

It had been well over two years since Earth's scientist sent genetically engineered dogs into space to fetch them a new planet to live on. The society of dogs traveled through space upon a mighty ship known as the M-Bark to search galaxy after galaxy for a new home for them and their best friends. Among the dogs taking on that huge task was the squad in charge of the exploration craft, the Pluto. This team consisted of seven dogs in total, Garbage, Stella, Nomi, Chonies, Ed, Loaf, and their newest member, Pepper.

Garbage was the captain of the Pluto. He was a corgi with light brownish orange fur over most of his body and cream-hued fur over his face, belly and paws. His firm ears were pointed up and like all the dogs he had a black, soft-cornered upside down triangle-shaped nose at the end of his muzzle. He had on a red, buttoned up captain's coat with yellow stars on the shoulders.

Stella's dog breed was a Shetland sheepdog and while she had once been the tactical officer of the Pluto, she had since become a co-captain, working alongside Garbage, acting more on logic to help balance her partner's much more gut-reliant instincts. Her fur was white on her muzzle and belly while it turned to a light brown around her eyes and down her sides. The top of her head, on her short, floppy ears, and down her back was a more chocolatey hue of brown. Like Garbage, she was also garbed in a red captain's suit.

The pilot of the ship was an overly energetic and slightly crazed shih tzu named Nomi. She was the youngest of the crew and mostly covered in white fur over her face, muzzle, arms, legs, belly, the middle of her forehead and atop her head in a long, floofy patch of fur. She also had dark gray fur over her eyes, on the sides of her head and over her long, fluffy ears. She was dressed in a dark yellow vest with a navy shirt underneath it.

Chonies the chihuahua was the timid medical and science officer of the crew. As one would expect of his tiny dog breed, he was the smallest of the crew but he also possessed the largest ears among them too. Compared to the rest of the crew's small, beady eyes, his were by far the largest. His fur was a brown hue all over which perfectly matched the full body suit he had on, giving him an undressed appearance, save for the red collar he had on around his neck.

The so-called "ambassador" of the team was the jack russell terrier, Ed. While most of his body was covered in cream-colored fur, around his eyes and on the base of his tail was light brown. Over his ears was a darker brown coloration of fur. He was dressed the most casual of the team with a simple green-collared shirt and black pants on. While he did have confidence and could sound incredibly convincing when he spoke, he found more use for such skills by conning others rather than using them when negotiating with alien species.

The round, doughy bull dog of the team was Loaf. Like many of the others, he had cream-hued fur over most of his body, save for the spots atop his head that had brown fur on them. As the one in charge of surveillance, he remained behind on the M-Bark during missions to help keep track of the rest of the team and provide them with intel when necessary. Despite

him not being out in the front lines during missions, he was often the one stressing and panicking the most out of everyone on the crew.

The newest and also by far tallest member of the team was the labrador retriever, Pepper. She was the new Tactical Officer on the team, in charge of helping decide the best course of action for the team to take. She also possessed a strong build for when their best move to make was a violent one. Her whole body was covered from head to toe in black fur. She often had on one of the red-gloved, silver space suits the team would wear when disembarking onto an alien world.

While this team was one of several that were regularly sent out on missions to investigate planets to see if their conditions were feasible to support Earth's life on it, their team was rather notorious for the hijinx and chaos that would often occur on each and every mission they took part in. Their latest mission to the lava planet of Magnanimous V once more continued the chain of calamity they caused throughout the Universe. Yet, like every time before, despite things going side-ways and then upside down, the team still found a way to all make it out alive, but like every time before as well, they found themselves no closer to finding a brand new Earth than when they began.

"Well, crew," announced Captain Garbage as Nomi flew the Pluto away from the giant ball of magma that was Magnanimous V. Despite the outrageously hot conditions of the planet he and the rest of the crew was shivering and covered in patches of snow and frost. "Let's look on the bright side of things. That mission COULD have been more disastrous."

"More disastrous than trying to adjust the thermostat in the Pyronians heat-resistant citadel, the only habitable place on an otherwise entirely molten lava planet," replied a very annoyed Stella as she hugged herself and rubbed her shoulders to generate more heat to warm her body. "Except it wasn't the gauge for the thermostat, but the control of the thermal energy turbine that draws energy from the planet's intense heat, a power source that should have lasted for hundreds of thousands of years and you guys wrecked it."

"Don't you think 'wrecked' is a bit much," Garbage replied, trying to defend himself, though the strained smile on his face was proof enough that he knew full well what a big bad he had done.

"Actually, he's right," corrected Pepper as she tapped some buttons on her computer screen. "You set the device onto overload and broke the controls in the process, the end result being that the seemingly endless thermal energy will be used up in a week's time. From that analysis I'd say 'wrecked' is an absolute understatement."

"Well, how was I supposed to know that device wasn't the thermostat?" Garbage asked, trying to defend himself. "I mean, a little warning could have helped avoid that whole disaster."

“Yeah, you’re right,” Stella replied with sarcasm in her tone. “All those ‘Do Not Enter’ and ‘Authorized Personnel Only’ signs clearly weren’t enough. Or the two guards stationed there to keep anyone from tampering with the controls. Or what the guide told us that room was for while we were touring the citadel. Clearly none of that was sufficient enough to keep you from doing that one really, really bad thing.” She then turned to Ed and Nomi. “And that goes for you two too.”

“Sorry,” apologized Nomi. “But after going on that boring, three hour tour my lust for violence needed to be satiated.”

“To be fair, we did it with the best of intentions,” Ed added. “They did keep the place a bit too warm, especially for thick-furred folk like ourselves. We did it for the betterment of the crew and you can’t fault us for that.”

“You just did it cause you wanted to try and cool the precious metals storage room,” replied Stella, well too aware of their team’s ambassador’s treasure obsession to know what motivated him above all else.

“Okay, you can blame me for that,” Ed confessed, knowing denying that obvious truth was a waste of time. “But in my defense, having to wait a thousand years for any of that gold, silver, and platinum to be cool enough to approach without bursting into flames is such a huge waste, especially when there are hundreds of thousands of tons of the stuff just lying around there.”

“And now because of you three that whole planet is about to go from a million degrees in the positive to a million degrees in the negative,” Stella replied. “The only consolation we’ve got is that the planet wouldn’t be suitable to support human life either way. Still, this is likely another alien race that will become hostile towards humans and us if we ever see them again. What’s that make now?”

“Thirteen,” answered Loaf on his comm. “I’ve been keeping count and I really don’t like how quickly that number has been increasing. “That’s like a new enemy every four planets.”

“The council is not going to like that,” sighed Stella. “Well, nothing we can do but head back to the M-Bark till the next mission. Nomi, is the course set?”

“All set,” she answered, tapping a few buttons on the controls and then holding her paw up for the go ahead from one of her captains.

“Then let’s hit it!” declared Garbage, already sounding chipper again.

“Roger,” the shih tzu replied as she hit the turbo button and sent the ship zooming back to the mothership.

Sighing again, Stella attempted to try and relax on the flight home and forget about that disaster of a mission, however, some sniffles, a cough and then a sneeze caught her attention. Turning to look, she spotted their med and tech officer, Chonies blowing his nose with some tissues at his seat. "Are you okay, Chonies?"

"Oh, I'm fine," he told her before snorting a load of mucus into another tissue that he tossed into a mostly filled waste basket full of kleenexes. As he spoke, his voice sounded quieter than he normally did. "Well, a bit of a runny nose... ACHOO!!! And some sneezing." Grabbing another tissue, he covered his mouth before he started to cough. "And a slight cough. But other than that, I'm perfectly fine."

"You certainly don't look fine," she told him, placing a paw on his forehead before quickly taking it away. "You're burning up."

"Chones!" worried Garbage, getting up to check his friend. Ed and Pepper came over too with the latter putting on a face mask before doing so. "Oh, you must have caught a cold because I turned the whole citadel into a blizzard. I'm sorry."

"It's okay," coughed Chonies, taking another tissue to wipe his nose. "It's not your fault."

"Actually, it is," corrected Ed.

"And not his fault alone," pointed out Pepper.

"I better take you to your room to rest," suggested Garbage, helping his chihuahua friend up. He then carefully carried him off the bridge. "When we get back to the M-Bark we'll take you right to the med center and get you fixed up in no time."

"Actually," sniffled Chonies. "There is no quick cure for the common cold. I can take some stuff to help with the symptoms and eat and rest to keep up my strength, but it'll still take about a week or two till this is completely out of my system."

"Heh," chuckled Garbage. "Humans were able to genetically alter dogs to walk on two legs and have opposable thumbs, yet they still can't cure something as common as a cold."

"Well, it is not all that simple, really," Chonies coughed a bit more. "You see the real issue is that- AAACHOO!" The tiny dog let out another, mighty sneeze that pushed Garbage back and onto his butt, though he managed to keep a secure hold on his friend.

"Maybe save the lengthy explanations for when you're better," suggested Garbage as he got back on his feet and brought Chonies to his bed. He tucked him in and helped him blow his nose into another tissue.

“Thanks, Garbage,” Chonies managed to smile up at him. He then let out a yawn, the fatigue hitting him now that he was in his soft, comfortable bed.

“Anything else I do for you?” he asked. “Maybe turn down the thermostat to help you cool down?”

“No!” the chihuahua cried and they could even hear the rest of the Pluto crew shout the same to him.

“Okay, I get it,” grumbled Garbage. “My thermostat privileges are revoked... just like with my stove privileges... and me getting to use the microwave... and the sink. I don’t even want to think what’ll happen if I get banned from the toilet.”

“None of us do,” commented Ed. “So, please don’t make a mess of that... literally.”

“I’ll be fine till we get back to the M-Bark,” coughed Chonies, forcing himself to speak, to steer the conversation away from where it was headed. “Just go wash up and get sanitized and make sure the others do the same. I’d hate to get everyone else sick.”

“Sure thing, pal,” Garbage nodded and started to take his leave.

“I’ll do my best to get better before our next mission,” Chonies added before Garbage shut the door behind him.

“You just worry about getting better,” Garbage told him. “Captain’s orders.”

“Aye, aye, Captain,” agreed Chonies, closing his eyes and slowly falling asleep.

Chonie’s condition had only worsened on the way back to the M-Bark. His fever had increased and he was barely able to speak coherently. In a panic, the rest of the Pluto crew was quick to disembark from their ship and carry their ailing friend to the medical bay with Garbage and Nomi even pushing past a few other sick and injured dogs in line to get their friend to the front first. Stella and Pepper followed after them, apologizing for their friends’ rudeness.

Ed stayed behind, making a little small talk with the injured canines and offered them a crudely made business card. “Sick, hurt, and laid up in bed,” he recited. “Don’t fret. Just sue with Ed. Leave the accusations to me. And I’ll get you justice... for a nominal fee.” Despite the catchy jingle, none of them looked interested and went back to ailing from their conditions. With a grumble, Ed made his way after the rest of the crew.

Reaching the receptionist, the Pluto team explained their friend’s condition and were promptly led to a vacant sick room to place Chonies in the bed there. After that, the crew waited around for a doctor to come in. Soon enough, one did, a black, shaggy-furred German

Shepherd dressed in a white doctor's coat with a stethoscope around his neck. Putting on a mask and some surgical gloves, he started to inspect Chonies, checking out his eyes, in his mouth, and then in his ears. All the while he did this he merely mumbled and hummed.

"Is Chonies going to be okay?" asked a worried Garbage, recalling how hot his friend's body was while he was helping carry him over.

"It's a pretty bad cold he's got," answered the doctor, opening a cabinet to take out a couple of pills. Grabbing a paper cup from a dispenser, he then filled it with water from the nearby sink. "But with proper rest and some medicine to help, he'll make a full recovery in no time." Leaning towards Chonies with the pills and water, he asked him. "Think you can take these."

"Uh huh," he managed to nod, sitting up a little as he put the pills into his mouth and swallowed them down with some water.

"That's a good boy," the doctor told Chonies as the little dog took a deep breath and tried to go back to sleep. "Are any of you feeling any symptoms?"

The rest of the crew looked at one another then shook their heads. "No, looks like we're all fine," Stella spoke for the team.

"Well, come back if any of you feel a fever coming on," he instructed the crew. "For now, it'd be best to let your friend rest."

"When can we come back to see him?" asked a very anxious Garbage.

"Give him a couple of days to sleep and recover his strength," the German Shepherd answered as he rubbed his chin. "By then his fever should start to go down a little. He'll still need a couple weeks to fully heal even with medical treatment, but you can rest assured that he's in the best of paws."

Doing as the doctor told them, the crew returned to see Chonies a few days later. To their delight, and his, the chihuahua's fever had gone down a lot, though his sneezing and coughing remained as frequent as ever for the first full week. Luckily, by day seven even those symptoms had begun to lessen too.

"How are you feeling today?" asked Garbage, bringing in a balloon shaped like a t-bone steak to go with some other partially deflated balloons and some starting to wilt flowers he and the others had brought in as gifts for their friend on previous visits.

“Eight days better,” spoke a congested-sounding Chonies. “My coughing is a lot less frequent and I’m barely sneezing now. My nose is still running a lot, but I’m not going through a full box of tissues in a single day anymore.”

“That’s great, Chones,” told a delighted Garbage, bringing him over the balloon. “Anything else you need? Do you need your pillow fluffed or how about another game of cheese?”

“My pillow is fine, but, sure, I’ll play another game of cheese, uh, I mean chess with you,” the chihuahua chuckled. “I kinda wish I could be sick all the time if you and the others would pay this much attention to me.”

“Anything to help you feel better,” Garbage told him. Taking out the chess board, he started to put the pieces on, managing to recall the correct order for a few of them before Chonies helped reposition the wrong ones correctly. “I’m sure I’ll figure this game out eventually. I might even finally beat you some day. I mean, maybe not in the first hundred games, but surely in the second hundred, at least once.”

“Maybe,” answered Chonies as he considered what to do for his opening move and was already calculating several moves ahead based on his friend’s novice chess tactics. “So, where is everyone else? You usually all come together.” He moved a pawn forward two spaces.

“The council called for us,” Garbage explained, making his move. “Stella went with the others to handle it while I came over to see you.”

“Guess that means we’re getting our next assignment,” the chihuahua concluded, moving another pawn up. “Time for another simple mission that ends up becoming unnecessarily dangerous and life threatening. Heh. Never thought I’d be so happy saying all that.”

“About that,” Garbage tried to say, struggling with the words a little. “As much as we’d love for you to come, you shouldn’t push yourself if you’re not fully recovered. We wouldn’t want you getting sick all over again.”

“Sorry, Garbage,” Chonies replied in a somber tone. “I had hoped I’d be all better before we got our next mission. I’d hate for you to go without your med/tech officer.”

“Yeah, also, it wouldn’t be the same without you, bud,” agreed Garbage. “And no doubt Stella and the others feel the same way. They’re probably convincing the council to postpone the mission till you’re all better.” As he said that the door slid open and the rest of the crew made their way in. “Oh, speak of the Hoover, here they are now.”

“Hey Stelle, everybody,” greeted Chonies with a friendly wave. A small cough snuck out of him that he was quick to cover with his paw.

“Hiya, Chonies,” Nomi greeted him back. “Are you feeling any better today?”

“Yes, a lot better,” he replied after clearing his throat. “Not a hundred percent yet, but I am at least in the mid to high seventies. I will definitely be all better by the time we go on our next mission.”

“Unfortunately,” reported Pepper, deciding to take the job of the bearer of bad news. “We’ve already been given our next assignment to investigate Planet Petite in the Gourmet Galaxy and we’re set to depart in just a little while.”

“Oh,” replied the chihuahua, trying his best to not sound saddened by this news as he looked at his crew that were also trying to keep from frowning at what this obviously meant. None of the crew looked eager to say more. “Well, that’s okay.”

“Sorry, Chones,” Garbage apologized. “I was really hoping we wouldn’t be given another mission so soon.”

“No need to apologize,” the still ailing, little, brown dog replied, sniffing his runny nose. “It’s the counsel’s decision and all we can do is follow orders.” Sitting up more, Chonies turned to get out of bed. “I might not be at a hundred percent, but seventy-four, no, seventy-eight percent should be more than enough.”

“Chonies,” Ed told his friend as he stood in his way to keep him from getting out of bed. “Take it from a guy who would and will take every chance to use a sick day anytime we go to a planet that doesn’t welcome visitors with a gift basket of gold and jewels. There is no shame in sitting out a mission... or five.”

“Seven, last time I checked,” commented Stella, looking none too happy to recall his numerous, questionable absences in the past.

“Don’t worry about me,” the chihuahua meekly countered. “I’ll cover up and bring plenty of disinfectant so none of you will catch my cold.”

“It’s not us that we’re worried about,” Stella stated, helping Chonies back into bed and covering his front with his blanket. “You may be feeling better, but till and only when have fully recovered will you be allowed to return to duty and those are orders coming from you captain... both your captains.” Looking at Garbage, he solemnly bowed his head in agreement with his co-captain.

“But what would you do without your Med/Tech officer?” asked Chonies. “Were you given a substitute?”

“No, of course not,” Nomi assured her equally small buddy. “And not just because nobody would be crazy enough to go on a mission with us due to our track record of nearly dying on multiple occasions per mission. We already agreed that we would not take anyone else before that was even brought up at the council meeting.”

“But you can’t go on a mission without a Med/Tech officer,” Chonies reminded them. “How can you go on a mission without me or a replacement?” Thinking about this for a moment, Chonies then looked over at Loaf.

“What? Me? Nonono,” the anthro bulldog replied, holding up his arms defensively. “I’m still needed here on the M-Bark, plus I was first on the list of dogs not wanting to go on a mission with these guys.”

“None of us might have your training or smarts for the job,” Stella replied. “But we’ve all had to take some classes in the field, so if we put our heads together we should be able to manage.”

“Also,” added Pepper. “After reviewing the data the probes sent for initial reconnaissance of the planet, it doesn’t appear to possess much, if any, fauna lifeforms, intelligent or otherwise on it. The atmosphere is breathable and scans haven’t detected anything particularly dangerous so, if all goes well, we probably won’t be there for longer than a day. If things go very well, this could even be just the planet we’ve been looking for.”

“And I won’t be there to share in the moment if it is,” sighed Chonies.

“Relax, bud,” Ed said to comfort him. “Don’t forget, it’s us. Even if it was the most ideal planet in the Universe, for humanity and dogs to live on, and there was absolutely nothing we could do to ruin it, we’d still find a way to mess it up.”

“That is true,” agreed Chonies, feeling a bit better by that fact.

“Sadly, it is,” sighed Stella, rubbing her temple in frustration.

“Regardless of that fact,” interrupted Pepper. “We’ve got a mission to see through, so we’d best head to the ship and get preparations underway.”

“And don’t worry,” promised Garbage, rubbing his friend on the head. “We’ll do our best to make sure we don’t get involved in too many zany antics while you’re gone. Oh, and in the event that we do, Loaf will be here to keep you filled in.”

“I’ll do my best,” Loaf replied. “Though, I hope that doesn’t mean I’ve gotta keep walking back and forth between the med bay and communications. My thighs are already chafing just thinking about how far of a walk that is.”

“Thanks, guys,” smiled Chonies, feeling a bit better after their little chat. “I still don’t like not being able to go, but I am feeling a bit better.”

“Glad to hear it,” yipped Nomi. “Need anything else before we go?”

“No,” he shook his head and reached for a glass of water and some pills on his end table. “I’ve got everything I need right here. With a bit more rest I’ll be good as new. Who knows. I might be all better by the time you guys get back here, tomorrow.”

“Then we’ll definitely have to take you out to eat at our usual diner then,” suggested Captain Garbage, getting a nod and some murmurs of agreement from the rest of the crew. “I’m sure after being stuck in here with just hospital food you’re probably dying to eat just about anything.”

“Heheh. Yeah, I really could go for just about anything else and a lot of it at that,” chuckled their chihuahua friend in the middle of taking his medicine. “I’ve been craving a nice big meal for days now. The food here is okay, if not a little bland and in very meager portions. When I finally get out of here I definitely wanna eat my fill.” Chonies gave his belly some rubs as he imagined a feast all for him to chow down on. “Oh, now I really can’t wait for tomorrow.”

“Well, get plenty of rest and before you know it, tomorrow will be today,” encouraged Garbage.

“Just don’t get too much sleep or you might end up with tomorrow being yesterday,” warned Nomi.

“I’ll be careful,” yawned Chonies, resting his head on his pillow as he allowed his body to relax and start to drift off to sleep. “Cause I definitely don’t wanna miss eating with you guys.” A couple heavy yawns and Chonies was quick to go to sleep.

“Poor Chonies,” Stella spoke quietly. “He’s feeling better, but it’s definitely still taking a lot out of him to recover. Hopefully, he will be past it by tomorrow.”

“No doubt in my mind about that,” Garbage stated confidently. “Now, let’s get going. The sooner we clear this mission the sooner it’ll be tomorrow.”

“Then let’s get going everybody,” announced Stella, waving them on and they hurried out of Chonie’s quarters to let him rest.

“So, what was the name of the planet again?” inquired Garbage as they made their way to the Pluto.

“Oh, right, you missed the briefing,” commented Pepper. “Well, like I was saying before, it’s called ‘Planet Petite’ and it doesn’t appear to be dangerous and it does seem ideal for us

and humanity to live on. That being said, while the sensors from the probes we sent didn't detect anything particularly threatening, they did pick up some irregularities, though the data sent back wasn't enough for us to figure out exactly what they were. Hopefully, we'll be able to determine the strange readings with our own eyes, when we get there."

"Whatever is up with that planet we'll figure it out and be back for Chonies faster than a dachshund catching its own tail," stated Garbage.

"And it wasn't worth all the effort doing that too," commented the long weiner dog calling out from another nearby room. He had a number of bandages over his rump and a humiliated expression on his face. "It still smarts where I chomped down on my hiney."

"Urghhh... Argh... Ooooooh..." moaned and grumbled Chonies as he started to awaken, finding himself still in his sick bed. Opening his eyes, he took a moment to see how he was feeling and a warm smile and a relief-filled sigh escaped his maw. "Oh, yes. That extra day's worth of rest was just what I needed. Now I'm feeling good as new." Making an attempt to breathe through his nose was quickly met with some snotty, phlegmy interference. "Well, my nose is still a little stuffed up, but that should clear up on its own, soon enough. I can't wait for everyone to show up so I can tell them the great news."

"Zzzzzzz," came a sudden noisy snoozing from the foot of Chonie's bed.

"What was that?" wondered the chihuahua as he climbed out of bed and walked around to see who was sleeping there. To his surprise, it was Loaf. "Uh, are you okay?" he asked as he approached the sleeping dog to gently nudge him awake.

"Huh? Who? Wha?" the bulldog mumbled as he started to stir. Opening his eyes, he saw Chonies looking down at him. "Oh, Chonies, you're awake! How are you feeling today?"

"I'm feeling good as new," he smiled before giving his nose a little wipe while his skinny, little tail swung from side to side energetically. "Still got a bit of a leaky nose, but other than that my fever's broken, my cough is gone and my tail's got its groove back. I can't wait to tell the rest of the Pluto team that I'm all ready to return to duty."

"And I'm sure they'd be howling at the moon with delight to hear you tell them that," worried Loaf. "The only problem is, the whole rest of the team is missing!"

"Missing?!?" cried Chonies. "What happened to them?"

"Remember that mission that seemed like it was going to be a very low risk that even our team shouldn't have been able to screw it up?"

“We screwed it up,” assumed Chonies, not sounding the least bit surprised if that was the case.

“I don’t know the exact details, but that seems to be the case,” Loaf panted. “Everything was going so well too. They made it to the planet and from what they were saying things looked great down there. They were really excited, going on about how it looks like a paradise with all sorts of food to eat and then next thing I know one-by-one their communicators started to only transmit garbled, muffled noise and none of them would respond no matter how much I called out to them.”

“That’s terrible!” cried Chonies, shaking with worry as he could only imagine what horrors had befallen his teammates. “I hope you don’t mean to tell me that they are d-d-d-”

“Done for?” guessed Loaf, fearfully. “According to the sensors on their suits they all still have strong life signs and aside from one their stress levels don’t appear to be going through the roof.”

“Is the one, you?” guessed Chonies, certain of his assumption.

“Yes, though that is normal for me with every mission, but that’s beside the point,” he continued to say. “I can’t contact the team at all since they landed on the planet and all the other exploratory teams are away on their own missions so we can’t even send out a rescue party. I went to the council to see if they could recall the Mercury Team from that planet populated with living vacuum cleaners.” He shuddered as he said that. “Ugh, no idea why we’d ever set foot on such a horrible, horrible place like that, but they declined my request since the lives of our teammates aren’t ‘technically’ in danger from the readings I’ve been getting.”

“Meaning, it’s up to the two of us to go and save them,” worried Chonies, not liking the idea of having all that burden placed onto his tiny dog shoulders.

“Which is why I came here to tell you,” breathed Loaf as he took a seat on Chonie’s hospital bed. “But between all the worrying and running around... I, uh, kinda fell asleep at the foot of your bed and now a full day has gone by and who knows if the rest of the team is still okay!”

“Well, you head back to comms and check on them,” instructed the chihuahua. “I’m going to get prepared and head out to Planet Petite to find our friends.”

“But, how are you going to do that?” questioned Loaf. “All the other ships are still out.”

“Maybe, but I just need to give a friend a quick call to give me a ride,” he explained. “Hopefully, he isn’t too far away from the M-Bark.”

“Okay, you call your friend and I’ll head back to comms,” Loaf breathed heavily, getting up and grabbing Chonie’s pillow. “Probably gonna need another nap by the time I get there too.”

Taking his leave, Loaf trudged along out of the medbay. Meanwhile, Chonies tapped a button on his red collar and sent out a signal into deep space. “Come on,” hoped the chihuahua as he listened to the ringing sound coming from his collar. “Please pick up. Please pick up.”

“H... Hello? Friend Chonies?” spoke a robotic voice coming out of a speaker on his collar.

“Oh, Cy-Bark,” the dog breathed a huge sigh of relief. “I’m glad I was able to reach you. My team went on a mission while I was sick and now we can’t get in touch with them. I need help getting to Planet Petite to find them and was hoping you’d be able to assist me with the rescue mission.”

“That won’t be any problem at all,” the robotic dog told him. “My current position is not too far away from the M-Bark. I’ll be able to rendezvous with you in approximately 17 minutes and 36 seconds. If time is of the essence, then I suggest you get prepared yourself and meet me in the M-Bark’s hangar for immediate departure.”

“I’ll be waiting for you there,” answered an eager Chonies as he started to run out of the med bay, passing by Loaf who was still making his way out at a much slower pace.

“Good news,” Chonies called to Loaf as he left. “Cy-Bark was around and we’ll be leaving for the planet in about twenty minutes.”

“Oh, glad to hear that,” he wheezed. “And by the time you get to the planet, I’ll, hopefully, make it to comms.”

“I should be all set up now,” noted Chonies as he zipped up his white and red space suit and looked out into space from the M-Bark’s hangar. “Suited up and got all my gear together. All I need now is to wait for Cy-Bark to get here.” Tapping his foot frantically as his anxiety dwindled his patience, he could barely keep still. “Did he get delayed by space traffic or something? Oh, why’s he running late?”

“Correction,” spoke the robotic voice as a large mecha suit made its way through the atmosphere shield of the hangar. “I calculated my eta with any and all obstacles along the most direct route and arrived at the exact time I specified.”

Cy-Bark had a white and silver frame with bulky arms and legs that possessed as much dexterity and movement as an organic equivalent. On top of the torso was a glass dome that opened up into the cockpit that was equipped with a cushioned seat and a number of controls.

While the glass dome was normally clear to allow viewing in and out of the cockpit this mech suit was different as it was dark and displayed a pair of circles for eyes and a couple of round-cornered triangles for a mouth and nose. On the sides of the dome were two black flaps that resembled ears. On its torso were three stickers and though they appeared like simple decals, they were actually very advanced alien AI technology that boosted the mech's capabilities and granted it its sentience.

"Cy-Bark!" cheered Chonies hurrying over to the sentient mecha and hugged his leg. "I'm so glad you're here! Have you been doing well?"

"With proper maintenance of my systems and parts I have been indeed doing well," he responded. "It has, however, been a lengthy interval since our last encounter and I was considering contacting you at some point to reestablish communications when you happened to make contact with me prior."

"Yeah, I've been missing you too, bud," smiled Chonies as he sniffled and snorted against his clogged nose. "Sorry that this couldn't just be a recreational visit, but I'm glad you're here to help me find the rest of my crew."

"You know I am always available whenever you require space travel and/or a fully equipped battle mecha," Cy-Bark informed him. "That being said, we should make use of my features post haste if we are to reach Petite in a timely manner."

"Oh, right," agreed Chonies as he backed away and let his robot companion open up his dome to allow him to jump inside and buckle up his seatbelt. Looking at the display screens, the chihuahua saw that their course was already set. "I'm all geared up and our course is set. Alright, Cy-Bark, let's get going!"

"Roger," he answered. "Approximate time to reach the planet will be in 1 hour, 26 minutes and 54 seconds... Starting now."

Turning to face towards the atmosphere shield, Cy-Bark started his engines, letting them roar to life before taking off, zooming out of the hangar and into space at an incredible speed. In the blink of an eye they put a great deal of distance between them and the M-Bark as they made their way to the Gourmet Galaxy. For the most part, they soared through space in a straight, direct line towards their destination planet, but, every so often, Cy-Bark activated his thrusters to either allow for some slight course correction or to avoid any space debris in their way.

"Hey, Chonies," Loaf called to the chihuahua through the speaker on his collar. He was breathing heavily as he spoke. "I just made it to comms. How are you doing?"

"Cy-Bark came and picked me up and we're on our way to planet Petite, right now. We'll reach it in... uh..."

“One hour, 13 minutes and 6 seconds,” finished Cy-Bark.

“Have you had any luck in contacting the rest of the team yet?” inquired Chonies, hoping for some good news to lessen the worry on the long flight over.

“Sorry, but there’s been no change,” Loaf answered. “It’s all just lots of muffled, unintelligible noises. The only thing I can tell is that these noises are definitely coming from our crew, but as to why it’s coming out all garbled like this, I can’t even imagine and I don’t want to.”

“Well, hopefully, when we find the team we’ll be able to give you an answer that won’t make you start hyperventilating into a paper bag.”

“I hope so too,” replied the bulldog. “But, if you don’t, I got one at the ready. Uh, anyhow, I should probably go over what the team did report before things went sideways, upside down, and the inside out.”

“We’re all ears, Loaf,” replied Chonies, not liking the dread-filled way he worded it, but he awaited what Loaf had to tell them then anyway.

“First off,” he informed them. “While the probes weren’t able to detect any lifeforms on the planet, the crew did report seeing some old unnatural structures on the planet.”

“Does that mean that there was a civilization that existed here and it was wiped out?” wondered Chonies. “Or perhaps something happened on the planet that forced them to leave it?”

“I was thinking something like that too, but the way the crew was describing the place it sounded like an absolute paradise,” continued Loaf. “That the planet had a perfect climate and tons of food everywhere. Even if something did happen to the original civilization that lived there you’d think some other space-capable alien race would have found and occupied this world by now. So, that became a big mystery for the crew to figure out, but, not long after that, I started losing contact with them one after another. As for what got them, I haven’t got the slightest idea. For all we know, the two of you could end up just like them, alive, but worryingly unresponsive.”

“Well, to rescue the team from whatever trouble they are in, we’ll have to be extra cautious,” stated Chonies, hugging himself and shaking as he worried about just what was the truth behind all these mysteries. “But, if worse comes to worse, we’ll just have to report everything we can to you so that you can send a more prepared backup to save us... but...”

“But what?” cried Loaf as he tugged at his ears. “You know how much I hate pausing important sentences after a ‘but.’ Because it’s always due to something very bad about to be said when the speaker continues.”

“But if the trouble we’re in is too dangerous,” finished Chonies, not at all content to say all this either. “You’ll have to relay it to the council that this planet is too dangerous and make sure the others steer clear of it, for their own safety. Though, let’s try not to dwell on this being a worse case scenario and consider maybe it’s something else non-life threatening that happened to them.”

“Like what?” asked Loaf, his paper bag already clenched tightly in his paws for immediate use.

“Maybe...” pondered Chonies, trying to think of what would make sense for the situation his team was in. Maybe they had a run in with a ton of extra chunky peanut butter and, well, you know how crazy we dogs are for the stuff. And maybe the team ended up getting stuck in it and their tongues got glued to the top of their mouths from eating it too. That’d certainly explain everything, wouldn’t it?”

“Yeah, it would,” agreed Loaf, though he didn’t sound confident in that explanation. “But, Chonies, just because that happened twice on missions before and that one time on the M-Bark, that doesn’t mean it happened again.”

“Well, it was just one idea, but my point still stands that we can’t give up on the team yet,” he continued. “After all, how many insane situations have we been in that we managed to get out of with only minor mental scarring and new potential enemies swearing eternal vengeance on us.”

“Heheh, yeah,” answered Loaf as he let out a nervous laugh. “Sure. That is true enough. Anyway, what are the odds that whatever they’re dealing with right now is all that terrible that we’ll need to enact such a worse-case contingency plan?”

“I could tell you,” Cy-Bark chimed in. “But it certainly won’t make you worry any less, so I won’t.”

“Swell,” Loaf replied as his voice cracked and he worried more anyway after being told that.

“Um... we’ve still got a while to go till we get to the planet,” pointed out Chonies after seeing how much the tension had grown in the few minutes they had chatted. “Why not take a break and calm your nerves, Loaf?”

“I was hoping you’d say that,” the bulldog replied before he started taking deep breaths into his paper bag to attempt to work through his stress. As the bag inflated it looked like it might burst like a balloon and when he inhaled, it almost looked like he might inhale the bag right down his throat.

“Uh, got any new tunes we can listen to while we fly to Planet Petit?” wondered Chonies, turning off communications with Loaf so he wouldn’t have to listen to him breath into a paper bag for the next few hours.

“Why yes,” he answered. “Since we last interacted, I have added 8,397 new songs to my hard drive. All of it Cosmic Polka.”

“Is that... even a thing?” Chonies questioned before the music started playing and the noise that suddenly blared from Cy-Bark’s speakers was enough to make him prefer listening to the terror that was the vacuum cleaner instead. “What even is this?”

“The electric accordion,” Cy-Bark explained. “Not a fan of it?”

“No!” Chonies howled as he gripped his ears. “Either play something else or turn the radio off before I have to tear my ears off. Please!”

“Sorry,” the robot dog replied before his speakers went silent. “Unfortunately, I had to purge all the other music on my hard drive for all this.”

“A huge fan, I take it,” panted Chonies, relieved at the silence, though he could still faintly hear that racket echoing in his ears.

“Affirmative,” the robot dog confirmed before a short silence commenced before he added. “Maybe we could listen to just one of my favorites?”

At first instinct, Chonies wanted to adamantly refuse, but just the way his robotic friend spoke, it was clear that he was truly hoping for him to at least give it a try. “I guess I could tolerate... one, short one,” Chonies answered, not sounding all that eager to hear any more.

Over an hour of listening to cosmic polka’s greatest hits later...

“Wow, you were right, Cy-Bark,” Chonies told his robotic dog friend as they entered the atmosphere of Planet Petit. Using their propulsion jets to slow their descent, they prevented the friction of the atmosphere from causing them to burn up into a giant fireball as they made their way over to the coordinates of the Pluto’s landing site. “Cosmic Polka really is great once you’ve heard it enough.”

“I calculated that you would come around after experiencing six or seven songs,” he replied.

“Yeah, you were right,” nodded Chonies. “At first I thought I was simply going mad, but after ten minutes of nonstop laugh-crying I realized that wasn’t the case. So, any chance we have time for one more song?”

“Negative,” Cy-Bark answered as he reverted from his ship form back into a battle mech so that he could land on his feet. He then opened up his face screen to allow Chonies to see the planet with his own eyes. “We have arrived at our destination.”

“Well, save it for the trip back to the M-Bark then,” the chihuahua suggested as he hopped out of the cockpit and onto the ground. Though he was in his silver space suit, he didn’t have the helmet on and took a slow breath to fill his lungs with the planet’s oxygen. “Even the air here is just right. This world definitely is perfect for humanity and dogs, though whatever happened to my team would say otherwise.” Nervousness returned to the tiny brown dog as he began his investigation. First, he hurried to check out the Pluto, running up the ramp to check inside for any of his friends.

“Hello? Garbage? Stella?” he called out to them as he checked each room for any trace of his crew. “Where are you guys? Nomi? Ed? Pepper? It’s me, Chonies. I’m feeling better now and came to make sure you guys are okay.” Feeling his nose getting runny, he sniffled and wiped away some of his dripping mucus. “Well, mostly better.” He waited, and hoped for some response, but he got nothing but the eerie and unsettling silence of a ship devoid of onboard personnel. Looking around the place, besides it being empty, nothing appeared to have been touched or disturbed since the crew disembarked. “Guess it was wishful thinking that they’d all just be on the ship waiting for me to show up.”

With a sigh, Chonies made his way back out of the Pluto. Looking over the ship, it didn’t have any external signs of being attacked either. “I guess whatever happened to Garbage and the others must have occurred after they left the ship,” he noted as he then made his way to his robotic ally. “No sign of them being on the ship. Have your sensors picked up anything?”

“Affirmative,” answered the robot, much to Chonie’s delight. “I am detecting five life signals in a mile radius up ahead. The closest reading is about fifty meters in that direction and matches the bio readings of Captain Garbage. Shall I lead you to him?”

“Oh, yes! Please! Hurry!” exclaimed an excited Chonies, already imagining the scene that would play out upon their reunion.

“Thank you for saving me from whatever terrible situation I was in, Chonies,” Captain Garbage said in Chonie’s head as he fantasized. “I knew I was right in making you my bestest bud. How about a hug and when we get back to the M-Bark we can play another game of chess even though I still don’t know how most of the pieces move.”

“No, worries, Garbage,” the chihuahua replied happily. “I’ll go over them again when we get back to the M-Bark. Then we can play as much as we want.”

“Really?” stated the Garbage in Chonies mind with far too much excitement for the cerebral game. “Oh, you’re the best friend a dog could ever ask for, Chones.”

“Oh, you’re making me blush,” flushed Chonies, waving a paw.

“Are you having a relapse with your cold, Chonies?” asked Cy-Bark as he stared at his fantasizing friend.

“Huh? Wha?” he mumbled and blushed when he realized he had zoned out for a minute. “Oh, no. My cold is just about gone.” Snorting, he took out a tissue to wipe his nose with it. “Just this runny nose, but it’s cleared up more since we left the M-Bark. In a bit more time my sniffer will be completely unclogged and able to smell things again. Now, let’s hurry to those life signals. My friends could be in great big trouble as we speak.”

“Affirmative,” agreed the robotic canine. “Your closest friend is in this direction.”

“Lead the way,” barked Chonies as the two hurried from the landing site and towards where their friends were. They trudged their way through the thick foliage of the planet’s forest, doing their best to tread through the path that the Pluto Team had made, though Cy-Bark’s large, bulky body forced him to widen the way forward even more to allow him to fit.

“There’s still no telling what’s become of my friends,” thought Chonies as they made their way forward, his focus solely on what was ahead of them. “But it doesn’t matter what terrible secrets this planet may hide. Nothing is going to stop me from saving them. Nothing!”

Pushing another tree that was in his way out of it, Cy-Bark knocked something out of it that fell behind him and right at his much smaller teammate. “Chonies, watch out!”

“Watch what?” the chihuahua asked too lost in his thoughts to notice something was falling right at him till it was already too late. It struck him right in his temple and the shock sent him falling onto his rear. “Owie!”

“Sorry about that,” apologized Cy-Bark. “Are you okay?”

“My glutes are a bit sore, but I’m fine,” the dog replied, rubbing his rear. “Whatever hit me on the head was actually soft and…” Bringing a paw to his forehead, Chonies discovered something red on it. It wasn’t blood, but its consistency was very familiar. Risking a taste, his eyes widened when the flavor hit his tongue. “Ketchup? What in the world fell on my head?” Turning to look at it, his shock at seeing what it was was even greater than when he was hit by it. It was a long, skinny cylinder of meat wrapped snugly in a bread bun and accompanied by a combination of mustard, ketchup and relish. Rubbing his eyes and blinking a few times to make certain he wasn’t seeing things, the unexpected but familiar object was still on the ground. Picking it up, Chonies was only able to utter, “This is a hotdog.”

“A hotdog with mustard, relish, and ketchup,” specified Cy-Bark as he took a look at it too and then observed the trees around them. “My optics see that it is not the only one in the trees either.”

“Who would put hotdogs in trees?” wondered Chonies. “Even compared to some of the weird things my crew has done, even they wouldn’t do that.”

“These hotdogs were not put in these trees by somebody,” corrected Cy-Bark as he grabbed one carefully from the tree and showed to Chonies that it was actually physically attached to it as if it was a fruit. “It appears that these hotdogs were actually grown on it.”

“But that’s impossible!” cried Chonies, unable to believe it even while he was seeing it with his own eyes. Looking around at other trees he saw more of the wieners partially covered up by leaves. “At least, it should be.”

“And it appears that’s not the only thing growing on the trees,” added Cy-Bark as he pulled someone from another tree, this time revealing a cheeseburger with the works. “Burgers also grow on trees on this planet.”

“Loaf, are you hearing all of this?” Chonies asked as he pressed a paw to the comms device in his ear.

“Burgers and hotdogs growing on trees,” he replied while drooling, but looking no less worried. “It sounds like my idea of heaven. Please don’t tell me I’m talking to you from beyond the grave... though, if you are, do bushes grow fries?”

“Um... no,” Chonies shook his head. “At least not in any of the ones I see.” Reaching into a nearby bush he plucked out a small breaded and fried piece of chicken. “But they do have chicken nuggets in them.”

“Even better,” the bulldog said while licking his chops and drooling. “And if I wasn’t certain that you wandered into the afterlife I’d probably be flying my way over to that planet right now.”

“I don’t know what’s the cause of this strange vegetation,” commented Chonies, looking between the burgers, hotdogs, and chicken nuggets and debating whether or not he should give them a try. “But I certainly don’t think we’ve died and gone to the big fire hydrant in the sky. Whatever is going on with this planet, we’ll have to investigate and find out, but first, we still need to find the rest of the Pluto team.”

“Chonies, come quick,” Cy-Bark called to his chihuahua comrade after choosing to take a look further ahead while Loaf and he were gabbing.

“Please tell me you found the others and not just more odd food,” he begged as he hurried his tiny legs over to him and took a look, finding the forest opened up into a field with a lake in the middle of it. However, rather than being filled with crystal blue water, something goopy and yellowy orange occupied that stretch of land instead. While he was curious about what it was, not seeing any of his friends caused him to sigh heavily and frown. “You didn’t.”

“Incorrect,” he countered and pointed at a large, silver, bulbous sphere at one side of the lake. “We have arrived at Captain Garbage’s location.”

“Garbage?” questioned Chonies, approaching the strange object by the lake. “But that’s just some weird silvery rock thing. That’s not Gar...” As Chonies moved in closer, his eyes grew huge and his jaw dropped as he recognized that the round object he was staring at was one of the space suits he and his team wore on their missions, though this one appeared to be blimped out to ridiculous proportions. Pressing a paw against it, he could tell it was occupied and hurrying around to the head, he checked to see that it was indeed his captain, just as Cy-Bark had reported.

“Garbage! What on Planet Petite happened to you, buddy?!?” Chonies cried as he frantically ran around the bloated space suit of his friend, spotting his red gloved and booted arms and legs of the suit too and saw they had thickened greatly from how they normally appeared. They were stubbier-looking as well as the torso of the suit appeared to have enveloped them after growing so rotund. Despite such an odd sight, the worried canine was far less interested in the limbs of and far more concerned at reaching the side where the head hole was. Once he managed to run himself calm again, he quickly walked nervously over to his head that was facing into the lake.

Getting a closer look at Garbage's head, Chonies saw that it was just as bloated and doughy as the rest of his body had become. The cushion of fat around his neck looked at least three times thicker than it did normally and a second fold had formed on top of it. The corgi's cheeks had become comically bloated like he had been trying to stuff his cheeks like a squirrel. Chonies paid those observations little attention, however, as what he was mainly focused upon was the horrific sight of seeing his captain's face submerged beneath the surface of the goopy lake and completely motionless. “N-N-No... It can't be,” he voice trembled and he felt ready to start bawling his eyes out. “Not Captain Garbage. Not my best friend!”

Suddenly, Garbage's head emerged from the goopy lake, gasping for breath and looking around. “Huh? Wha? Chonies, is that you? Are you feeling better?”

“G-Garbage?!?” exclaimed Chonies, jumping for joy that his friend was moving and speaking with him. Unable to help himself, he hugged at his friend, partially sinking into the thick layers of blubber on his neck and face. “Y-Yeah, it's me and my fever broke, but that hardly matters right now. What about you? Are you okay? I mean, clearly you aren't, but I'm grateful that you're alive.”

“Oh, I’m much better than alive,” he answered, letting out a deep belch that went on for several seconds that Chonies patiently waited through. “We’ve found the perfect planet for dogs and humans to live on. Just like the initial readings said on it, it’s got breathable air, a stable atmosphere and, uh, other good things, but the best thing of all is what we discovered upon landing here. Chonies, food is everywhere on this planet and I mean the really, really good kind. Hotdogs and hamburgers in trees... Flowers made of onion rings and mud that tastes like peanut butter...”

“Uh, yeah, I’ve seen a few of those things,” the chihuahua answered the obese corgi, far from as enthusiastic about all this as he was. He wanted to question his friend about what happened to him, but he was at a loss for words on that matter at the moment. “And this lake... is made of?”

“Cheese,” he answered, drool leaking from his maw as he uttered that single word while a look of sheer bliss glistened in his eyes and he sniffed its scent up deeply. “It’s a wonderful fountain of cheddar fondue. Oh, and you have to try one of the cattails. Their tops are wrapped in bacon. Here, let me get you one.”

Grunting and groaning, Captain Garbage attempted to retrieve one of the cattails in the water, however, he couldn’t even get off of his gut and sit himself upright. Here merely squirmed and fidgeted and eventually gave up and started panting heavily. “Huh? What’s going on? Why do I feel like I do when I’ve eaten myself to a standstill?”

“Maybe because you have... and then some,” answered Chonies. “Just look at the state your body is in.”

“My body?” repeated Garbage, turning his blubbery head to see and his jaw dropped at the tons of lard that were stretching his space suit to ridiculous proportions. “What happened to my body? I just told the rest of the crew to go on ahead and I’d catch up with them after I had a little snack. It’s only been a few minutes, so, how did I end up like this?”

“A few minutes?” pondered Chonies. “I get the feeling that you might have been gorging yourself on this cheesy lake for at least a full day.”

“I was chugging delicious, melted cheese for that long?” replied the overweight corgi, his face full of disbelief. “Well, not the worst use of my time.” Turning his face back towards the lake again, he licked more of it up.

“You really shouldn’t stuff yourself anymore,” warned Chonies, trying to keep his captain from licking up even more of the melted cheese with very little success. He even attempted to physically lift his head out of the lake, but his captain resisted his aid. “At your current proportions you’ll barely fit into the Pluto.”

"I'm sorry," whimpered Garbage, struggling against the chihuahua to shove his face back into the delicious glop of food. "But I can't help it. It tastes so wonderful that I just have to have more and even before that, the hunger-inducing aromas of this planet had me feeling peckish from the second I set foot on the planet."

"All the more reason you should stop eating right now!" cried Chonies as he turned to Cy-Bark. "Can you give me a hand rolling my captain away from this lake?"

"I'll even give you two," offered the robot dog as he easily rolled the blob of a dog a short distance from the lake and sat him so he wasn't stuck lying on his belly.

"Oh, please roll me back," whined Garbage, his belly rumbling despite how much he had filled it with. "I'm still so hungry."

"You have to get a hold of yourself," the chihuahua told his friend. "This weird planet is turning you into a bowling ball of a chow hound between the hunger-inducing smells and the fattening and addictive food." Another thought then came to Chonie's mind as he started off further ahead, but could only see more forest. "And the fact that the rest of the crew is nowhere in sight must mean that they have ended up as obese as you from this planet too."

"Yeah, they were all looking hungry as I was and am as we explored the planet, but what about you, Chonies?" asked Garbage, drool running down his muzzle while his nose kept sniffing deeply the aromas in the air. "We all barely started our expedition here before the smells got all our bellies rumbling. Right after that, we started to munch on all sorts of food that the planet had to offer. I lost sight of the others when I got here, but if I've been eating for as long as you say I was then they're probably just as overfed as me now. But, you don't seem to be as starved as I still feel I am."

"That's probably because of this," answered Chonies and he wiped his nose with a tissue. "Because of my cold my nose got all stuffed up. I can't smell anything so my hunger hasn't been affected." Attempting a breath through his nose, Chonies realized that he wasn't as clogged up as he had been during the flight over. "But it looks like that might not be the case for much longer. It definitely feels like my nasal passages are clearing up, but not enough to be affected, it seems."

"That's a relief to hear," commented Garbage, only seeming to partially hear what Chonies had just said. His attention had been slowly shifting back to the lake of fondue as they chatted and now he couldn't take his eyes off that tasty lake as his tongue hung out while he panted hungrily. "Now, if you'll excuse me, I've got a lake of deliciousness to get back to." Without any further warning, the bowling ball of a dog leaned forward and began to roll himself back towards the cheesy lake.

"Garbage!" cried Chonies, trying to hold him back, but the massively overweight canine's need to feed forced both him and his robot friend to move out of his way or risk getting

steamrolled by him. All they were able to do was watch as he returned to his cheesy trough of deliciousness and resumed chugging down one big mawful after another. "You have to try to control yourself."

"I'm sorry, but I can't," he answered with his mouth full of melted cheese making his words barely understandable once more. "My will is too weak and this cheese is too tasty."

"Come on, Garbage, you can't just give in to gluttony," Chonies attempted to pep talk him, but any more efforts he made to reason with him and roll his blobby body from the lake had lost all effectiveness in even getting him to reply to him. "Cy-Bark, can you give me a hand with him again?"

The large bulky battle bot once more tried to roll Garbage away from the addictive lake, however, he could barely get his arms around his fatty frame before the corpulent corgi wiggled and struggled out of his grasp. "Not without clearance to use more aggressive force," he answered.

"No, we don't want to hurt our friends," responded a worried Chonies as he attempted to think up a better solution to their dilemma. "But if the others are as hooked on the food here as Garbage is then it'll be almost impossible to keep them all from eating till we can figure out a way to help them. The best thing I can think to do right now is to locate everyone first and then figure out what this planet's deal is. Hopefully, that big structure also mentioned in the intel will be able to provide us with some answers, otherwise, I'm not sure what we'll be able to do."

"Agreed," Cy-Bark nodded. "Then let us make haste. The next nearest member of the Pluto is in this direction."

"Let's hurry. Our friends don't have much time," hustled Chonies, rubbing his nose as he did another little sniff, checking to see how stuffed up he still was. "And I might not have much time before I could succumb like they did."

As the duo left Captain Garbage's side and hurried to seek out their other friends, another space ship entered into the orbit of Planet Petit, this one a larger craft than the Pluto with a bulkier, rougher design and a scratch and rust-covered green and black paint job.

"Did our little buffet manage to draw in anymore fliesss lately?" hissed one of three lizard men on board the bridge of the alien ship. As he spoke, his tongue slid out to extend his S's. They were all garbed in black battle suits that were covered all over in sharp metal spikes. There were also numerous signs of wear and tear on them from dents and scratches to chunks of metal cracked and chipped off of it. The lizards themselves were mostly green with streaks of red, blue or yellow running across their bodies in patterns unique to each of them. Their eyes were green and their pupils were black and vertically slitted.

“Sensors do indicate that a couple vehicles did enter the atmosphere recently,” another answered. “One just a little before we arrived and one... about a day ago.”

“Oh, then we might be in for quite the treat today,” a third salivated. “We’re long overdue for having a decent meal ourselves.”

“Oh, yesss, definitely,” the first one drooled through a sharp-toothed grin. “Tell the ressst of the crew to get prepared. Tonight we are going to have quite the feassst on sssome nicsse, fresh meat.”

“Captain, I thought we agreed that you were going to see a doctor to get your tongue disorder corrected,” the green with blue markings lizard told him.

“And have to wear that tongue corrector,” the green with red markings captain argued back, looking away in embarrassment and gripping his elbows. “No. That thing iss sso ssstupid. Plusss, you’ll all laugh at me.”

“And if you don’t,” reminded the green and yellow one. “We’ll mutiny on you.”

“Hey, come on now,” he replied, attempting to speak more calmly to diffuse the situation. “What if I am more careful with what I utter from now on? Then it won’t be a problem, right?”

“You’re going to have to do a lot better than avoiding any words with an s sound in it.”

“Oh, yeah,” he sweated, focusing really hard. “I can s-say th-those words-s too without any problem, s-s-see!”

“Not bad, but let’s see you say, ‘She soars seven star systems stealing sparkling silver saxophones.’”

“N-No problem,” he sweated and paused for a while as he dreaded such a diabolical tongue twister. “Sh-Sh-She s-s-soars seven star s-systemsss- Gah!”

“Nice try, but no more putting it off,” they told him. “After we finish up with our new dinner guests you’re seeing a doctor.”

“Ugh... Sssalty sssea dogsss,” he grumbled bitterly at this.

Fortunately for Chonies and Cy-Bark they didn’t have to go much further from Garbage to find the other members of the Pluto Crew. Unfortunately, they were all in as bad of shape as the corgi was in terms of overwhelming girth and an uncontrollable hunger for the planet’s food and all its delectable and addictive qualities.

“Oh, come on, Nomi, you have to stop eating,” the chihuahua begged, finding her tangled in vines that were actually thick ropes of spaghetti. As she munched and slurped up the long seemingly endless strands of pasta and freed herself, she was just as quick to get herself tangled up in more as she rolled her bulbous body towards another nearby pile. “You look like a giant meatball in an equally large pile of spaghetti.”

“Mmm~” she salivated at the thought. “A big, meaty meatball would be just the perfect thing to go with all this spaghetti,” she replied. “Especially one as big as I am right now.”

“Definitely not,” he cried. “Then you’d be twice as large and you’re already up a frightfully enormous amount. Do you really want to go from being the second smallest on the Pluto Team to being bigger than the Pluto itself?”

“That depends,” she replied after slurping up another loose strand of spaghetti. “Are there any meatballs as big as the Pluto around here?”

“I sure hope not,” he signed, already seeing that talking with her further wasn’t going to do anything but waste the fleeting time he had before his nose regained its full smell capabilities and made him as compromised as the rest of the crew. “Just hang tight. We’ll be back to help you once we finish our investigation.”

“Hey! Wait!” Nomi called to Chonies while they started to walk away from her and towards the others of their team. “Before you go can you help roll me close to more of the food. I’ve eaten all the big piles over here and it’s tough just rolling a little bit on my own at this point.”

“Which is a very good thing,” he assured her as the chihuahua followed Cy-Bark onward to their next friend. “Well, if I had to guess who would be the next to succumb to the temptations of this planet, I’d have to go with Ed.”

Making their way into another clearing, this one was comprised of a large field of flowers, however, rather than being topped with colorful and vibrant petals, each one had a thick and juicy-looking t-bone steak on it and, just as Chonies guessed, Ed was sitting in the middle of the meat flowers, large as Garbage and Nomi were and looking just as lost in the bliss of gluttony. Leaning his large bowling ball-shaped body forward, he plucked another steak off its stem and started to tear through it while also pausing every few bites to lick the meat juice that was staining his muzzle. When the meat was gone from the bone, he merely tossed that piece away onto a pile of bones from all the other steaks he had already finished.

“Ed!” Chonies called to him, hoping he could reason with him. “You have to stop eating. Don’t you see what you’re doing to yourself?”

“Oh, hey, Chonies,” the jack russell terrier replied while he was pulling another of the tasty steaks from its stem to munch on. “So happy to see you out and about. You must be doing so much better now, buddy.” He spoke with a warm, friendly demeanor that quickly went

hostile after the pleasantries ended. “Just don’t take another step closer to my treasure or I’ll rip you to pieces.”

“Trust me, Ed,” replied Chonies, speaking as sympathetically as he could to the canine as he tore through another tasty, fattening steak that only widened his waistline once he tore every last scrap of meat from the bone and swallowed it. “I don’t want your treasure and neither do you.”

“Oh, but I most certainly do,” he assured his tiny, brown-furred teammate. “Meat this irresistibly good is by far the greatest treasure I’ve acquired and we both know I’ve hoarded quite a lot of priceless alien objects during our time in space. Why, I bet every dog on the M-Bark would go kibbles and bits over this stuff.”

“Exactly,” agreed Chonies, attempting to change tactics to convince him to stop eating. “Think of the fortune you could make if you sold these steaks. With how hooked they’d get after one taste, you could charge anything and they’d pay it no problem.”

“Hmm,” pondered Ed, rubbing his multi chin as he actually appeared to be considering the money-making proposal.

“It’d probably be best if you stopped eating all your merchandise,” added Chonies, trying to be very delicate in his tone and wording.

“Yeah, it certainly would make me fabulously wealthy beyond my wildest dreams,” Ed conceded, looking at all the many steaks still around him that were waiting to be eaten. The fact that there was even this brief interval in his gorging gave Chonies a slight sense of relief that he had convinced him to stop, but it only lasted for those few seconds before he plucked another step to munch on. “But, in this case,” he continued. “Keeping this tasty meat all to myself is far more valuable to me than all the money in the Universe.”

“Well, that’s three not budging and two to go,” sighed Chonies. “Hopefully I’ll have better luck with Pepper and Stella. I mean, I’ve gotta. Out of all of us, they’re the two most level-headed of the team and the least likely to get carried away by some tasty food, especially when they see what it’s doing to everyone. Yeah, they’re definitely fine. No doubt about it!”

“We’re fine Chonies!” snarled Stella, her body as massive and round as the others, though how the Shetland sheepdog was still on two legs and moving about only seemed possible thanks to the aggression she was having with the equally rotund labrador retriever, Pepper. They were both covered in a goopy, brown substance that appeared like mud at first, but upon feeling its texture, Chonies realized they were wrestling in a pit of peanut butter. “Never been better, actually!”

“Uh, are you sure?” he sweated from just watching them tussel, occasionally dipping their hands into the peanut butter to scoop a glob out and stuff in their maw. While they tried to chew the chunky stuff up and attempt to swallow it, they went back to glaring at one another as their fingers locked together and their brawl resumed. “Cause I’m not exactly sure what’s going on.”

“It’s a very simple disagreement we’re working out,” Pepper explained, slipping free of their finger lock to get around behind her captain and attempt a headlock. This didn’t work out too well due to their oversized torsos getting in the way and just caused her to flop down on top of Stella who responded by rolling to force her off and taking the chance to get another mawful of peanut butter while her face was pressed up against it. “I think this peanut butter is mine and Stella thinks it belongs to her, ergo, we’re fighting to the death for ownership of it.”

“Don’t you think a battle to the death is a bit much for a ‘very simple disagreement?’” asked Chonies, as he watched them both struggle back to their feet and ram at one another, forcing them both to bounce off one another’s guts and land their keisters back in the very food they were both willing to die for. “I mean, sure we dogs love this stuff, but it’s still only peanut butter.”

“No dog has truly lived till they’ve had THIS peanut butter,” Pepper stated with such zeal in her tone.

“But you can’t have any,” added Stella. “Cause it’s mine! All mine!”

“You mean mine!” growled Pepper, snorting like a bull before she charged at Stella.

“Not even in your dreams!” snapped Stella as she managed to find the strength to leap her rotund body off the ground. The captain flopped right down onto her tactical officer who leapt up, prepared to take her head on. Chonies couldn’t even bear to look as he shut his eyes and didn’t open them up again until he heard a splash. As he cracked his open in the aftermath, he witnessed a wave of peanut butter coming right at him. Unable to flee, he merely used his arms to shield his body as the goopy goodness crashed down on him, covering over the front half of his body.

Luckily for the chihuahua, he guarded his mouth to keep any from tantalizing his taste buds. However, the scent of the mashed up peanuts coating his face was starting to tickle his sinuses and aggravate his hunger. “Oh, smells so good,” Chonies drooled and started to feel an uncontrollable urge to eat it that made his body ache as he did his best to resist it. Reaching down to rub his gut, it grumbled as his mental fortitude waned. “Ugh... no wonder the others can’t help themselves. I can slightly smell it and it’s already starting to overpower my will. Cy-Bark, you have to do something to get this stuff off of me quickly.”

“My assistance does not appear to be needed,” the robotic canine replied, proceeding to quickly step away from his chihuahua friend.

“What are you talking about?” groaned Chonies, his body shaking as he did his best to keep his tongue from escaping his maw to get a taste. “It’s all I can do to fight it from just barely sniffing it. If I get a taste then I’m done for as well. You’ve got to do something. You’re the only one who can.”

“Negative,” corrected Cy-Bark as he pointed at Stella and Pepper charging at the chihuahua, drooling and staring at him hungrily.

“THAT’S MY PEANUT BUTTER!!!” they both roared, forgetting their own battle for the moment to reclaim what they perceived as Chonies stealing their food.

“Those two helping you will be more than satisfactory to assist you with the peanut butter removal,” he elaborated further. “I am not needed for this task. Also, those two scare me, even though I should not be able to comprehend what fear even is.”

“Oh, tennis balls,” whimpered Chonies as he shut his eyes and braced himself as the two fatties pounced on him and proceeded to lick and slobber all over his body to get every last bit off the chihuahua’s peanut butter-covered body into their maws. The whole thing lasted only for several seconds and the instant the two chowhounds finished his tongue bath they released their fellow dog unharmed, but soaked in their saliva and shivering from that slightly traumatic event. After that, Stella and Pepper glared at one another yet again and started to snarl as they resumed their original brawl and wrestled one another back into their peanutbutter pit and away from a quivering Chonies.

“I am going to need major counseling after all of this,” uttered Chonies, not saying another word as he slowly made his way from the last two members of his team and continued on his way. When he finally felt he was safe enough away from them and most of their drool had dripped off his body, Chonies turned to Cy-Bark. “S-So, Cy-Bark... are we almost at that alien structure yet?”

“We’re approximately only a hundred more meters away now,” he computed. “I feel I must point out that there is no guarantee that we will be able to find an explanation to the strange food this planet produces and even less likely a remedy to fix your team.”

“I’m aware of that,” confessed Chonies, though that admission didn’t dampen his spirits. “But I’m also aware that we’ve made it through plenty of dangerous situations in the past that should have killed us many times over and didn’t. Compared to the giant, dog-eating monsters we encounter on like every fourth planet we visit, a world filled with addictively tasty and fattening food is no big deal by comparison.”

“Your friends’ situation seems like a big deal to me,” remarked Cy-Bark, causing Chonies to stare at him in awkward silence before the robotic dog continued. “That was a joke. I can tell that you are quite anxious despite trying to appear the contrary.”

“Oh,” blushed the little doggy before he snickered and chuckled lightly as he found his mood greatly elevated. “Heheh. Yeah, I guess their predicament is a big deal, in a way.” Taking a deep breath, the pooch didn’t feel nearly as tense as he had been upon seeing the state all his friends were in. “And, at least, they all seem to be enjoying themselves.”

“That does it!” shouted Pepper at Stella. “Do you want a knuckle sandwich?!?”

“Actually,” remarked Stella, seeing plenty of delicious peanut butter caked to her fist. “I’d love one.” Licking her chops, she opened her maw wide for it.

“Oh, no you don’t!” barked Pepper as she coveted her arm and started to lick her fingers clean. “If anyone gets to enjoy my knuckle sandwich, it’s me.”

“No,” argued Stella, reaching to try and bring Pepper’s hand to her maw. “You already offered it to me, so gimme!”

“It’s my peanut butter,” snapped the labrador retriever. “If anything, I should be getting a knuckle sandwich from you!”

“Well, I guess Pepper and Captain Stella are sorta, kinda enjoying themselves,” thought Chonies after hearing their arguing reach his ears. “At the very least, they’re both much too fat to really harm one another. So, beyond eating till they run out of food and glutting themselves to a complete standstill, the worst of this situation isn’t really so bad.”

“What about yourself, Chonies?” inquired Cy-Bark. “It will only be a matter of time till your sense of smell fully returns and you end up like them, enslaved by your own hunger.”

“I’ll figure out some way to plug up my sniffer before that happens,” he answered. “And if that’s the last thing we have to worry about then we’ll be able to search for a cure at our leisure.” Smiling, Chonies added a bit of a spring in his step as he continued onward with plenty of optimism as they finally reached the base of the ancient structure. Being so close to it, the chihuahua had to crane his neck back to see its peak. “Good thing too cause who knows how long we might be searching.”

Looking around the outside of the towering alien building, he was delighted to find nothing dangerous or otherwise appeared to be lurking about, allowing him and Cy-Bark to simply stroll over the the entrance of the large, stone structure. “Hmm... No attack sentries or laser tripwires. Not even any surveillance cameras from what I can see. Yes siree, the worst wasn’t even so bad and things can only improve from here.” As the two made their way inside, they failed to notice the lizard men’s spaceship was hovering high in the sky over them as the crew on board observed them all closely.

“What isss thiss?” questioned the captain of the space lizards. “How did thosse two make it all the way over there without sssuccumbing to thiss planet’ssss temptationssss?”

“Looks like one is robotic so, naturally, food can’t affect it,” another replied. “As for the other, I’m not certain. It does appear somewhat similar to the others and it did interact with them on its way here. Either, this one can’t be tempted by this planet’s food like ourselves or it has some means to protect itself that the others did not.”

“Either way, we can’t allow it to do as it pleases. It could ruin this good thing we’ve got going for us.”

“Then it’s agreed. We’ll disembark and capture the two immediately.”

“Not sso fassst,” the captain interrupted, lacing his fingers as he contemplated something sinister. “Thiss could be a golden opportunity if we play our cardsss right.”

“What do you mean?”

“Think about it,” he hissed and smirked. “Normally, when foolsss venture to our planet, we can barely get anything out of them due to how fixssated they are by the food. We can’t pry any usseful info from them, but that issn’t the cassse with thesse two. Who knowsss what we could learn from a... moderately painful interrogation. Perhapsss even where more of them are and jusst how we can lure them to our little buffet~”

“Oh, yeah,” salivated the others, thinking of countless blobs of fattened canines for them all to consume at their leisure. “If there are more of these things then we might never have to worry ourselves with going hungry ever again.”

“Then itsss settled,” the captain decreed. “We’ll let them do ass they pleasse for a bit longer while keeping an eye on them to sssee if they are in contact with more of their kind. If they are, then we can surely figure out a meanssss to lure more here. If not, we can sstill happily ssettle for the onesss we already have in our clutchesss!” Villainously, the captain laughed and hissed.

“Yeah, great plan, but that doesn’t excuse you from going to get that hiss thing of yours fixed,” they reminded him, cutting his fiendish chortles short.

“I know. I know,” he grumbled bitterly.

“Well, this does look like a door of some kind,” observed Chonies as the two stood directly in front of the alien structure and came upon a huge, metal, hexagonal plate that stood out from the rest of the stone the place was built of. Looking around it, he spotted what appeared to be a button, though it was at a far higher elevation than the dog could reach. “The

aliens that built this thing must have been quite huge to need such big doors like this one. Hopefully, that's the button for getting inside." Pressing a button on his belt, activating a pair of energy wings to appear over his back. With just a small hop, he was lifted off the ground and sent high enough for him to reach the button. Giving it a press, the hexagon split into two halves that slid in opposite directions, opening the way for the two to continue onward.

"Okay, we got through the door, no sweat," noted Chonies as he slowly descended back down beside Cy-Bark and continued to proceed forward while remaining cautious. The place was pitch black inside, but as they walked in, the place was quick to illuminate itself, showing just a simple hexagon-shaped passageway forward to a large terminal. "The place seems to have sensors to activate the lights for anyone coming inside..." Pausing, he checked their surroundings, his eyes and ears on full alert, but after several seconds of nothing happening he breathed and smiled again. "And no alarms going off or murder bots coming to tear us to pieces. This really is shaping to be a walk in the dog park for a change."

"Isn't saying all that just tempting fate?" cautioned Cy-Bark.

"We pretty much do that every time we set foot on a planet," Chonies pointed out. "And most alien races tempt fate just by interacting with us. And if we're already on an inescapable collision course with the worst possible outcome, nothing else done or said could possibly cause things to end up even worse."

"If you say so," replied Cy-Bark as he took a single step further away from Chonies as they looked up at the computer terminal that was large like the door they entered from. The monitor in front of the keyboard and mouse was also a hexagon shape.

"If this place has power, then hopefully that means this computer is still running," figured Chonies as he flew up to the extra large keyboard and pushed down on a button, needing both his paws and quite a bit of strength to manage this. Upon doing it, he looked up at the screen in front of him and watched as it lit up with a brightness he had to wince against till his eyes adjusted to it. "Yes! It works." Staring up at the screen, he watched as first a bright white screen appeared and then changed as the desktop took its place, revealing a number of files and programs on the sides of the screen along with the background wallpaper consisting of three blue hexagon shaped aliens with three green eyes each and friendly, toothy smiles on their faces. Their bodies and heads appeared to all be one part, with legs and arms protruding from their sides. Two were big, one having a thick, bushy mustache and a hat on his head while the other had on some lipstick and earrings on the side of her head. The small one was held in the female-looking one's arms and sucking on a hexagon-shaped pacifier.

"Awe, what an adorable family photo," smiled Chonies, blushing at how happy and friendly the trio of aliens appeared to be, but didn't let that distract him for too long as he moved the large mouse to maneuver the screen's cursor over to one of the files. When he was on it, he walked around the huge mouse to double-click the left side button to open the data file and reveal a file containing tons of alien text on it.

“Any chance you can translate this, Cy-Bark?” asked Chonies as he tilted his head, trying to make sense of it himself to no avail.

“Let me see,” he replied, pausing for a moment as he stared at the screen and a loading circle appeared on his face. Chonies took a seat and waited, looking between his friend and the screen. Rubbing his nose and taking small whiffs, he found his nasal passages were continuing to open up and found that even in this strange room that the alluring scents of food were making his mouth water.

“Please hurry,” he whimpered, wiping his muzzle clean of saliva.

“Analysis complete,” Cy-Bark finally told him. “Expositional Dump translated.”

“Exposit-” Chonies replied, scratching his head. “That’s the document’s title?”

“Essentially it is,” the robo dog nodded. “It details the entire history of this planet which involved a significant amount of love, betrayal, war, creation, destruction, rebirth and twists and turns that’d make for quite an enjoyable afternoon read.”

“Yeah, that’s all well and good, but we don’t have time for all that,” Chonies reminded him as he pinched his nose tightly to help him continue to resist that ravenous beast within him that was begging to be unleashed.

“Would you prefer an abridged version that details only specific info in regards to our current situation?” he suggested.

“Please and thank you,” Chonies nodded, taking a deep, calming breath to try and help him regain his composure against that gnawing hunger within him.

“Let’s see then,” mumbled Cy-Bark as he quickly trimmed the log down as requested. “It appears this planet wasn’t naturally formed, but that it is an artificial one created as a place of refuge for alien species in need of a new home.”

“Sounds like it was tailor made for us then,” noted Chonies. “Though, if what’s happened to my friends is any indication, something clearly went wrong.”

“Affirmative,” continued Cy-Bark. “Apparently, this spherical construct was formed by the machinery in this tower drawing in matter from space to form the planet around it. That was its primary function and after eons it amassed enough materials to become as big as currently is. Its secondary function was to alter the genetic structure of the materials it was made out of into sources of food to those taking up residence on the planet. Due in part to some sort of neural interface, it’s able to mimic the foods that one loves the best to ensure that even the pickiest of

eaters will be able to enjoy themselves without complaint. Alluring scents were also used to help the alien species to feel more relaxed and at home here too.”

“But I take it that all this was done too well and the results are what’s happening to the others right now.” Chonies assumed.

“It is a somewhat cliché scenario,” Cy-Bark agreed. “It seems that the alien species here made the mistake of not calibrating the calorie consumption the food should be at for said alien races so it defaulted to their own. By my calculations, with their mass and estimating their stomach sizes in comparison to that of an Earth dog’s, all the food here is about two thousand four hundred and twenty-one point eight times more calorie-packed than what one should realistically ingest for a single meal.”

“Which accounts for all the weight everyone’s put on in such a short amount of time,” Chonies concluded as a worrisome thought crossed his mind. “Is there anything in the document detailing how we can get them to lose all that weight?”

“According to what’s written, the weight should go away in roughly a day’s time, provided we can get them to stop eating,” Cy-Bark told him. “Apparently, the whole project was never completed due to reasons not important to what we’re presently dealing with.”

“Yeah,” the chihuahua nodded. “We know enough now. All that’s needed is to keep them from eating any more of this planet’s strange food. That won’t be a problem at all. We just need to get them off the planet and with the two of us working together it’ll be a simple matter, but we’ve still gotta hurry before the same thing ends up happening to me.” Activating his jet pack wings, Chonies used them to carefully descend to the ground and hurry his way back outside. “Come on now, Cy-Bark. I know just what we need to do, but we have to head back to the Pluto first.”

“Coming,” Cy-Bark called to Chonies. “There is still one thing that concerns me about this place.”

“What’s that?” asked Chonies as they trudged through the forest while the flesh and blood dog did his best to keep his sniffer plugged up.

“The fact that no other intelligent life seems to have stumbled upon this planet before us,” he explained. “While other alien species might be aware of this planet’s true nature and avoid coming here, what about others like ourselves that lacked such knowledge. According to the last time stamp on the document, its final update was made several centuries prior to our arrival, likely meaning that the creators of this place abandoned it long, long ago. While it could very well be a simple matter that we were the first to stumble upon it, the odds of a planet like this remaining unvisited for so long are close to none.”

“But our scanners didn’t detect anything before the Pluto arrived,” Chonies reminded him. “So, it just means we really did happen to be the first to come to this planet, otherwise it’d already be filled with overly fattened aliens unable to stop themselves from eating.”

“Without any other data I can only concur with your hypothesis,” Cy-Bark conceded. “Still, I advise we proceed with caution if that isn’t the case.”

“Don’t worry,” Chonies assured his metal friend. “I always do, because, with the Pluto crew, even when it comes to seemingly simple tasks, things tend to take a turn for total disaster.”

“Then let us proceed before the worst really does happen,” suggested Cy-Bark as he and Chonies started to hustle faster towards the Pluto, passing by their friends as they did. Each was still lost in the bliss of binging and even appeared chunkier since the chihuahua last saw them, but he paid them little more mind than a passing glance until they reached the lake of cheese, bacon cattails and Captain Garbage still gorging many times his own weight on the endless supply of it all.

“We’ll work our way to everyone from Garbage,” instructed Chonies to Cy-Bark. “You wait here while I fly the Pluto over. It might be a tight squeeze to get them all aboard, but at least they’ll all be away from the food. I just hope the ship can handle all those tons of lard.”

“It will definitely be greater than the recommended weight limit for a ship of the Pluto’s design, however, even at everyone’s current mass, simply staying airborne shouldn’t be a problem,” calculated Cy-Bark.

“That’s a relief,” sighed Chonies, looking relieved upon hearing his robot buddies’ logistics.

“Maneuverability, on the other paw, will be greatly diminished,” he added. “In the event of danger, the ship will be no better than a floating, slow-moving bull’s eye.”

“Well, it’s certainly a huge relief that we won’t need to perform any evasive maneuvers then,” the chihuahua replied with a nervous laugh. “Oh, I really hope I didn’t just jinx us, but, just in case, I better hurry. You just wait here till I get the ship.” Getting a nod from his mechanical partner, Chonies scurried the rest of the way to the Pluto on his own. He was squeezing his nose tightly, his congestion almost completely gone and the temptation to feast as strong as ever in him. “Can’t give in. Can’t give in,” he coached himself as he ran along. The greater his hunger stirred, the more he noticed all the delicious foods around him, almost like they were attempting to surround him. Whimpering and crying as he resisted his most basic canine impulses, Chonies sprinted with all his might, not slowing down till the Pluto came into sight and not pausing to catch his breath till he ran up the walkway and made his way into it. As he entered into the ship, it was a final practice in his willpower to not look back at all the food he

had ignored and make a mad dash back out to feast and while part of him applauded his willpower another part was achingly hungry.

“Made it,” he panted and gasped as he arrived on the ship’s bridge and proceeded to power its engines. “Okay, let’s see,” he mumbled to himself as he looked over the controls. “I may not be the team pilot, but I’m more than capable of operating the Pluto.” Rolling his shoulders to loosen up, Chonies pressed the button to start the ship’s engines and they roared to life. Grabbing the wheel, he piloted the ship off the ground and made his way towards the closest of his friends first, Garbage. “Don’t worry, guys. Chonies is here to save the day.”

Zooming his way over to Garbage’s location, Chonies accidentally zipped right by. Gasping at his overshoot, the pooch was quick to activate the ship’s reverse thrusters to slow it down as he turned down the forward ones. With that set up, it allowed him to back the vessel up slowly till he was properly overtop the area Garbage was still slurping up melted cheese like there was no tomorrow. “Ok. I’m getting the hang of it,” breathed the tiny dog as he shut off both the rear and forward propulsors and turned on the stabilizers to keep the ship stationary in the air.

Hopping off his seat, Chonies then proceeded down to the ship’s cargo hold and pulled a level to open up the bottom of the ship. Looking down below, he could see the tops of the trees and the goopy yellow lake. Most importantly, however, he spotted the big, round butterball that was Garbage and a smaller, silvery object, Cy-Bark, proceeding towards him. Squinting his eyes to see the best he could, Chonies could barely make out as the mechanical mutt grabbed at the corgi’s thick, blubbery folds and then proceeded to use the maximum propulsion of his own built in rockets to send the two of them straight up at the Pluto.

“Looking good... Looking good,” Chonies mumbled to himself as he watched Cy-Bark fly Garbage up to the ship. “Careful now. Not too fast. It’s gonna be a tight fit getting him inside and we don’t want him getting hurt.”

“Oh, come on!” Chonies heard Garbage cry when he finally was in earshot. He was squirming as best as he could, but that wasn’t much when his limbs were completely useless while his body was so cartoonishly bloated. “That cheese and bacon was so good. Just give me five or six more days with the stuff then you can take me wherever.”

“Sorry, but this trip cannot be delayed,” replied Cy-Bark as he continued to fly Chonie’s greatly overstuffed captain up to his ship. As they reached the hull’s hatch, Garbage’s blubbery hide pressed against the sides of it and wedged him halfway in and halfway out of the ship. The mechanized dog attempted to push him in, increasing the propulsion of his rockets, but the flesh and blood and blubber dog’s girth still wasn’t budging anymore.

“A little assistance would be appreciated, Chonies,” Cy-Bark called to his chihuahua friend as he continued to push Garbage up into the ship.

“I’m on it!” Chonies called as he hurried over and gripped at Garbage’s fat folds, helping to tug him inside till the overfed canine finally POPPED! all the way in and the two carefully carried him to the side and secured his bulky self in place with a cargo net.

“Can’t you at least get me some bacon to nibble on while you do what, uh, whatever it is you’re doing?” begged Garbage, making the saddest puppy dog eyes he could manage.

“Don’t look,” Chonies coached himself as he turned away and shielded his eyes. “Gotta be strong. It’s the only way to help Garbage and the others.” Taking a few deep breaths, he did a small, cautious glance at his captain, but did his best to not look directly into his sorrow-filled eyes. “Sorry, but you’ll have to just endure some hunger pangs and waterfall drool for a little while, best buddy.” With a sad whimper and whine, Garbage buried his face in his blubber as his slobber overflowed his maw and cascaded down his belly.

“I’ll be heading out to fetch the next closest Pluto crew member,” Cy-Bark told his little brown-furred friend.

“B-Be right there,” replied the chihuahua as he trudged himself back up to the cockpit to pilot the ship over. Peeking back one last time at his sad captain, he knew it’d only get worse the more the hull got filled with sad doggy noises.

Nomi was picked up next, followed by Ed and then Pepper and finally Stella as the duo enacted their plan to get the whole crew off the planet’s surface and away from the hyper fattening food. The hull was noisy with their hungry whines and their pleas for Chonies to feed them. Rivers of saliva ran across the floor and waterfalled down the open hatch. Thunderous belly rumbles made it sound like there was a storm contained within the moderately-sized vessel. The tough love-giving pooch tugged and covered his large ears to attempt to block them out, but it did him as much fleeting good as stuffing tissues in his nostrils to keep him from smelling.

“Oh, please, just a gallon of cheese or one whole hog of bacon,” begged Garbage. “That’s not that much, right?”

“I was having such fun being a big, round meatball in spaghetti too,” pouted Nomi.

“Okay, my final offer!” barked Ed. “I’ll split my steak stash with you, Chonies, 95-5...” He waited for a response, but, after a few seconds of being ignored, he amended his words. “94-6 then. How’s that?” He continued to go on like that, raising Chonie’s share incredibly slightly every time.

“Chonies! Bring me back to my peanut butter this instant!” barked Stella.

“Are you still being delusional about that whole thing?” questioned Pepper. “We all know that the peanut butter belongs to me!”

“You’re the one who’s mistaken!” snapped Stella as the two aggressive canines wiggled and wobbled in an attempt to wrestle one another again, but their fat, bloated bodies and the restricting cargo net kept them both shortly out of reach of one another and left them unable to do more harm than bark out aggressions and flail their half buried in blubber limbs futility in the air.

“Well, at least we’ve got them all,” commented Chonies. “Now, all that’s left is to get them back to the M-Bark where they’ll be safe and far away from this planet and it’s weird food.”

“I did some computations,” Cy-Bark told his friend. “The crew appears to have gained more weight than I originally projected, but with the full power of the engines, we should still be able to just escape the planet’s atmosphere while hauling all their tonnage. Once we do that, we can easily make our way back to the M-Bark.”

“That’s great to hear,” smiled Chonies. “Then we’re all set to get going. Time to say goodbye to this horrible, yet delicious planet.”

Reaching to flip the switch to send the rocket into orbit, Chonie’s paw was right over top of it when he was stopped by an explosion at the side of the ship that caused the Pluto to shake violently. Chonies and Cy-Bark held on tightly to their chairs while the cargo nets holding their friends in place snapped while trying to hold them in place, causing the doughy dogs to bounce and flop around in the belly of the Pluto.

“What in the world was that?” cried Chonies, trying to steady the ship that was beginning to lean to one side.

“We lost one of our stabilizer engines,” Cy-Bark informed him. “Reduce power to a stabilizer on the other side to balance us.”

“Right,” he nodded and hurried to do that. He panted heavily once they were balanced again, frantic over how suddenly things were going south for them. “Does that mean we can’t leave the planet till we fix that engine?”

“Worse,” Cy-Bark informed him. “It means we cannot leave the planet and that we are under attack.”

“Attacked?” cried Chonies as he checked the ship’s radar and saw another ship was on it. “Where did they come from?”

“Their ship appears to be of Lizalfos design,” Cy-Bark informed him. “Their stealth tech is some of the most sophisticated in the Universe.”

"Looks like they're hailing us," worried Chonies, seeing the button for a ship-to-ship call begin flashing red. Biting his lip, he pushed it and watched as the trio of lizard men appeared on the screen.

"Sssalutationsss, my tasssty new friendsss," hissed the captain of their ship as he spoke. "Ssso nicssse of you two to round up our dinner for usss."

"D-Dinner?" cried Chonies. "You mean my friends?"

"But, of coursse," he cackled. "This planet isss our feeding groundsss. We sstumbled upon it yearsss ago and found that any creaturesss that visssit it end up bloated to wonderfully huge proportionsss, making them perfect mealsss for usss."

"Uh, is your ship leaking gas?" asked Chonies? "I keep hearing this hissing sound."

"Let me speak," the lizard with blue markings told his captain. "You're much more silly than menacing with that lisp of yours."

"No!" he snapped. "I can do thiss jussst fine!"

"Not until you finally do something about it," she argued. "Or we'll never be taken seriously again! I mean, look at that, whatever it is we're attacking. It hardly looks the least bit frightened of you."

"Um, question," Chonies interrupted them.

"Y-Yeah?" asked the lizard man with yellow markings while the other two were bickering.

"If you guys want to eat so badly, why not just eat the food on the planet itself?"

"Oh, well, you see we only eat liv-" he started to say before he was shoved aside by his captain.

"Hey! I'm sstill the one in charge here!" he snapped. "Now, we only eat fresh, living meat, sssomething that thiss planet won't provide. Ssso thiss placce doesssn't affect usss like other visssitorsss that come here. I'm actually sssurprissed that you managed to venture through the placsse and not sssuccumb like your friendsss did. Isss it sssome immunity you have or sssomething?"

"Just recovering from a cold I got a little while back," the frightened pooch confessed. "My nose was actually clearing up and this place almost got me too."

"A bit of a shame that it didn't," he laughed. "Causse you wassted all that effort for nothing. Now, be a good boy and land your ship and sstart pigging out. One more huge

chunker of meat will allow us to have a huge feast tonight. Roll your friendsss out too. They're ssstill much too malnourished for our liking."

"Even as big as they are, they're still not filled enough for you guys?" questioned Chonies.

"We do tend to eat huge meals and work them off over several months," explained the blue Lizalfos. "It used to be such a chore finding enough live prey to fill our bellies, but on this planet we can focus much more on quality over quantity."

"And if you think your friends are big now, just you wait," the yellow one laughed. "We keep the fattening relatively low till we're about to feed and then we crank it up higher and turn them into truly massive blobs of fat!"

"Quit sssaying too much unneccsssesssssary ssstuff!" snapped the red one, his lingering S's really showing through his anger.

"And you quit it with that lisp!" argued the blue one. "You're driving me nuts!"

"What should we do?" Chonies asked Cy-Bark as he muted their conversation while the lizards began to bicker amongst themselves again.

"As we are," he informed his fleshy friend. "We are at a severe firepower and maneuverability disadvantage to them. If we resist, they will just blow us out of the sky and if we do as they order the results will be the same."

"Well, we can't lose the Pluto or we'll never get off this planet," figured Chonies. "We'll have to do as they say and land. Can you take them in a land battle?"

"It depends on their numbers," confessed Cy-Bark. "Just those three wouldn't be a problem, but from the size of their ship, there is likely to be dozens more, far too many for me to fight alone, especially while keeping you and the others protected."

"Well, they must have some weakness we can exploit," suggested Chonies as he looked back at the viewing screen and saw they were still going at it. "They do seem easily distracted and aggressive towards one another."

"A typical trait of theirs especially while they are hungry," Cy-Bark informed him. "When they are like this it is impossible for them to pass up on a big, tasty meal. Even if we had a means to bargain with them, they wouldn't pass up on eating you and your friends. It seems we really don't have any options. On the ground or in ships, we have no means of defending ourselves. All the time we have left solely depends on how much they aim to fatten you and your friends up. I'm afraid this might be the end of the Pluto crew."

“No...” pondered Chonies, closing his eyes and trying to think. “There has to be a way. We always end up in terrible scrapes like this, but we usually figure something out. Usually it’s Garbage trusting his gut and doing something crazy, unexpected and crazy again, but in a clever-sort-of-way to turn things around, but what about me? What can I do? With my nose pretty much all unclogged now, all my gut is telling me to do right now is fill it up with oodles of tasty, delicious food. The second we land they’re just going to make me eat and I’ll be a helpless, insatiable glutton like the others. Then they’ll just have me stuff myself without end, till I’m a huge bowling ball like all the others and then I’ll be fattened up further till... till...” As he said this, he paused as an idea did come to mind. “But maybe I can use that.”

“Do you have a plan?” asked Cy-Bark, seeing a mix of hope and uncertainty on Chonie’s face.

“Maybe,” he confessed. “It’s certainly something Garbage would do if he was me right now, so, it’s certainly worth a shot.” Looking back at the monitor screen, the Lizalfos had stopped fighting.

Unmuting their end, Chonies nervously spoke to them. “Uh, are you three done fighting?”

“Yeah, sorry about that,” the blue one apologized. “Not our best moment, bickering right in front of our prey and all. We’re supposed to be professional pirates, after all. You’re probably pitying us more than you are fearing.”

“That’s okay,” Chonies replied in a kind, understanding tone that brought some small smiles back to his foes’ faces. “We all have our bad days, so I understand. Also, for what it’s worth, you’re still plenty frightening, in my opinion.”

“Th-Thanksss. We really appreciate your kind wordsss... Now, land your ship or we’ll forcsse it down!” the red one threatened, slamming his fist on his captain’s chair. “We can do thiss the eassy way or the hard way.”

“Don’t worry. We’ll take the easy way,” replied Chonies as he began to bring the ship down. “But, I want to make a deal with you guys.”

“Why would we haggle with you?” questioned the blue lizard. “You are in no position to make demands.”

“I want you to spare my friends,” begged Chonies. “In return, I’ll let you fatten me up as huge as you want. Big enough to be the largest meal you guys have ever had to the point you won’t have room to eat my friends. Then you can eat all you want and they can go free.”

“Hmm, that iss an interessting proposal,” laughed the red captain of the ship. “Sssuch sself-sssacrificsse. You may have actually moved me... a little. Fine. If, and only if, you can

be big enough to feed usss all then we can leave your friendsss be. Of coursse, there are plenty more piratesss than jussst the three of usss on thissss ship. To be big enough to ssstuff every lassst one of usss you're going to have to make yourself quite masssive and then even huger than that! It'll be a tough challenge, impossible really, but if you can pull off sssuch a spectacular feat then you'll have truly earned our respect."

"And, what about your end of the deal?" questioned Chonies, tilting his head and squinting at them. "You will keep up your end if I do this. You're not crossing your fingers or anything of the sort, are you?"

"On my honor assa captain," he vowed, trying to play it straight, but an obvious smirk on his face and that of his crew said otherwise. "Just get your stomach ready cause to feed us, a tiny little thing like you is gonna need to be supersized at least a few hundred times over before you're even half a decent meal!"

"If that's what it'll take to have you spare my crewmates then I'll do just that," nodded Chonies. "Do what you need to and I'll do the same on my end and this way we can both get what we want. Now, if it's all the same to you, let's land our ships so we can get started on this immediately, that is, unless you bunch aren't feeling as hungry as you claim to be."

"Huh? Uh, no, we cssertainly are," the lead Lizalfos replied, looking at his two cohorts who seemed equally as puzzled by Chonie's apparent eagerness for this. "Though it iss quite a shock to sssee our food acting sssso willing for usss."

"I'm doing this for my friends," Chonies replied, turning away as he shivered a bit fearfully. "But that doesn't mean I'm not deathly afraid of this either, so I just want this to be over as quickly as possible. So, see you on the surface. Chonies, out." He ended the transmission and flopped back into his chair to catch his breath, hyperventilating a bit before he went back to the controls to bring the Pluto back down to the planet. "So far so good, but that was the easy part compared to what I've got to do next."

"You do know that they will either eat your friends after they are done with you or simply leave them on the planet for when they get hungry again," Cy-Bark told Chonies. "Sacrificing yourself, though, while a noble and valiant gesture will ultimately be pointless given who you are up against."

"I'm well aware," admitted Chonies as they neared the ground. "But I don't intend to let them eat me, my friends or anyone else on this terrible, but delicious planet ever again. Now, we don't have much time to talk. Here's what we're going to do..."

The Pluto landed first, back where it had originally set down and, soon after, the Lizalfos ship parked several meters away. The ship's unboarding ramp lowered and Chonies peeked down it, his nostrils tightly plugged up with tissues to mitigate the planet's siren aromas, but they

did little as the small pooch's maw was overflowing with saliva while his stomach growled louder than he could even bark.

"Are you all set?" Chonies asked to Cy-Bark as he did his best to restrain Garbage and the others as the tasty smells were urging them to go back to eating. Though immobile, their ravenous appetites made their flailing and wobbling quite violent and wild. The robotic canine had to push them back and restrain them with the cargo nets once more to ensure they couldn't go anywhere.

"I have your friends secure here," he barked back to his chihuahua companion. "And, in here, I will be able to keep them the most protected, should the Lizalfos attempt to gnaw on any of them."

"Hopefully, that won't be necessary," replied Chonies, struggling to take his first steps back down to the planet.

"The real question is, 'are you ready?'" questioned Cy-Bark, seeing his hesitation.

"No, but I have to go anyway," he admitted, drawing on his courage to start lifting his feet and begin his short trek to the midpoint between the two ships that seemed endlessly further with how heavy the burden he was now carrying with him. The three lizards and a handful more were already there and waiting for him, each smirking and cackling as they were already delighting in their victory over their latest meal.

"Well, aren't you even more precious-looking in person," the blue lizard commented as they looked down at Chonies. "Smaller and scrawnier too. Can we really trust that you'll be able to fatten yourself up enough to upgrade yourself from a crumb to a smorgasbord big enough to feed our entire crew?"

"With enough leftovers that you'd probably get tired of eating me after a while," he boasted, though such a gruesome thought was only making him sweat more fearfully and tremble.

"Then you'd besst get to eating, pronto," the red one told him. "I'm sssurprissed you haven't already. You were the one who wanted to get thiss over with ass fassst ass possible after all."

"And I do," nodded Chonies. "However, simply eating the food the planet provides wouldn't do. Sure, I'd fatten up as quickly as the others did, but that'd take too much too long and with how large the planet is and my own increasing blubber getting in the way of my glutting, I could be slowly bulking up over the course of days. So, before getting started, I want to go back to the control center for this planet and make a few changes."

“Changes?” questioned the yellow lizard, glaring at the drooling and shaking chihuahua suspiciously. “What exactly do you have in mind?”

“Just something that’d help me gain more tasty blubber in far less time than what all the others put on, combined,” he explained, getting the lizards to drool at the prospect of such a skinny doggy turning into the biggest feast they had ever partaken in.”

“Sounds very promising, though, how do we know this isn’t some sort of trick?” the blue one pointed out. “Perhaps you could be planning to make the food no longer as delicious or fattening just to ensure you won’t get fattened or, at the very least, ensure nobody else falls prey to our little trap.”

“Even if I did pull a stunt like that, that wouldn’t save me from you. Plus, you could just as easily undo any sabotage or stop me the second you realized what I was doing,” Chonies pointed out. “So, even if I did try to pull a fast one on you all, it would amount to nothing in the end.”

“Pluss, it’d void our deal and your crewmates would be back on the menu ass well,” hissed the leader, getting a cackle from the others, none of them even trying to hide the fact that they had no intention of holding up their end of the bargain under any circumstance. “Very well. Let’s go make your alteration to the planet, but there better not be any more ssstalling.”

“There won’t be,” Chonies assured them as he used his jetpack and took off towards the building and the Lizalfos used similar, though more rustic tech to take to the air and follow the pup, their air rigs leaving a trail of black smoke behind them as they flew.

Upon making it back to the facility, Chonies was quick to land back on the computer and got to work moving the mouse and activating the files. “Do you have a visual?” Chonies asked Cy-Bark through his communicator.

“I do,” he acknowledged, the robo canine still on the Pluto and keeping an eye on the rest of the crew. “Just adjust those files as I instruct and you’ll get the desired results.”

“Uh huh... Uh huh... Yeah... And just do this,” he mumbled, listening to his friend help him make the necessary adjustments to the planet just as the Lizalfos caught up to him and watched him finish up.”

“Sso, anything looking sssusss?” the red lizard asked the blue one.

“No. It doesn’t appear like anything is wrong,” they replied. “From what I can tell, he’s merely creating a singular point on the planet for one to be able to ingest all the matter contained on it.”

“Uh, and what does that mean in simpler terms?” the yellowing asked, scratching their head as Chonies left the building and hurried to hose that had suddenly sprouted out of the ground. Removing the tissues from his nostrils, he finally let the hunger-inducing scents fully enthrall him and let it dam on his hunger flow free. No longer able to resist his appetite, he stuffed the tube into muzzle, prompting it to activate and started pumping a slurry-like substance into his mouth. A single drop of the concoction was like pure heaven to the canine, making his eyes roll back into his head as he started to chug the contents down as quickly as more flowed in to keep his mouth filled and his cheeks stretching to contain it all.

“Essentially,” the blue lizard continued as they hurried after the chihuahua and got a visual explanation before the verbal one. “He basically turned the entire planet into a juicebox that he can chug on endlessly till he’s big and fat enough for us to eat. It’s actually ingenious. Doing this, he might actually make himself massive enough to the point we won’t have any room left to gobble up his companions afterwards.”

“Though, not like we won’t eat them at sssome later point when we do get hungry again,” laughed the lead Lizalfos as he approached Chonies to gloat. “Hear that, you foolish, tasty-looking morsel. Even if you do thiss, we’re sstill gonna devour your friendsss eventually. You really shouldn’t have trusssted usss, not that you could do anything elssse, but thanksss for ssetting thiss whole thing up for usss to ussse for future feassstsss. Now we have an even better way to fatten up our mealsss ass bis ass we want. We really owe you one, sso we’ll make sure to give you our thanksss while we’re tearing through your tasssty flesh!”

Chonies answered him back with some muffled words. He didn’t even turn his head to look at him and just continued to glut away, his belly already starting to go from skinny as a rail to a bulging and developing gut. More meat was also spreading onto his legs and thighs too, giving them a thicker, chubbier look that was also present on his rear.

“Poor creature,” teased the yellow one. “Probably too lost in his own gluttony to even hear us now. Well, that’s fine. No sense in him doing anything but working to become a bigger and better feast for us.” Kneeling down, the big lizard poked at his gut, smirking at the soft layers of flab already developing on his belly that was also spreading and accumulating on his limbs, rear and face too when only mere minutes had ticked by since he began. “Coming along quite nicely, but this still might take a bit till he finishes.”

“That’sss fine,” hissed the red one, rubbing at Chonie’s chubbing up face to feel up his increasing lard as he salivated. “Ssseeing prey plump ittself up for usss iss all the entertain we even need to while away the hoursss~”

“Glugluglug... Gulpgulpgulp... Chugchugchug...” Chonies kept on slurping away at the irresistibly tasty mix of fattening slurry that was being pumped from the planet and straight into his maw. He gulped countless times as the seconds accumulated into minutes and eventually would become hours while the oodles of calories went from the planet to his belly and soon after

digested into new fat on his frame. His haunches thickened more and more, going from slender legs and thighs to thick turkey legs and then meaty, piggy waddlers before plumping up to even greater levels of obesity.

The rest of his body continued to lard up as well with his belly and rear increasing with roundness like they were balloons being pumped up with air. And, just like with his canine companions, despite how massive the pooch became, his space suit remained as remarkably resilient and stretchy as theirs had been. Even after he surpassed how big they were, the space age fabrics and polymers of his wears kept on stretching and expanding to contain his increasing massiveness while showing not a single tear, not even at any of the seams. Little by little, however, his girthier limbs started to get overtaken by his swelling torso as if it was on a mission to turn the chihuahua into a perfectly blubberous sphere. Any trace of his skinny, little tail had already been lost between his gargantuan glutes. As for his head, it was doing a much better job at avoiding being engulfed by his torso, unlike the rest of him, as rolls neck fat formed like lifesavers that helped keep his noggin afloat while he continued to fatten and expand without even a brief moment of pause since he began.

“This is working better than we could have hoped,” gossiped the Lizalfos as they watched and admired Chonie’s fattening figure, giving it an occasional grope and fondle on his developing folds as they checked to see how their meal was coming along.

“Who would have guessed that such a small, skinny creature could have larded out this munch in... what’s it been? About two hours?”

“Not even that long! The blubbering up powers of this planet are simply amazing, but whatever he did with that hose thing has made it even better! Hopefully, it won’t run dry any time soon.”

“I seriously doubt that’ll be a problem, seeing that everything on this planet, including the planet itself can be used as food material. So, unless he was actually able to consume a planet’s worth of calories, I don’t think we have anything to worry about.”

Mmph hmmp!” Chonies nearly choked on his addicting food as he heard those comments done in jest. Looking around, he saw all the Lizalfos were laughing at how ludicrous it sounded for the chihuahua to consume the entire planet. Seeing none of them appear at all concerned by this, Chonies continued to chug away, taking a quick look at the area around him to notice that any trace of grass and plant life that had been in the vicinity was now no longer visible anywhere around them.

“That was a bit too close for comfort,” breathed Chonies full of relief as he listened to the predatory lizards going back to drooling over the sight of his increasingly meaty haunches as his size was already several times what it started at and was still visibly getting larger and more obese by the swallow. “I’m lucky they are too focused on me bulking up to be more suspicious of my true intentions, but the longer I take to finish, the greater the risk that they might actually

decide to use their brains.” Looking down at his huge, spherical and continually expanding body, Chonies could barely believe there was so much of him now and that this was still only a drop in the bucket for what he was chugging his way towards. He took a deep breath, sniffing in the enticing scents of the planet to let it continue to take hold of him and ensure his hunger overpowered everything else the chihuahua was currently experiencing throughout this whole ordeal. “Just gotta keep them all focused on my glutting till everything is in place for our counterattack and this planet is doing a great job of helping me out with that.”

“Mission update,” Cy-Bark called to Chonies almost an hour later as the chowhound had gotten even more massive from all his chugging, causing his sitting body to reach all the way to the top of a three story building and made the rest of his crew seem like they had been slacking on their glutting by comparison. His suit continued to prove its durability as he still didn’t show any signs of giving against the hugeness of his torso that had long since enveloped his paws and continued to show off that it was far from its limit for growth. “My infiltration into the Lizalfos ship is going well.”

“Shh,” hushed Chonies as he nervously looked at the alien menace that had only grown more excited the larger he became. Between gulps of the fattening slurry, he quietly conversed with his ally, but plenty of nervous whimpers leaked from his lips as the predators couldn’t keep their claws to themselves with so much meat on him to marvel at. Creepily, they were all rubbing and groping and even gently gnawing at sections of his body fat, showing off how eager they were to feast on their increasingly blubberous meal in the making. Most were on the lower side of his body, nuzzling and licking across his gut, but a few managed to scale up to his chest to do the same around his moobs that were tightly compressed against his suit as well as his numerous neck rolls that weren’t. Some were even bold enough to do so on his cheeks, making Chonies all the more fearful that some might overhear them speaking. “Not so loud. I’ve got the whole crew of Lizalfos on my body. I don’t want them accidentally overhearing us talking to each other.”

“Is everything okay on your end?” questioned Cy-Bark, sounding concerned, but did his best to keep as silent as he could while speaking. “If your safety is in peril, I can hurry over to assist. I’m almost done on my end.”

“Right now they’re just tasting me and nibbling a little,” he replied, trying not to sound as bothered by it as he really was. “So long as none of them actually make a real effort to eat me, there isn’t any need for you to intervene.” Chonies took a deep breath to try and relax himself. “Not sure if this is their pre meal ritual or it’s just my luck that they find me extra delicious, but they’re all swarmed on top of me, but now I know what a milk bone feels like.”

Pausing from his conversation, Chonies took several more glugs from his planet-sized juice box to ensure his fattening didn’t stop and gave the Lizalfos the inkling that he was done and ready for eating. Watching them for a few minutes as his body resumed expanding, he

soon took another brief break to continue speaking with Cy-Bark. "So, how far are you in taking care of their ship?"

"Much smoother than I had anticipated," he replied. "It seems these lizards aren't the most tech savvy species in the Universe. The password to access their main systems was, 'password1' and, after that, there was no extra layers of security to get in my way, so I've got free reign of the entire ship. Looks like they're all out there with you too cause it doesn't appear they left anyone behind to keep an eye on things."

"Then our plan is moving along better than we could have hoped," Chonies replied with a sigh of relief before he chugged a bit more to plump his massive self up and a bit more. "And how close are you to finishing up now?"

"Their ship's weapons are all offline," Cy-Bark answered. "And I'm in the middle of taking them all apart so that even manual operation won't be an option for them. Once that's done, the only function of this ship will be basic flight."

"That's good to hear," smiled Chonies. "And, if you're that far ahead in the plan, then I can pick things up on my end and bring about the resolution all the quicker."

"Affirmative," nodded Cy-Bark. "Remember, all you need to do is tug the straw two times and that'll kick things into overdrive."

"I know," whimpered Chonies, looking nervous as he bit down on the hose and hesitated to do as he was instructed. He took a minute to gather his courage and then pulled his head back twice, yanking the straw as he did so. Immediately, the end of the straw started to transform, becoming a muzzle that covered over the bottom half of Chonie's face. Tubes slipped into his nostrils, pumping both air and the entrancing odors right into him. Straps also wrapped around his head, ensuring Chonies was going to have an impossibly tough time removing the hose from his maw, even if his paws weren't already lost to his obesity.

"What'sss all thisss, now?" wondered the captain of the Lizalfos as he saw all that was happening to Chonies. "What did he do?"

"I saw this when he was in the middle of setting all this up," the blue one replied. "Something to hasten the gaining, I think. Guess that means he is done with the warmup round and is ready to seriously binge himself to truly obese proportions now."

"You don't sssay," salivated the red one as did the others as all eyes became even more focused upon Chonies as the hose in his maw widened from the end coming out of the planet and spread towards the end in his maw, forcing his muzzle as wide as possible for the slurry of irresistible, fattening delight flooded into his mouth mercilessly. Chonies hardly even had to swallow as the stuff practically forced his throat open to allow it to make its way down into his

gullet with nothing along the way to hold it up. “And just when I didn’t think our feast today could get anymore appetizing.”

His chubby cheeks bulged even more, to help contain the flood of food filling his mouth till all those countless gallons could flow their way down his throat in monstrously massive gulps that were barely visible against his thickening, doughy neck rolls that melded with his head and made it appear like his was just a round ball with a face on the top. And while seeing such intense glutting did make the lizards snicker and drool with delight, it hardly compared to what happened to the chugging canine once that extreme surplus of calories reached his stomach and were hastily digested.

The slow, but steady gaining he had been displaying till now ramped up to the point he was gaining dozens of fresh new pounds of blubber in seconds. Before the increase, there was not much space on Chonie’s body that didn’t have the many Lizalfos clinging to his body, yet, in only a few brief minutes, he could have had at least twice and many swarming on his bulk and he’d still have room to hold more. The gargantuan pooch had now reached an alarming ten stories in height and looked massive enough to be a comparable size to the towering building behind him before his continued expansion easily surpassed it and still didn’t show any signs of doing anything but picking up speed of glutting and gaining.

“Look at him grow!” the Lizalfos cried, getting more voluminous and eager as the chihuahuas blubber expanding bigger and faster, making them all feel smaller, yet grew their appetites larger.

“Have we ever had a single course prey this enormously blobbular before?”

“We’ve never had this much freaking meat on the largest flock of victims to fall for our little fattening trap here and that group totalled about twenty and the size gap between them is already so huge and still widening rapidly!”

“With how he’s upgraded this planet we’ll end up obese blobs ourselves with how much we’ll be feasting. We can probably eat him and live off all that bulk for a year... at least!”

“He’s already more than our whole crew can devour in one sitting,” one pointed out, his words worrying Chonies as he groped and rubbed and then tugged at a small chunk of his blubber that was but a drop in the ocean of his massiveness that was quickly getting big enough to fill such a large body of water. “Let’s just eat him now. Just looking at all this succulent meat is driving me crazy and I can’t wait another minute longer!”

“Not good not good not good!” ran through Chonie’s mind as he began to sweat fearfully while the only thing his mountainous massive body could do was chug down more calories and remain an immobile, but tasty blob of blubber. As the one Lizalfos began gnawing more aggressively at his space suit-clad body, a number of the others started to join him, all equally eager to consume as much of him as they could.

“Hey! What do you all think you are doing!?!” snapped the red Lizalfos leader as he leapt into action to kick and smack at his overly eager crew members, knocking them down the mega chunky chow hound and didn’t let up till they all stopped trying to take a bite out of Chonie’s hide. “I didn’t ring the dinner bell and sssay that it iss time to eat!”

“But look how big he is already,” the Lizalfos that started everyone on eating pointed out. “He’s already more than big enough to fill us all up and then some. We’re all starving now, so why don’t we get started eating?”

“Have you all losst your Lizalfosss pride?” the captain lectured them. “We’re a lot of thingsss, but sssettlersss cssertainly issn’t one of them. Jusst becausse thiss creature iss now the fattesst thing any of usss hasss ever ssseen doessn’t mean we should eat him, not when he iss clearly capable of becoming even fatter ssstill. It truly is a rare opportunity to indulge more than any other Lizalfosss ever hasss before and we are not going to let our hunger deprived usss of that. Have I made myssself clear?”

“C-Crystal sir,” the other Lizalfos answered with a salute and tears and snot running down his face. The others reacted in the same, overly emotional fashion, proving how greatly their leader’s words had moved them. “We’ll wait till we have truly the grandest feast there ever was before us!”

“And don’t forget that I get first pick at his tenderiest and juiciest bits,” he added before looking up at Chonie’s head to see him still chugging down and fattening up his beyond colossal self up to ever greater levels of blobbiness. How deep his limbs were in his epically blimped out body was something he couldn’t even imagine. Just the fact that his head hadn’t fully been submerged and he was still chugging in spite of all the ways things could have gone wrong was a miracle in itself.

The red Lizalfos then climbed his way up Chonie’s body and took a seat atop his highest neck fold so that he was able to have a brief chat with the pooch, not entirely sure if he even had any consciousness left after drowning in such overwhelming gluttony. “Did you hear that?” he questioned, slapping at his blubbery neck that sent ripples across his whole jiggly round body. “Your end was delayed, but not by much. I’m just as famished as the others are and, should you stop eating for too long I’ll consider that a sigh you’re finally full and ready for us. So, till that gut of yours can’t expand another millimeter to contain all this high calorie stuff you’ve been feasting on, you better not stop chugging away. Cause I don’t want to devour you unless you’re truly as big as you can be. You got that?”

Unable to nod or even more while his thick, hilly multi chins kept him in place, the best the pooch could do to acknowledge what was said to him was by glancing in the red lizard’s direction and blinking a couple of times. “Good,” he spoke with a smirk and patted Chonie’s blubbery body some more, admiring the increased jiggle it gained since he last tested how thick

with lard he was. “Then enjoy every plumping up gulp that you take, cause each one means that’s another moment longer you get to live.”

“So terrifying,” thought Chonies as he kept on eating. “But, at least, I’ve been spared so long as I keep gulping away. I just need to hope that my body can endure all this... for all our sakes.”

GLUGLUGLUGLUGLUGLUG  
GULPGULPGULPGULPGULP  
CHUGALUGCHUGALUGCHUGALUG

More hours passed as Chonies kept on swallowing down massive mouthfuls of the planet’s edible matter. Bigger and more massive he grew, continuing to astound the ravenous predators that were endlessly delighted in the tons of plump meat he was packing onto his more mountainous than mountainous torso as he blimped up big enough to be clearly visible from space, beyond the planet’s atmosphere and still showed no signs of slowing down.

All the while this happened, Chonie’s insatiable appetite had been causing more and greater changes to the planet that went unnoticed by the lizard people while their focus remained solely upon the chow hound still chugging away metric tons of food by the swallow. Bodies of water from ponds, rivers, and lakes to seas and oceans began to dwindle in size and eventually dry up as a result of Chonie’s ceaseless chugging, drawing away their resources to be used to feed him instead.

The same was true for forest and vegetation as trees shriveled up like raisins and were sucked into the ground and vanished entirely. Forests were reduced to woods, which eventually ended up as treeless fields. Not long after that, even the grass and other remaining plant life even on the other end of the planet had the life sucked out of them, and reduced large sections of Planet Petit to nothing more than a barren desert. Yet, even as the lush, green planet started to look like an endlessly barren desert, Chonies kept on slurping the dwindling life and even the mass out of the planet to transform it into even more,thick layers of lard on his ever expansive torso that was reaching moon-sized proportions as his obesity continued to transform the once miniscule pooch into one of the largest beings in the cosmos and yet his gaining had still not reached its end yet.

“Doing great, but can’t stop yet,” thought Chonies, still hungry, but even with the scents still urging him to eat, fatigue started to weigh heavily on him to stop eating and get some rest. Doing his best to shrug it off, he kept his mind focused on what remained of his planet-sized meal. “Gotta keep eating. More and more. Till there’s nothing left to consume.”

“Oh, I’m so glad we waited,” the Lizalfos celebrated as they gazed up at the dog’s girth that they could barely see the top of from the ground.

“There’s enough meat here to end hunger on our home planet,” one commented before they all started to burst into laughter. “A shame that this feast is just for us!”

“A feast that isn’t even complete yet,” someone else pointed at as they pushed their claws against Chonie’s hide and watched his fat continuing to expand outwards, proving he was still actively gaining. “He’s still getting fatter for us!”

“Then grow, you tasty morsel, grow!” they all cheered. “Don’t stop till you can’t fit even one more calorie in you... if that’s possible for a black hole like you!”

Despite their ultimate aim to eat Chonies once he was done, the pup took encouragement from their words as he kept chugging. He swallowed bigger, multi-ton mouthfuls of the planet’s resources with every cheek-bulging slurp he performed. More and more of the world deformed into like a fresh, ripe apple that was rapidly rotting, making it shrivel and wrinkle up into a decayed and misshapen form. From being roughly as large as the planet Earth, it had soon lost almost half its total mass and was quickly being depleted of much, much more of its diameter at a steadily increasing pace.

Petit soon found itself no larger than Mars and its mass was still dwindling faster than ever too. Chonies, by comparison was growing more rapidly as his body was becoming large as a small planet in its own right. Even then, Chonies didn’t stop. He slurped even harder, stealing miles of diameter from the planet to add to himself again and again, helping reduce its mass till eventually it was more akin to Pluto and not even worthy of being classified as a planet any longer. Chonies, on the other hand, had continued to endure his gaining and managed to greater planet-sized proportions of his own. He had greatly outgrown the area he had been eating at, even burying the nearby building in his blubber. The Lizalfos remained atop Chonie’s body, making certain he didn’t blubber out right on top of them and get smothered beneath his bulk as well.

“I must be downright huge right now,” guesstimated Chonies, while his field of vision was blocked in all directions by the circular mountain range that was his neck fat. His stomach was aching worse than it ever had or even what he thought could be possible. His limbs were lost and trapped beneath miles of his own fleshy torso. At times his vision started to get blurry as the fatigue of such endless eating and digesting was downright exhausting to Chonies as well. “So full... So tired too... But still far from done... I can’t stop now. Not when... I’m so... close... Close to... saving... the others... Gotta... keep... on... eating... Eat till... there’s nothing left...”

Pooling together his remaining strength and resolve, Chonies kept on sucking the remains of Planet Petit into his belly, shrinking it smaller than a dwarf planet and soon enough smaller than the tiniest moon. It kept on shrinking while the pooch’s size began to measure up to the hugeness it started out with. The Lizalfos remained ignorant to this fact as their focus remained solely upon their enormous meal. They had no idea that the chihuahua had become

what he had eaten or that the epic expansiveness of his torso had done much more than cover over the planet for as far as the eye could see.

As Chonies took a few more big slurps of his planetary smoothie, a shocking delight made every inch of his endless blubber quiver as he sucked and only drew out air. His eyes widened and his jaw dropped lower as the muzzle covering his face slipped off of him now that his meal was at an end. "I- I did it," he stuttered in disbelief that he had pushed his stomach to the limit countless times over and he survived. "I really did it. I- UUUUURRRRRRRRAAAAAAAAAAPPPPPPPPPPPPP!!!!!!!"

An enormous belch exploded out of Chonies, one that had been waiting and accumulating strength within him till it finally made its move to climb up his buried throat and make its escape. Seeing this end-of-meal burp, the Lizalfos danced and celebrated upon Chonie's planetarily massive belly.

"He's done! He's done!" they cheered and chanted. "That means it's time for us to eat!"

"Yesss," agreed the red Lizalfos. "It finally isss time for usss to get what we've got coming to usss. Ssso, tell usss, big g-"

"UUUUUUUUUUURRRRRRRRRRAAAAAAAAAAPPPPP!!!!!" Chonies interrupted him as another belch forced itself free of his stomach.

"Oh, excuse me," Chonies apologized.

"Uh, right. No problem," replied the commander of the Lizalfos as he started again. "It isss time for usss to eat! Ssso, tell usss, big guy, how does it f-"

"UUUUURRRRRRRPPPPPP!!!" he belched yet again.

"My bad," the chihuahua apologized yet again while the other Lizalfos couldn't help snicker and laugh at the silliness of it all. "I think that should be the last of the gas."

"Uh... it isss time-" he attempted for the third time.

"Urp!" another one squeaked out of the endlessly obese chihuahua. "Sorry. Last one for real this time."

The red-marked Lizalfos stared up at Chonies for several seconds, waiting and expecting another interruption from him. His fellow lizard men couldn't help snickering and chortling over the ridiculousness of the scene that provided them a bit more pre meal entertainment. After almost a minute passed, the red Lizalfos finally opted to make a mad dash to say what he wanted to. "It is time for us to eat! Tell us, big guy, how does it feel to be the meal to end all meals?"

“Hey, you didn’t hiss when you spoke that time,” the blue one pointed out. “I think we’ve finally had a breakthrough.” Hearing that, the red one just rolled his eyes.

“Anyway,” he continued. “Now that you’ve had your fill, it’sss finally out turn to have oursss.”

“Yeah, about that,” answered Chonies as he replied to him with some bad news he was delighted to give them. “Unfortunately for all of you, your dinner has been canceled.”

“What are you talking about?” the lead Lizalfos questioned him. “Nobody cancelsss our mealtime, essspeccially not the meal in quessstion.”

“But, you see, I’m not just the meal,” explained Chonies. “I’m also the planet you’re currently standing on.”

“The planet?” he asked, looking at his crew who looked equally confused by this and then looked off into the distance and saw that the only thing in sight was chihuahua blubber spread out like endless fields of silver from his ridiculously stretched out space suit. It didn’t matter which direction they looked. That was all they could see, save for the light brown furry fields around Chonie’s head that made up his mountainous rolls of neck fat. As for the planet they had once been standing upon, there was not a trace of it in sight and just looking at how cosmically massive he was, he clearly wasn’t bluffing. Their two ships were also visible in the distance, managing to survive the planet’s apocalypse as well as they had, giving them a small relief that they weren’t marooned upon his hide, but nothing more than that. “You mean you ate the planet? All of it?!”

“It wasn’t easy, but, yup, I did,” Chonies confirmed once more with a prideful look upon his face. “I wasn’t sure if I’d be able to, but setting things up as I did made it possible. All that I needed after that was the right motivation and saving my friends and surviving all of you did that for me in spades.”

Growling and hissing the Lizalfos were furious at this deceit and spoiling of their eagerly anticipated feast. “You haven’t ssstopped usss yet!” he told Chonies, stomping on his blubber, making it wobble and cause his cohorts to fumble and fall on their butts from how jiggly the surface of this dog planet was. “You might have ruined our trap planet, but we can ssstill enjoy feasssting on your body for generationsss to come. Add to that, we can ssstart with your friendsss, jusst to prove that, in the end, you accomplisshed nothing more than pissing usss off!”

“That would be a problem,” countered Chonies as he looked up in the air and smirked at the sight of the Pluto taking to the air making its way over to them. “Fortunately, eating this planet was only half of my plan.”

"It musst be that robot that wasss with him," figured the Lizalfos leader. "Quick, everyone back to the ship. We'll blow theirs to sssmithereenssss like we should have done at that ssstart!"

"Hate to break it to ya, fellas," Stella spoke through the ship's speakers.

"Well, I would love to give them the bad news," interrupted Garbage, a voice that was music to Chonie's ears and caused him to start tearing up with joy.

"Go right ahead," allowed Stella as the Lizalfos awaited just what else could go wrong with their day.

"While you guys were being distracted by our lil buddy, Chones, here," Garbage continued, attempting to keep from snickering. "Our other buddy, Cy-Bark, took the liberty of de-weaponizing your ship."

"Garbage! Stella! Everybody," whimpered an emotional Chonies. "You're all okay and back to your not massive, bowling ball-shaped selves."

"Not quite," Stella told him as she looked at her still hugely round self that was barely able to stay balanced on two feet and reach anything with her hands. The same was true for the others who couldn't even sit at their stations and instead had to rely on their robot companion, Cy-Bark to handle the Pluto's controls in their stead. "After a few hours of not eating, the effects of the food have started to wear off, so we can at least move a bit and barely fit through doors. A few more hours should fully fix us and, thankfully, there's no more food left to tempt us."

"Yeah, I saw to that," smiled Chonies as another burp managed to find its way up his throat and out his maw before another followed right after. "Oh, excuse me. Sorry, but I think I might be planet-intolerant, if that's even a thing. Urrrrap!"

"Our ship?!?" cried the red Lizalfos as he checked a device he had on him that was wirelessly linked to his ship's systems. He attempted to activate every violence-inducing feature, but all his attempts were met with a red flash and an irritating buzzing noise. "The death rays... The missiles... Even the air conditioner and karaoke room are all offline. The only things still operational are the main fight controls and the life support. Urgh! Bliznak! Who wasss the idiot that wasss sssupposed to make sure the ship wasssn't left unattended?"

"You didn't assign anyone to that task," the blue one pointed out. "So, I guess that means you're that idiot."

"And now you've got no planet and no weapons on your ship," taunted Garbage. "Meaning you're all done and at our mercy."

“We could very easily finish you off just as quickly as you planned to do to us,” added Stella. “Lucky for you, we’re feeling pretty generous and are going to let you go.”

“Actually, it was the rest of the crew that was feeling generous,” Pepper chimed in. “In order to eliminate future skirmishes with the likes of you, I highly recommended total annihilation, but I was outvoted.”

“I actually voted to have us compensated,” huffed Ed. “But I guess this whole misadventure was just another profitless waste of my time. Still, the food was good.”

“So very good. I voted to see if we could get some dessert,” giggled Nomi. “Because despite their end game to eat us, I can’t say I didn’t fully enjoy myself.”

“Uh, anyway, Garbage and I both voted to let you all go and with it being 2-1-1-1 that’s what was decided,” stated Stella, as she growled to show she meant business with what she was about to say next. “So you’ve got ten minutes to get your scaly butts off our friend’s body or we will vaporize you!”

“Ugh,” snarled the red Lizalfos, scowling up at the ship and then back over at Chonies, his blubbery face filling him up with equal parts hunger and loathing. His lust for revenge and anger that his hunger remained unsated was almost maddening. Part of him would have gladly remained to fight the Pluto crew despite how futile it would have been, but another part of him reminded him of the wisdom to live to fight another day. “Thiss isss far over!” he announced, opting to choose survival for himself and his crew rather than a wrath-fueled demise. “We will have our revenge on you creaturesss! We will devour each and every last one of your kind till your whole ssspeciesss isss wiped clean of the galaxy.” Glaring at Chonies again, he shot a finger at him. “And I’ll perssionally handle your ingesstion!”

“And this is why I wanted to eliminate them now,” pointed out Pepper as they watched the Lizalfos flee to their ship.

“It probably would, but after what Chonies has been through I don’t think he’d appreciate us shooting him up as we try to vaporize all of them,” Stella pointed out.

“Fair point,” the largest of the crew conceded as she watched the Lizalfos enter their ship and didn’t take her focus off of them till they were gone and no longer on their sensors. “Okay, they’re gone. We’re good to land now.”

“Where should I bring her down?” asked Nomi as she scanned the expansive bulk of their Med-Tech officer. “On his right moob or maybe on one of his squishy neck rolls?”

“I think the right moob would be just fine,” decided Garbage to the crew’s pilot, though it was Cy-Bark who had to be her hands for landing the ship.

“Hello? Pluto Crew? Chonies? Cy-Bark? Anybody?” Loaf started to call to them, his voice shakey and fearful as ever. “Please someone answer... preferably with good news.”

“Everything’s a-okay on our end,” Stella answered him with a reassuring tone that made him flop back in his chair and let out a huge sigh of relief. “All thanks to Chonies and Cy-Bark, of course.”

“Oh, thank heavens,” he panted and cried tears of joy. “I practically shed myself naked with worry. What ever even happened to you all? That planet was supposed to be safe, a paradise from what the reports were saying about it. They must have been horribly wrong, huh?”

“No, they were completely right about it,” assured Garbage as he recalled the taste and the smells of the planet and started to drool buckets from that alone. “It was a true paradise, one greater than anything you could have imagined.”

“There were some things that still needed to be fixed and adjusted, something we probably could have taken care of,” added Stella. “And once all that would have been taken care of, planet Petit could have been the new world we were searching for. One that dogs and humans could have lived quite happily on.”

“So much past tense in your words,” groaned Loaf. “Meaning, something happened and that’s yet another planet we’ve got to cross off the list.”

“Crossed off the list and erased from the map,” giggled Nomi.

“I’m afraid so,” Pepper confirmed. “Sadly, we’ll be heading back to the M-Bark empty-pawed again.”

“Do I dare ask what happened to this world?” he inquired as he recalled the numerous other incidents that transpired in the past. “Do I even want to know?”

“Not sure if you’ll believe it,” giggled Nomi, knowing how ridiculous the answer was going to sound with or without context. “Chonies ate it. The planet, I mean.”

“Chonies ate it,” he repeated, sounding truly in disbelief at the sheer ludicrously of how it sounded. “A skinny, little chihuahua ate an entire planet that was roughly the size of the Earth. I was right, I really didn’t want to know, but I certainly do believe that’s what happened.”

“Well, technically, he didn’t eat it, but sucked it all up through a straw,” Ed further elaborated. “Now he’s as big as the Earth and no telling how long he’ll be that massive. The high fattening effects do wear off quickly, but even with that, he’s so huge it’ll definitely take some time.”

“Meaning, I’m gonna be out of commission again,” groaned Chonies, back to square one again. “But maybe we won’t have another mission till I’m all better?”

“I hate to break it to you all,” Loaf informed his crew. “But the council’s already got your next mission lined up for as soon as you get back here.”

“So soon? What is it this time?” asked Stella.

“The Pluto crew is to attempt to negotiate with this reptilian civilization a few planets down from the one you are- uh, were, currently on. They’re known as the Lizalfos and they really love the taste of living creatures chock full of meat. Heheh.” Already he was panting and breaking out into a sweat. “I can already feel my next panic attack coming on.”

“What are the odds?” sighed Stella as she pressed her paw to her forehead, feeling a headache coming on.

“For us, pretty much a hundred percent guaranteed,” Pepper reported without needing to do any calculations.

“Perhaps some soothing music to help calm your nerves for the time being,” suggested Cy-Bark as he started to play some Cosmic Polka.”