on your own with quick thinking. After seeing you work just now, I think you're more than capable of caring for a couple fishes on your own. *But!* Don't forget that you can always call on me for help if you need it."

“H-hey, you’re gonna make me blush!” Alan laughed, rolling over to hide his own even redder face. He made sure not to roll too far, however; those head-scratches felt great. If he wasn’t careful, he’d end up falling asleep on that big waterbed belly. Not that there was any problem with that, of course.

“I’m serious! I’d love to help.” BLK smirked. “But in exchange, you have to share some of the potions you’ve been brewing in your room with me sometime.”

“Oh?” This time Alan was the one grinning as he rolled back over to face his friend. “Why wait? Why not dump them all in your maw right now, just to see what happens?”

“W-*what?*!” BLK went wide-eyed, now holding his wobbly arms defensively, as though that tiny kobold on his belly was the most dangerous animal on the planet! “H-hold on, Alan, I’m already massive! O-one at a time, please!”

“I’m kidding!” Alan laughed, slapping his knee. “That’s revenge for saying you sprung a leak earlier!”

Fine, Alan will admit it, he *may* be a bit more mature than he initially thought. But, he wasn’t mature enough to not be petty!