

The Astronaut
by Anonymous

To my Mother.

The astronaut stood tall in his tattered spacesuit and shattered helmet while he watched his shuttle slowly sink into the ocean, as if taunting him. There was one last look at the spacecraft as the astronaut watched the menacing ocean suck it under, leaving behind a quake of bubbles. The hopeless soul walked away from the catastrophe and tears melted down his face. On the other side of the beach, a wall of forest took over the sand and everything was colorful and bright. The trees there hung high as skyscrapers, mushrooms the length of saplings and thick vines strangled the plant life they surrounded. A cacophony of noises was heard: loud caws, ribbits and SHRIEKS! came from the shadows--the astronaut became more uneasy and furthered his vigilance.

He found a quiet hidden area, at the outskirts of the beach, next to a boulder with smelly moss and a patch of ten-foot-high ferns; there he pondered his catastrophe, the ruin of his dead comrades and the underwater ship with galaxy-communication--he would be stuck here forever. A castaway.

The astronaut was able to save minimal supplies: a week's worth of ready to eat meals and three-days water, a first-aid kit and raypistol. If he didn't find his bearings, he'd only last as long as his gear, unless something else got to him first.

However, the astronaut was compelled to build a cairn for his fallen friends and he worked slow and smooth. When the burial was done, he headed towards the forest and was placated by the beauty, despite his melancholic circumstances.



The wildlands were still bright inside (though subdued) even after the suns had long ago set. As he neared closer, the astronaut began to notice giant bird-like creatures flying in and out

of the trees. Their feathers changing from shades of blue, to orange, then red and back to blue. The birds' beaks looked like two hacksaws mashed together. Their bony-teeth were deadly. The astronaut stared, glued in place, as the flock of creatures dived through the sky, piercing their long, jagged beaks through the clouds.

The astronaut continued towards the forest's edge where soil met sand and looked below at his heavy boots to notice that every step he took the plant life below would retract, spreading out around his footfalls and would make an empty patch of earth where he had just stepped, only to see it return moments later like nothing had happened. Entering the forest, the astronaut watched as strange and potentially dangerous creatures ran across branches. The beasts could be seen swinging from vines with their six-limbs to pick at exotic fruits that glowed and spilled fluorescent goo when the furry monsters took a bite from them. Ferns lit up in the shade, lighting the way for the astronaut. Orange, swirling plants disappeared into the mossy floor when you came too close to their patterned leaves, popping back up when the danger was gone, for the bees to restart their nectar collection. The astronaut thought, 'I feel like this place is engulfing me, I feel tiny.'

Overly-sized insects were covered in magnificent shades and crawled along the forest floor, along with other odd creatures--some of them engulfed in a snake's wide maw, trapped before they could reach their burrow. Bugs and birds danced through the air leaving trails of light in their wake that painted the shadows purple, green or red. The rainbowbark on trees glowed with a hue that mirrored their respective colors. Areas of the forest were set with fog that seeped through the land, pooling around the astronaut's feet and anything else it came across. The astronaut was surrounded by energy and awe, it was as if the forest was breathing and had its own pulse.

"Oh, God. Where am I?" the astronaut said to himself, thinking that if he had crash landed anywhere at least he landed somewhere scenic. A branch snapped about a hundred-paces-away, then a RAWR! billowed from some creature of the night. Paranoia seeped into the astronaut's brain, sweat appeared on his brow and the hairs on his neck pricked--despite his training for this, the astronaut was shaking at the knees a bit. The animal who startled him slinked off into the dark recesses of the forest. 'I wish my expedition was with me, I can't believe they're gone,' the astronaut dreamed. An outcast to a new-world with nothing but a horrible excuse for supplies, a ship and crew (that now rested on the ocean floor) and an equally drowned communications system. Riddled with fear and anxiety, until the only thing the astronaut could think of was how utterly alone he was.

Alone and tired the astronaut walked through the forest waiting for a clearing where he could set up camp and start a fire, possibly sleep. Then from the shadows, the astronaut saw a green pulsing, ambient-light coming towards his direction slowly and gracefully. As the light moved closer it split into a gangly group of figures. They appeared before him taking on different shapes and appearances, of different size and brightness. The astronaut reached for his raypistol, fear-stricken and then in a moment of hesitation, he relinquished his grip and instead said all he could think to say...

"Hello."

The End

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Thanks for reading!