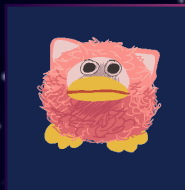




OFF TO SPACE

A BEE AND PUPPYCAT ZINE

THE MOD TEAM:



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**A big thank you to Gree Grecia
for making the zine's cover.
You can find them on Instagram
under @gree_grecia.**

DEAR READERS,

We wanted to create a zine that is open to beginners and masters alike and we think we succeeded. Our only requirement was a love for Bee and Puppcat, which we hope will shine through the pages! The mod team is grateful for the opportunity to grow and learn from this project.

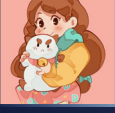
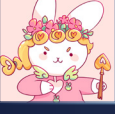
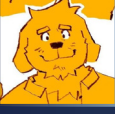
Our creators have worked hard and we would like to thank them for supporting each other and us through the process of this zine. The entire thing was very fun! A special thanks goes to friend of the mods, Tim, who gave us wonderful tips on how to use Indesign.

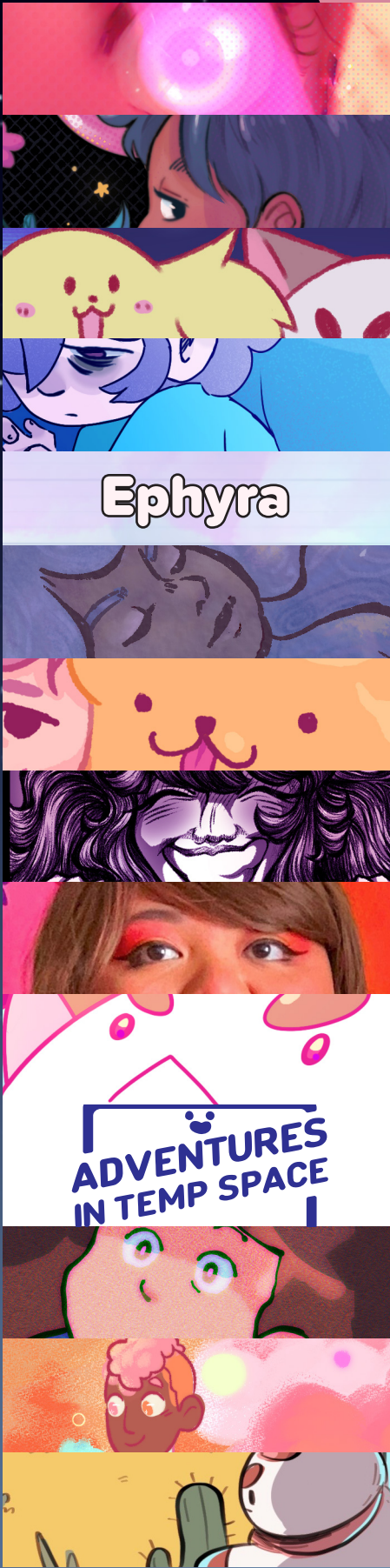
Happy reading!

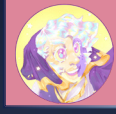
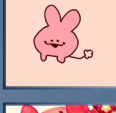
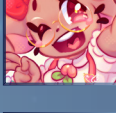
The mod team



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	Chelsea Reyes - @chil.jpg on Instagram, @chil.jpg on Twitter
	Chumby - chumby_y on Twitter, chumby.yy on Insta
	Seineevee - Seineevee on Youtube, riverseinery on Twitter
	Void - ColorfulVoid on Twitter, Voids-Colorful-Creations on Tumblr
	Pens01 - pens01.tumblr.com
	Clio - mynthae on Tumblr
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	Toffle - Toffleteeth on all platforms
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	Xephia - Xephia on Tumblr and Twitter, xephia_art on Instagram
	Yali Scribbles - yali_scribbles on Instagram
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	Air / Bun-bun - fallingbuns on all platforms
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Acacia- on Twitter knavelike, on Tumblr acaciaww



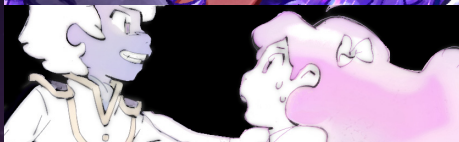
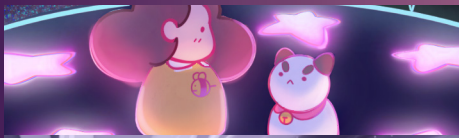
Chloë/ CatCryptid - catcryptid on Twitter



Britt/Bee - Artzoid on insta, Artzoid_ on Twitter



Isabella Weissflog - pinepaz on all platforms









Ephyra

By colorful void

It's nearing the end of dusk when Cardamon wanders into his mother's room. The dying sun outside only casts wisps of light through the window, divided by the shut blinds. More lighting comes from monitors and devices, beeping and chiming their way along. A soft glow envelopes the space, ambience cast in multi-coloured hues. The sunlight refracts through gelatinous tears, rainbows of light shining all throughout the room.

The piles of them grow higher and higher every day, and it's almost scary how Cardamon feels like he's begun to get used to it.

He starts to shuffle the tears out of the way on auto pilot as he wades his way into his mother's room, but with the depth of them it's really more like a hybrid climb/swim. It's wholly uncomfortable.

The tears don't sit right, they're not quite firm enough to stand on, but not soft enough to dissipate.

"Hello." Cardamon greets, giving his mother a proper glance as he proceeds deeper into the multihued sludge. "You might be surprised to see me with my school bag when it is not time to go to school, but there is good reason for that."

The bag in question rests on Cardamon's shoulders, as always, and he pulls it slightly closer as he speaks.

He rounds the edge of the bed, kicking over at the tears and sending them lightly bouncing about.

"It's a fairytale book I got from school. Ms. Coffee helped me pick it. I thought I would let you know that now so you could set your expectations low in advance."

After considerably too much effort, Cardamon finally makes it to his mother's right, able to brush the tears off the blanket and make room for himself.

He sits right at the edge, ends of his mother's skirt flared out just centimetres away from him. He lingers slightly, not quite ready to touch just yet. Slowly, Cardamon takes off his bag, pulling out the book inside.

It's somewhat old, but rather thin. The cover and spine aren't labelled, only bound in soft lavender fabric. "I'm going to read to you now, alright? Princes should read to sleeping princesses, I think."

The ever-present beeping answers, and Cardamon proceeds.

"I helped choose it too. It's a book with jellyfish in it."

He hesitates on his words, unable to make them fit the shape of his mouth correctly. He wants to say "*you like jellyfish, so you'll like this book too.*". Part of him can't allow it, out of fear that this may not be the case. He remembered his mother's stories about jellyfish, yes, but what else? Did she really like jellyfish or just talk about them? Did she even talk about them at all?

The more there was to think about it, the scarier it got. Could his memories have gotten mixed up? His mother had been asleep for such a long time...

The thoughts grew darker and deeper the more Cardamon thought about them, so he decided not to think them all together.

"I'm going to start reading now, alright?"

No one answered.

He starts out quietly, a voice hesitant about the words on the page.

It's a story of a princess, a story of a young girl.

It's a story of loneliness.

There aren't many pictures in this book, it's all text with the exception of a few black ink drawings every few pages. It doesn't matter much though, Cardamon can see the descriptions play out into the air as he reads aloud.

His eyes don't see quite right, whenever he glances up from the page and over to his mother, around the room he can see the story play out. It's cast in multicoloured refractions of light, specks dancing in dusk.

He watches them as he reads them, the little princess in the book springing to life. The youngest princess, the only princess, awaking in her sprawling bed.

It's floating, in her room, above the water that's come in.

It's floating, in front of Cardamon's eyes, close enough to touch if he reaches for her. He doesn't, of course, he tries to keep his voice steady, to maintain her illusion.



The rainstorms had come, in the fairytale world, and the princess’s home was flooded. Her whole kingdom had flooded. The little girl, dipping a finger into the water, gently pushes herself off, and swims over to the window.

The sunset that falls across Cardamon’s pages is partially obscured by the tears against the window. They’re soft purples, blues, and greens across the words, a mix of hues that softens to aquamarine, to lavender and periwinkle, to the sea at sunset.

There too, out the girl’s window, the kingdom had been cast underwater. Her home, all she’d known, it’s flooded. It’s changed.

Tropical fish swam along the streets and turtles went in the shops. Jellyfish bobbed around like light.

“How exciting!” She said, said Cardamon, out into the air that wouldn’t reply. The lights still dance above him, the little girl in his eyes flitting around in front of him.

“I must go play with them!” She declared, read Cardamon, and off she swam out into the kingdom.

The girl in the story swims around the room, around Cardamon’s eyes, above his mothers head and up towards the ceiling. This way and that, purple hair streaming out behind her, sparkling in the sunset.

If his mother would just open her eyes, wouldn’t she be delighted? Wouldn’t she clap and smile, say Cardamon my darling, how wonderful of you, how proud of you I am? Would she say that? He can’t remember.

He keeps reading, and the girl keeps swimming.

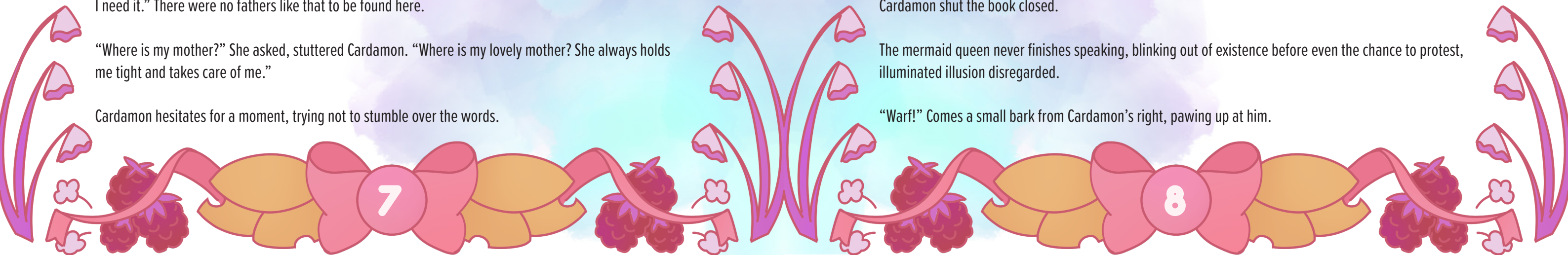
Soon though, the girl became distraught.

“Where is my brother?” She asked, read Cardamon. “Where is my little brother? He is always silly and cheerful.” There were no little boys like that to be found here.

“Where is my father?” She asked, read Cardamon. “Where is my strong father? He always helps me when I need it.” There were no fathers like that to be found here.

“Where is my mother?” She asked, stuttered Cardamon. “Where is my lovely mother? She always holds me tight and takes care of me.”

Cardamon hesitates for a moment, trying not to stumble over the words.



There is no mother like that to be found here.

“Where is everybody?” The princess cried into the sea, swimming through schools of fish and past swaths of sea turtles. The seaweed sparkled, waves in the brush of everything, but it was never waving at her.

Cardamon runs his finger along the pages as he reads, voice growing slower.

He’s starting to think he might not like this story very much. But it’s silly, it’s childish to care. And if Cardamon is anything, he can’t be a kid, not anymore than he already is.

He simply can’t afford it.

On and on the princess continued to sob, tears splashing softly into the water that embraced her in place of any family. She hovers dangerously close to Cardamon’s mother, one small mourner in a funeral that won’t begin.

Cardamon doesn’t like reading this story very much.

“My, my, don’t cry darling. What’s wrong?” Reads Cardamon, flat tone making the line impossible to differentiate from the others despite a change in speaker.

The little princess looks up, only to find herself surrounded by the Queen, King, and Prince. “Mama!” The princess cried, Cardamon read, “There was all this water- I- I couldn’t find you! I was so lonely and scared!”

The queen reaches forward, embracing her daughter. The illusion flickers like fire light above Cardamon’s mother, unmoving.

“My dear, there is nothing to be afraid of. The water is nothing to fear, your tail is strong and will let you swim smoothly through it. Even if you can’t find me, there is nothing to fear, because I will always come back to you. I promise, little princess, you will never be alone, because I will-“

Cardamon shut the book closed.

The mermaid queen never finishes speaking, blinking out of existence before even the chance to protest, illuminated illusion disregarded.

“Warf!” Comes a small bark from Cardamon’s right, pawing up at him.



Sticky looks up with big eyes, nudging her head forward to lick at Cardamon’s hands, still clutching the book. They begin shaking ever so slightly less.

“You’re right, Sticky. It wasn’t a very good story. Not very good at all.”

Cardamon’s gaze drifts over to his mother. Pale, still, and so very, very quiet. He doesn’t find the comfort he’s looking for in her appearance. The beeping of the monitors only seems to grow more shrill with time.

“I’m sorry. I didn’t choose a very good book. Next time I’ll choose better.”

He takes a breath, slower and shakier than it should’ve been.

“I’m sorry I didn’t finish reading to you.”

No one answers. The night bleeds into through the blinds, sunlight long vanished. It’s only the reflection of the moon, it’s waning light that catches in the thousands of jellied tears. A hundred different colours nearly glow; soft light that can’t replace the missing warmth.

It’s cold in here.

Silently, Cardamon places the book down; lets it tumble off to the ground. He inches his way across the bedspread, crawling over a pristine skirt lying atop well made sheets.

He winds up curled inwards, a ball that’s tucked to his mother’s side. Sticky follows suit, curling on his other side, a tiny nest that Cardamon hides himself away in.

Cardamon lets his head rest against his mother’s stomach, feeling himself move just slightly as she breathes.

In.

Out.

In.

Out.



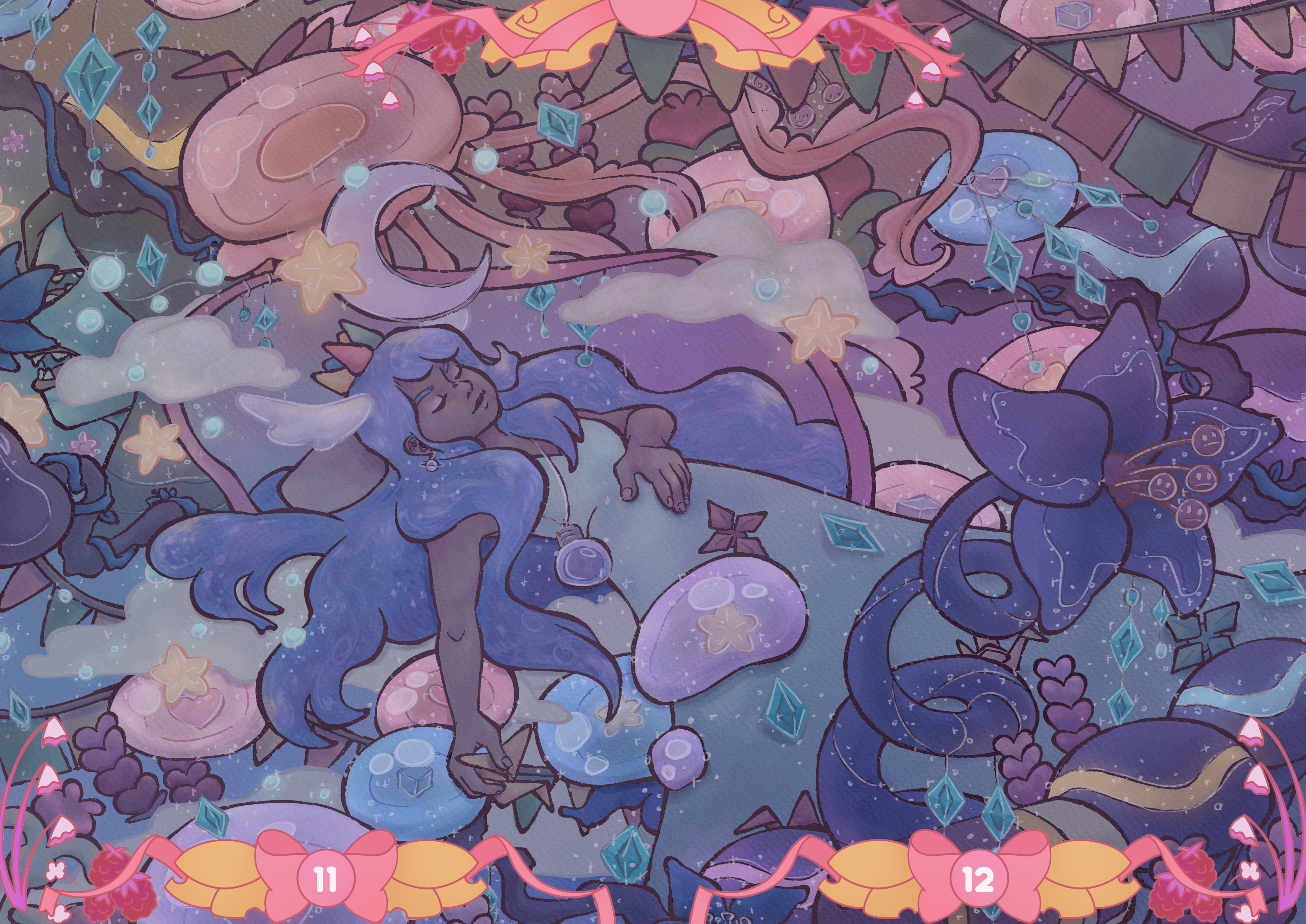
It’s shallow, it’s slow, but it’s there. A soft tide, a gentle bob of the waves.

And maybe it’s just that late, perhaps the moonlight lulls him, perhaps the sleeplessness has caught up to him.

For whatever reason, with Sticky on one side and his mother on the other, Cardamon drifts asleep.

In his dreams, she still hasn’t stopped crying, she never really does. Instead her sorrow dissolves into a sparkling liquid that floods the island, submerges it into the sea around them. There, among the turtles and merfolk, past the coral and twisting seaweed, Cardamon dreams.

In a sea of his mother’s tears, reborn as a jellyfish, wrapped up in a bloom of thousands.







ADVENTURES IN TEMP SPACE

A BEE AND PUPPYCAT ONE PAGE RPG

IN THIS GAME, PLAYERS ALL MUST SHARE CONTROL OVER BEE AND PUPPYCAT IN THEIR ADVENTURES COMPLETING TEMP JOBS THROUGHOUT SPACE. AS THEY WORK TO COMPLETE THE TASK PROVIDED BY THAT JOB, THEY MUST BALANCE THE UNCERTAIN BEE AND THE CHAOTICALLY DISTRACTIBLE PUPPYCAT SO THEY CAN BE PAID AND AVOID CERTAIN DOOM.

THE GAME MUST INVOLVE AT LEAST ONE GAME MASTER (GM) AND AT LEAST TWO PLAYERS AND WILL USE UP TO THREE SIX SIDED DICE (D6)

PLAYER RULES

- 1 ON A PLAYERS TURN, THEY MUST DECIDE WHETHER TO CONTROL BEE OR PUPPYCAT ON THEIR TURN.
- 2 PLAYER DECLARES THE ACTION THE CHARACTER WILL TAKE, WHICH THE GM MUST APPROVE. IN THE EVENT THAT THE SKILL IS NOT PROPERLY JUSTIFIED OR EXPLAINED, THE GM CAN HAVE THE PLAYER RETHINK THEIR ACTION WITH A DIFFERENT SKILL.
- 3 ONCE THE ACTION IS APPROVED, PLAYERS WILL ROLL THEIR DICE. BY DEFAULT IT WILL BE 2D6, BUT DEPENDING ON THE ACTIONS TAKEN, PLAYERS MIGHT BE ASKED TO ADD OR REMOVE A DICE FROM THE ROLL.
- 4 THROUGHOUT THE GAME, THERE IS A METER WITH 12 SPACES THAT MEASURES THE DOMINANCE OF BEE AND PUPPYCAT. THIS "BP METER" WILL HAVE A SCORE THAT PLAYERS HAVE TO MEET OR SURPASS TO SUCCEED ON A TURN.
- 5 IF A ROLL SUCCEEDS, THE BP SCORE WILL MOVE TOWARDS THE SUCCESSFUL CHARACTER. IF A ROLL FAILS, THE ACTION WILL BE DECLARED UNSUCCESSFUL AND THE BP SCORE WILL MOVE AWAY FROM THE CHARACTER. IN THE EVENT THAT THE ROLL TIES WITH THE BP SCORE, BEE AND PUPPYCAT MANAGE TO WORK TOGETHER PERFECTLY AND GAIN VALUABLE INSIGHT ON THEIR JOB (SEE GM SECTION FOR DETAILS). AFTERWARDS, PLAYERS DECIDE WHICH DIRECTION TO MOVE THE BP SCORE.

BEE



CHARACTERS



PUPPYCAT

BEE HAS THREE CORE SKILLS:

FLEX: USE ANYTIME BEE HAS TO USE HER UNNATURAL STRENGTH AND DURABILITY TO FIGHT, CARRY, OR PROTECT SOMETHING.

FEAST: WHENEVER BEE HAS TO DO ANYTHING THAT INVOLVES FOOD (I.E. EATING, COOKING, BAKING, THINKING ABOUT FOOD).

FEEL: ACTIONS THAT INVOLVE BEE USING HER EMOTIONS AND EMPATHY TO ASSIST OR UNDERSTAND SOMEONE OR SOMETHING.

BEE IS ALWAYS HAPPY TO HELP THOSE SHE WORKS WILL, BUT IS WORRIED ABOUT THREE THINGS: RESPONSIBILITY, A LACK OF SLEEP, AND WATER.

WHENEVER PLAYERS CONTROL BEE, THEY MUST **ROLL BELOW** THE BP SCORE.

MOVE BP SCORE LEFT
ON SUCCESS

PUPPYCAT HAS THREE CORE SKILLS:

DEDUCE: USE THIS SKILL TO HELP PUPPYCAT NOTICE OR REMEMBER ANY INFORMATION RELATING TO YOUR JOB.

DESTROY: WHENEVER PUPPYCAT DOES ANYTHING TO CREATE CHAOS (WHICH IS OFTEN), USE THIS SKILL.

DISTRACT: ANYTIME PUPPYCAT USES HIS CUNNING TO MANIPULATE, OUTSMART OR DISTRACT, USE THIS SKILL.

WHILE PUPPYCAT HAS EXPERIENCE WITH WORKING IN TEMP SPACE, A LOT OF THE INHABITANTS DON'T SEEM TO LIKE HIM THAT MUCH. HE WILL ALSO FIXATE ON WHATEVER HE CONSIDERS COOL AT THE MOMENT.

WHEN PLAYERS CONTROL PUPPYCAT, THEY MUST **ROLL ABOVE** THE BP SCORE.

MOVE BP SCORE RIGHT
ON SUCCESS

BP METER



PLACE A DICE OR TOKEN ON THE METER TO TRACK CURRENT BP SCORE

IF THE BP SCORE SURPASSES A 1 OR A 12, YOU WILL HAVE FAILED YOUR JOB AND THE GAME IS LOST

GM SETUP: ISLAND ADVENTURES

WHEN STARTING THE SESSION, THE GROUP WILL DECIDE WHICH OF THE SIX SKILLS BETWEEN BEE AND PUPPYCAT WILL BE STRONG AND WEAK FOR THE TEMP JOB. **THE STRONG SKILL** WILL MEAN THAT PLAYERS CAN ENHANCE THE DICE ROLL BY EITHER REMOVING 1D6 TO BEE'S ROLLS OR ADDING 1D6 TO PUPPYCAT'S ROLLS. **THE WEAK SKILL** WILL HINDER THAT CHOSEN SKILL BY EITHER ADDING 1D6 TO BEE'S ROLL OR REMOVING 1D6 FROM PUPPYCAT'S SKILL ROLLS. IN DECIDING THESE TWO SKILLS, THE PLAYERS AND THE GM WILL DECIDE UPON THE SITUATION THAT CAUSED BEE AND PUPPYCAT SKILLS TO BE CHANGED LIKE THIS.

THIS CAN ALSO BE A CHANCE TO INCLUDE ANY OTHER CHARACTERS INTO THE SESSION, BUT THOSE CHARACTERS WILL BE IN THE CONTROL OF THE GM. ONCE THE SITUATION IS ESTABLISHED, BEE AND PUPPYCAT WILL BE TELEPORTED TO TEMP SPACE TO BEGIN THEIR WORK.

EXAMPLE:

"PUPPYCAT HAS AWAKENED BEE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT TO TRY TO GET ENOUGH MONEY TO BUY AN EXCLUSIVE PRETTY PATRICK FIGURINE THAT IS GOING ON PRE-ORDER AT 3:46 AM. BEING SO TIRED HAS MADE IT HARDER FOR BEE TO **FLEX**, BUT PUPPYCAT'S FERVOR FOR PRETTY PATRICK WILL CAUSE HIM TO **DESTROY** ANYONE THAT STANDS IN THE WAY OF HIM AND PRE-ORDERING ONE OF THE THREE FIGURINES."

CREATE A TEMP JOB

WHEN PLAYERS ENTER TEMP SPACE, THEY WILL BE ASSIGNED A JOB BY TEMP BOT. WHEN CREATING A TEMP JOB, THE GM OR THE PLAYERS CAN ROLL 1D6 FOR EACH PART IF OF THE JOB ON THE TABLES TO THE RIGHT.

THE CLIENT...

1. A TALKING ANIMAL
2. A LIVING OBJECT
3. A CREEPY ALIEN
4. A FRIENDLY GIANT
5. A WELCOMING PLANET
6. A DEMANDING PARENT

WANTS YOU TO...

1. DESTROY / PACIFY
2. RETRIEVE / STEAL
3. DELIVER
4. BEFRIEND
5. CREATE / COMPLETE
6. PROTECT / EMPOWER

THE...

1. ANCIENT ARTIFACT
2. ANNUAL COMPETITION
3. GIANT CELEBRATION
4. PERFECT PRESENT
5. BABY CREATURE
6. MYSTERIOUS ENTITY

BUT LITTLE DO YOU KNOW... (GM ONLY)

1. THE CLIENT WILL TRY TO DESTROY YOU!
2. THEY THINK YOU ARE A GOD!
3. THERE ARE OTHER TASKS AFTERWARDS!
4. ANOTHER CREATURE PLANS TO STOP YOU!
5. THE TASK IS BASICALLY IMPOSSIBLE!
6. YOU HAVE SOMETHING THAT CAN FIX EVERYTHING!

GM RULES

- 1 ONCE THEY GET TO TEMP SPACE, INTRODUCE THE BASIC PREMISE OF THE JOB. BE SURE TO LEAVE OUT THE INFORMATION ABOUT THE EXTERNAL COMPLICATION.
- 2 AFTER PLAYERS FAIL ENOUGH TIME, START TO INTRODUCE THE EXTERNAL COMPLICATION, FIRST BY SHOWING SIGNS THAT IT'S ABOUT TO HAPPEN, THEN BY ASKING FOR A RESPONSE.
- 3 WHEN A PLAYER COMMITS AN ACTION, THE GM WILL THEN NARRATE HOW THOSE ACTIONS PLAY OUT WITHIN THE STORY. IT MIGHT HELP TO END THE NARRATIONS BY ASKING A QUESTION TO HELP THE PLAYERS BUILD ON EACH OTHER'S TURNS.
- 4 IF THE PLAYERS ARE PARTICULARLY PRIORITIZING ONE CHARACTER OVER THE OTHER, HAVE THE EXTERNAL THREAT BEGIN TO TARGET THE OTHER CHARACTER.



TIEING THE BP SCORE

IF THE ROLL LANDS IS THE SAME AS THE CURRENT BP SCORE, BEE AND PUPPYCAT WILL HAVE MANAGED TO WORK TOGETHER PERFECTLY! A TIE WILL ALSO RESULT IN THE PLAYERS GAINING SOME SPECIAL INSIGHT INTO THEIR JOB. VALUABLE QUESTIONS INCLUDE:

- WHAT ARE THEY REALLY FEELING? WHO'S BEHIND THIS? HOW COULD I GET THEM TO DO SOMETHING?
- WHAT SHOULD I BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR? WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO FINISH THE JOB? WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON HERE?

AFTER WHICH, THE PLAYERS CAN DECIDE WHICH DIRECTION TO MOVE THE BP SCORE.







Two Bowls of Soup

By Peach

Trigger warnings: passive portrayal of family member/minor character death; grief for a family member's death.

It was a late crisp autumn night the day Crispin Wizard returned to the island.

He was currently squeezed into the back of a modestly sized ride – for a clown car – surrounded by what had become his on the road family for the past ten years. The car was rambunctious and loud, as a car stuffed with clowns tended to be, but Crispin sat in quiet reflection. His heart clenched as the car pulled onto the ferry transporting them back to the island and he looked out the window at the full moon's rippling reflection out on the water.

Realistically, Crispin *knew* a day would come when he'd finally leave the traveling circus and return home to his family. In fact, after he'd run away, he thought that day would be sooner rather than later. But a year went by, then two, and he couldn't bring himself to leave.

Now, ten years had gone by since the night he stuffed a few belongings into a tied up sheet and left the home he found himself invisible in.

He looked down at the tattered paper he'd been worrying between his fingers. He didn't need to open it to know what it said.

“You should probably come home.”

He'd only just started writing letters to his family a few years ago. A month or so after he sent his first letter, he was shocked to find his whole family there at one of the circus' performances. His mom and dad looked older, with new lines on their faces and light streaks of white in their otherwise green hair. His mom had cried when she saw him and he'd instantly felt his stomach cramp with all the guilt he usually repressed. He was astonished too to see how grown all his other siblings looked, probably most of all by his baby siblings Deckard and Cass, who'd just been babies when he'd left.

His mother and father had tried to convince him at the time to return. But by then he'd already grown a new family and couldn't imagine leaving them. Traveling with the circus and his clown friends, Crispin felt at home with himself, content in a way he never felt before.

He didn't want to reflect on if that made him a bad person. He knew it made his parents sad, which in turn made him feel kinda bad. And his siblings didn't understand. None of them did. Being on the road, surrounded by the things and people that gave him the most joy, Crispin

needed it the same way he needed air in his lungs.

So in the end, he decided to stay.

But that night he felt the wisps of longing for his parents and siblings. He felt the phantom touches of his mother's fingers carding through his hair. He could hear the deep rumble of his father's laugh. And he missed the buzz of energy that seemed to hum under his skin when interacting with his siblings, even if it was an argument and one of them was throwing a toaster at the other.

So he promised his family he'd keep in touch this time. And he did. He began writing home on a weekly basis, and he got weekly letters in return. He got pictures. Wesley holding up the latest fish he caught, a small satisfied smile creeping across his face. Deckard and Cass from when they first learned how to ride bikes. Millions of close up glamor shots of Howell. Little glimpses into the lives of his five other brothers and one sister.

He thrifted a tattered picture album – he painted it in bright hues of red, yellow, and blue with little clown faces in the corners, each one making their own exaggerated faces – that he kept the photos all tucked away in.

Crispin cherished them all. He had actually been considering visiting home and staying for a while during the circus off season. That was when he'd got this letter.

Crispin,

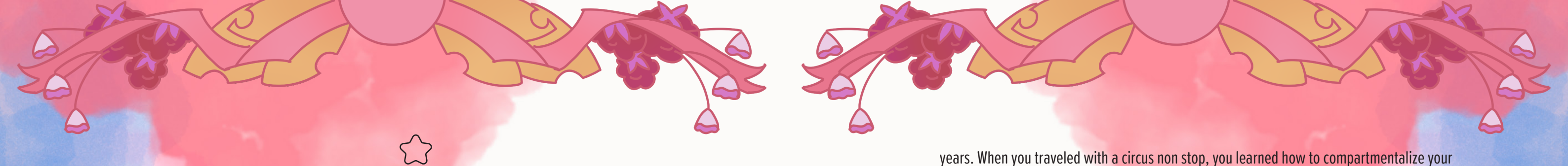
You should probably come home. The service for mom and dad is at the end of the month. I'm sure they'd prefer if you could be there too. They loved you so much.

We miss you.

Wizard Siblings

Crispin crumpled the paper further in his fist, trying not to feel anything at all.

Yes, Crispin Wizard certainly knew he'd one day return home. But he never thought it would be quite like this.



He'd been at a bonfire with carnie friends the week before when he heard of the passing of his parents. His eldest brother Merlin had been the one to call. Car accident. They didn't even make the trip to the hospital.

Crispin couldn't remember how that night ended. He didn't even remember what he'd said to Merlin on the phone. He just remembered a cold and quiet rage at the world and everyone in it seeped into his skin.

He remembered staying so, so quiet. Just watching as the night continued to glitter around him. He watched with a sense of horror as his friends continued to smile, to laugh.

Oh god, he thought. My parents are dead.

And then at some point it must have been too much. He only remembered becoming aware of the sound of yelling and chaos. Someone was holding him from around his back. And he had the collar of someone else's shirt in his hands. It was some friend of a friend he didn't even know that well. Apparently he'd been shaking the guy and screaming in his face.

Crispin had felt like a wild animal looking around at everyone – a sea of concerned and scared faces. He couldn't seem to recognize anyone there anymore. His throat felt tight. He let go of the guy he'd been shaking and in turn felt whoever was gripping him release their hold as well.

He doesn't remember the sharp pain of his knees hitting the ground, but they are still raw from where a few rocks tore up the skin. He doesn't remember lifting his wet face to the sky and screaming in front of everyone there.

Perhaps it was best he doesn't remember.



As the car pulled off the ferry and drove into the small island town, Crispin's friends also grew quiet. It didn't take long for them to pull up to the familiar apartment building from Crispin's childhood. The car came to a stop and idled there. Crispin let out a deep breath and stuffed the paper into his pocket before turning to everyone else in the car.

"Well, I guess I'm out of here," Crispin said with a shrug. One of the clowns reached into the very back of the car, grabbing the small bag of belongings Crispin had acquired over the

years. When you traveled with a circus non stop, you learned how to compartmentalize your belongings and travel light. It wasn't much, but each item was dearly precious to him. He held the bag close to his chest as he finally opened the car door and spilled out. He caught himself and stood up, looking back at the clown car and all those in it fondly.

Multiple clown eyes watched him and he managed to present them all with a weak smile. Facing them all he said, "I'm gonna miss you guys. Don't forget to keep in touch!" They each nodded vigorously at him.

A clown in the back named Red Nose Randy sniffed and wiped away a tear before saying, "We'll always be here if you need us, kid. Take care of yourself."

Crispin nodded back at them. The car door finally shut behind him and the clowns all tearfully waved their goodbyes, honking their clown noses as they did so. The car pulled away and Crispin smiled fondly after its departure, watching until it disappeared completely around the corner.

He sighed and turned back to the apartments... and let out a strangled yelp when he saw the person standing right in front of him. "GAHH!"

"You must be Crispin," said the person. Now that Crispin was able to calm his heart, he realized it was a woman with voluminous brown hair. She was wearing a yellow sweatshirt with a bee graphic on the front and a pink skirt that reached her ankles. He also noticed she was wearing two different socks, one light pink with a frill around the cuff, the other plain white. He looked back up to meet her dark eyes, they were beacons in a pale face awash in the moonlight cast around them.

"And who are you?" Crispin said, his words coming out much harsher than he'd intended, but to be fair she did scare the living crap out of him.

"I'm Bee." She said and pointed to the bee on her sweatshirt. "I live in the apartment next to your family, remember? It's been a while since the last time I saw you," she mused. "You must've been this high?" She held her hand out perpendicular to her hip.

"Oh... yeah." Now that she mentioned it, she did look familiar to his memory of the lady that lived next door. In fact... "You look exactly the same?"

"Yeah, I do." She said, not explaining further. "Does your family know your back today?"



He scowled at her. “They knew I was gonna come back soon, right? So I’m back.”

“Hmm,” Bee tapped a finger to her chin. “I think they’ll be happy to see you. I think they need it. And maybe you do too.”

Crispin shifted his gaze away feeling pinned and far too seen by her stare. He mumbled, “Yeah. Maybe.”

Bee smiled at him politely. “Regardless, welcome back Crispin. I know the circumstances aren’t great, but I’m happy to finally see you again.” And without going further into what those “circumstances” were, like Crispin feared she would, she simply gave him a warm smile before she turned around to walk back to her apartment.

“Wait.” Crispin was surprised to find himself reaching out and catching her wrist before she could go too far away. She turned back and looked at him curiously.

“Thank you.” And then he opened the drawstring of his bag and dug around until he found what he was looking for. “Here, a gift.” He handed her a small clown figurine. It had a wide animated face made to look like it was laughing and crying at the same time. Bee crinkled her brow at the thing but when she looked back up at Crispin he was looking at the figurine softly. She got the impression he didn’t let himself look soft very often.

“It’s my art,” he said as an explanation.

Bee looked back down at it and gently wrapped her fingers around the little figure, holding it close to her chest. Crispin startled at the warmth spreading in his own chest at the action. She looked back up at Crispin and smiled, a twinkle in her eye he didn’t think he noticed before. “Thank you.”

Crispin’s scowl returned at the hint of sincerity in her voice. He forced himself to look away and said, “Yeah, whatever. See you around, I guess.”

“Yeah. See ya,” she said quietly. This time when she turned to leave, Crispin let her. When she got to her front door, she turned to wave at him before going inside. Crispin just rolled his eyes, but secretly he was pleased. He wasn’t sure what exactly urged him to give something so vulnerable and precious to her, but he didn’t regret it when he saw the way she softly handled it. Maybe the “circumstances” Bee had mentioned had him feeling much too vulnerable to begin with right now. Yeah, that was probably it.

And the way Bee seemed to know he didn’t want her to pry further... She was certainly strange, but Crispin got the sense that he could trust Bee enough to let himself be vulnerable from time to time.



Crispin took a deep breath and turned back to his family’s apartment. He pulled out the spare key his family sent him years ago and entered for the first time in ten years.

Inside it was dark and quiet. Now that he entered he wasn’t sure what his plan was. Why exactly did he think it’d be a good idea coming back home in the middle of the night while his family was all asleep?

He sighed and dropped his bag gently to the floor and sprawled himself out on the couch. He’d just rested his arms behind his head and closed his eyes when he heard a sound from the kitchen.

Crispin sat up abruptly looking out into the expanse of darkness. “Who’s there?”

He heard a small gasp and saw a dark shadowy figure in the kitchen hide below the kitchen counter.

“Seriously, who is there? I will yell!”

He heard a yelp and then a small head peeked out around the counter. Crispin had to squint to see them better, but still couldn’t make out who the person was. With a grunt Crispin reached over and turned on the lamp closest to their couch. When he looked back at the person, he saw two wide and fearful eyes - one blue and one green.

“Deckard?” Crispin breathed the name with disbelief. He hadn’t seen the younger boy since his family came to visit him about five years ago. And back then, the boy didn’t talk much, he’d been too shy. Crispin did the math. He must be at least 10 or 11 years old now.

Deckard cautiously stepped out around the kitchen counter, but he still looked like he was considering bolting away.

“How do you know my name? Who are you?” He was wearing flannel pajama pants and a large black oversized T-shirt that reached down to his knees. His white hair was a little shaggy, his



bangs falling into his eyes.

Crispin's mouth floundered open and closed for a moment before he finally answered. "I'm your brother."

He watched as the boy furrowed his brows. "I have a lot of brothers."

Crispin gave a small laugh of surprise. "Yeah you do. And one sister. You probably don't remember me... You were still pretty young the last time I saw you. And you were just a baby when I left."

The boy gasped again and suddenly ran over, all wariness and suspicion abandoned. "Are you Crispin? Cass said you would be coming home but I didn't believe her!"

Deckard now stood in front of him, his eyes sparkling with a sharp intensity. Crispin averted his eyes and scratched the back of his neck nervously. "Yeah, that's me."

Deckard gave a bright and brilliant laugh. "I thought you were a murderer at first!"

Crispin couldn't help but laugh in reply. "And what if I was? I could've just lied and said I was your brother anyway. And then what? You would be dead."

Deckard smiled wide and toothy, not looking worried in the least. Crispin noticed a gap tooth and felt a twinge in his chest for this small boy that was his younger brother. He was suddenly very aware of all the years Deckard spent growing up that Crispin has been missing. Sure he had photos, but did that really stand in for witnessing it with his own eyes?

"Nah, I know it's you. You've got Wizard hair." Deckard giggled.

Crispin looked up and caught sight of his dark green hair hanging just above his eyes. "I guess I do, huh."

"Plus I've seen pictures of you before! You and a lot of clowns! Everyone says we went to see you one time, but I don't really remember it. Sorry I didn't recognize you at first."

"That's okay, I think you were only about five years old? You've grown a lot since then," Crispin said and the ache threatens to enclose his heart again. He tried to shake the feeling away.

Deckard jumped up and down in front of him and Crispin couldn't help but grin at the boy. "What was it like traveling with the circus?"

"You really want to know?" Crispin asked dubiously.

"Yes!" Deckard said, nodding his head vigorously.

And without needing invitation, Deckard climbed up onto the couch and settled in next to his brother, looking up at him expectantly.

"Shouldn't you be in bed? What were you doing up anyway?"

Deckard pouted. "It's not a school night! I don't have to wake up early tomorrow!"

"Yes, but that doesn't answer what you were doing in the kitchen."

Deckard's face dimmed and he looked down to his hands that he twisted in his lap. "I have trouble sleeping sometimes. Especially lately." Crispin internally kicked himself for being so stupid. "When it's really bad, I go to the kitchen and cook something."

"You're only ten, what do you even cook?" Crispin asked. When he was Deckard's age the only thing he knew how to cook was microwaveable mac 'n cheese.

"I can make all kinds of things! And I'm good at it! At least that's what everyone else says. When I grow up I'm gonna go to Cooking Prince Academy and become a Chef!"

Crispin couldn't help but smile fondly at the boy. "What were you planning on cooking tonight?"

"I'm making soup!" Deckard then grows quiet and looks down at his hands. "Mom and dad always made me soup when I didn't feel good. So I figured if I made myself some soup, I'd feel better. It doesn't always work though."

Small crystalline tears began to form on Deckard's dark lashes. Crispin panicked. He never knew how to handle someone else's tears. He searched his mind for any response useful in this predicament. Ideally one that wouldn't lead to him being a crying blubbery mess alongside the ten year old brother he hadn't seen for most his life.

“What if I help you?” Crispin said hesitantly. Deckard looked up at him, quiet tears glistening on cheeks. “Mom and dad made soup for me too. Maybe if I help you make it, it will work this time.”

Deckard wiped his cheeks with his arm and nodded solemnly. After a moment of quiet he asked, “Can you also tell me about the circus?”

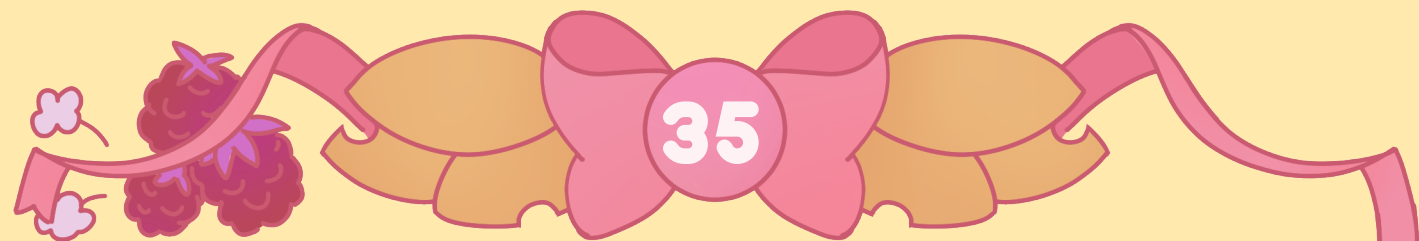
“Yeah, I can do that.”

Deckard did most of the cooking while Crispin watched and recounted stories of his time throughout the past ten years. He did his best to make Deckard laugh and smile, anything to make the soup’s magic take effect.

So there at the dining room table at two in the morning, sat two brothers – practically strangers – over two bowls of soup. They told animated stories and quietly held back laughter so they wouldn’t wake their five other siblings still sleeping soundly through the night. They did this until their bowls had long since emptied.

Looking at his youngest brother’s shining eyes, Crispin couldn’t help but think Bee was right. His family needed him and he needed them too. Maybe coming back home would be another new beginning. Crispin knew it wouldn’t be easy, but he was ready to be here for it all, all the same.







SPECULATIVE SCRIPT

1 BEE'S LIVING ROOM - INT. AFTERNOON 1

BEE and PUPPYCAT perch on the sofa, eyes glued to the newest episode of "Pretty Patrick."

CUT TO:

The TV shows the last minutes of PATRICK's episode. He stands behind his kitchen counter. On the counter in front of him is an elegantly made blueberry pie, drizzled with honey on top.

PATRICK:

So...yeah. Today we made and ate a fancy blueberry pie, with the authentic historical recipe straight from the Western Peninsula. It was a pretty great time. Thanks for being there with me through it all.

The episode goes to commercial.

CUT TO:

Our heroes back on the couch.

PUPPYCAT:

<No Patrick, the pleasure was all mine.>

BEE:

You mean all ours.

PUPPYCAT:

<Patrick and I have our own special unbreakable bond.>

BEE:

Pssh, whatever...Oh, hey! Isn't Cass and Toast's two year dating anniversary coming up? We still have to get them something for the Wizards' party celebrating it. Hmmm. I know they both like blueberries. Maybe we could make them the pie from this episode!

PUPPYCAT:

(nods excitedly, picks up the smartphone) <I'm already searching up the recipe on his website.>

BEE:

Alright.

(beat)

Hey, give me back my phone.

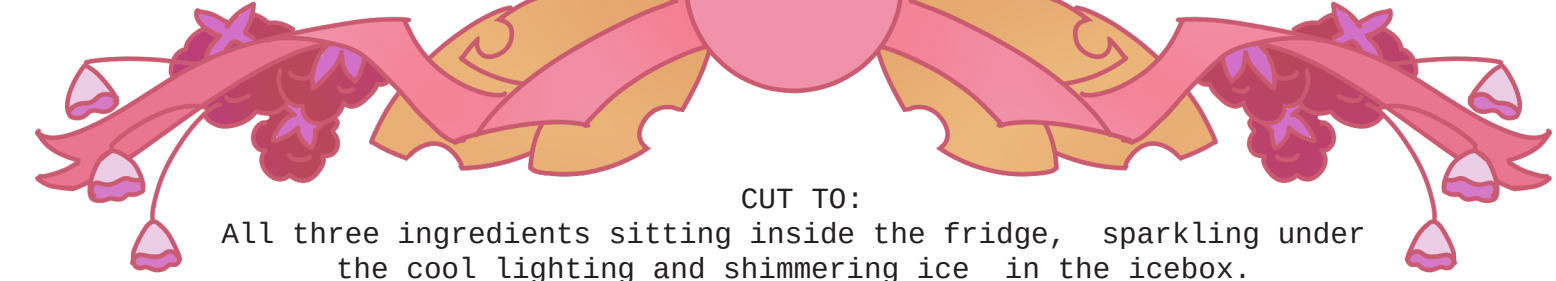
PUPPYCAT chucks it at her and it smacks her in the face. BEE grunts, then picks up the phone to look at the webpage.

BEE:

Let's see what ingredients we need...Blueberries, got 'em. Eggs, got 'em. Butter, got it.



"When Berries Aren't Enough"
Written by Ariel F



CUT TO:

All three ingredients sitting inside the fridge, sparkling under the cool lighting and shimmering ice in the icebox.

CUT BACK TO our heroes.

BEE:

(skimming the list)

Yes we have all of these, even right down to the honey. We can totally do this.

PUPPYCAT pops in frame and taps a paw at the screen.

PUPPYCAT:

<Are you sure we have the exact honey brand we need?>

The CAMERA TURNS so now we see both of their backs, as the recipe on the phone screen is now facing the front of the screen. In the center of the page is a jar of honey with a very ornate golden jar.

Cursive

black lettering on the jar reads: "Miel de Azafrán." Sprinkled around it are purple crocus flowers with their red saffron sprouts, which are all used to make this type of honey.

BEE:

Miel de Azafrán? Do you know how expensive that stuff is? They have to import it here all the way from the Western Peninsula, and that is not cheap. Especially ever since that big shipping boat got caught in the trade canal.

THE CAMERA TURNS BACK so now our heroes' faces are to the front again.

PUPPYCAT:

<But if we don't get the Miel de Azafrán, then it won't be like Patrick's anymore. And we don't want to let him or his other fans down.>

BEE:

Puppycat. None of them are coming to this party. Or even know that you exist.

PUPPYCAT:

<I don't care! I still need them all to like me!!>

BEE:

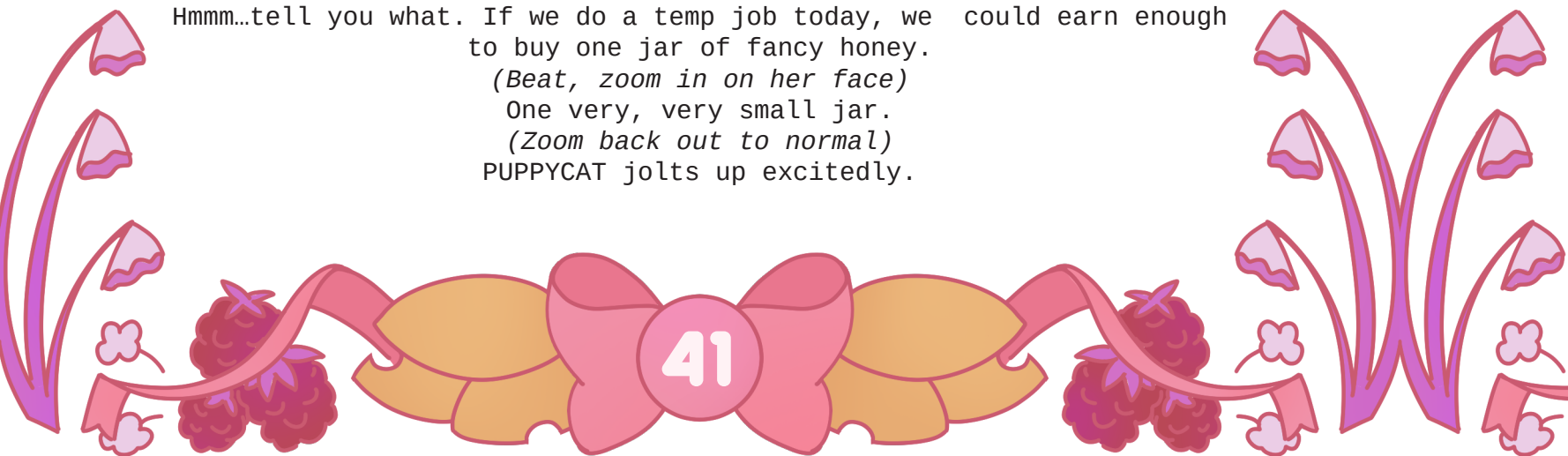
Hmmm...tell you what. If we do a temp job today, we could earn enough to buy one jar of fancy honey.

(Beat, zoom in on her face)

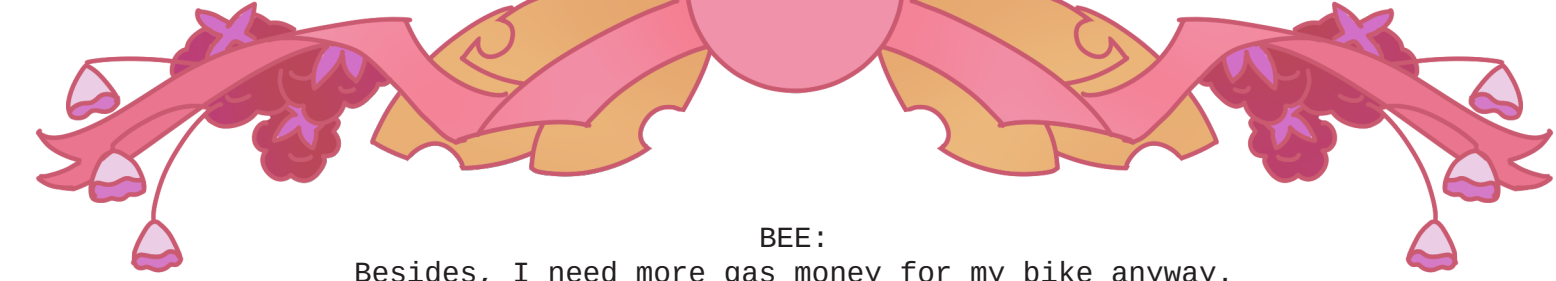
One very, very small jar.

(Zoom back out to normal)

PUPPYCAT jolts up excitedly.



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BEE:

Besides, I need more gas money for my bike anyway.

Both stand up off the couch. PUPPYCAT gestures towards his bell collar, which glows with a new assignment and zaps them away into...

2 TEMPBOT'S OFFICE - INT. AFTERNOON 2

TEMPBOT:

Oh, hello. I wasn't expecting you two to come in so close to the weekend, but it's alright. We do have a new assignment for you, luckily. The royals of Bee Planet need extra hands for storing and cataloguing their honey.

She opens her mouth, blasting out the ray of light that gives them their costume change. PUPPYCAT now wears an upside-down purple crocus blossom like a hat. BEE now wears her hair in a ponytail, purple bloomers, and a purple blouse that looks like it's stitched out of crocus petals.

TEMPBOT coughs, then opens her mouth again to reveal the portal to Bee Planet.

TEMPBOT (CONT.):

Blahhhhh.

ESTABLISHING SHOT of BEE PLANET floating in space. It looks like a huge brown-orange beehive, surrounded by dozens of white moons, floating through space. Each moon is coated with flower gardens that the bees feed from and pollinate off of.

3 BEE PLANET'S HONEY FORTRESS - INT. AFTERNOON 3

BEE and PUPPYCAT step through the portal, and into the fortress's main office. A gaggle of (human-sized) bees in royal uniform are waiting for them.

WORKER #17:

(In a bubbly feminine voice)

Welcome! You two must be our temp workers for the day. I am Worker Bee #17, and I'll be your supervisor for today.

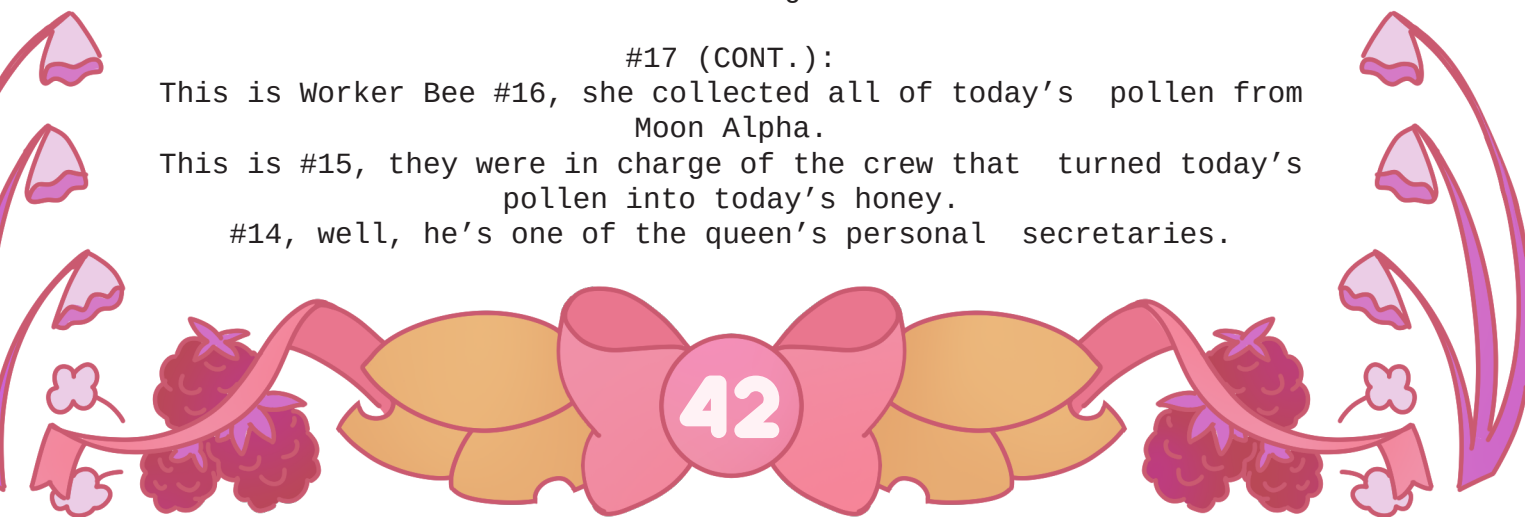
As she introduces all the other bees around her, the CAMERA SIDE PANS more and more as she goes down the line.

#17 (CONT.):

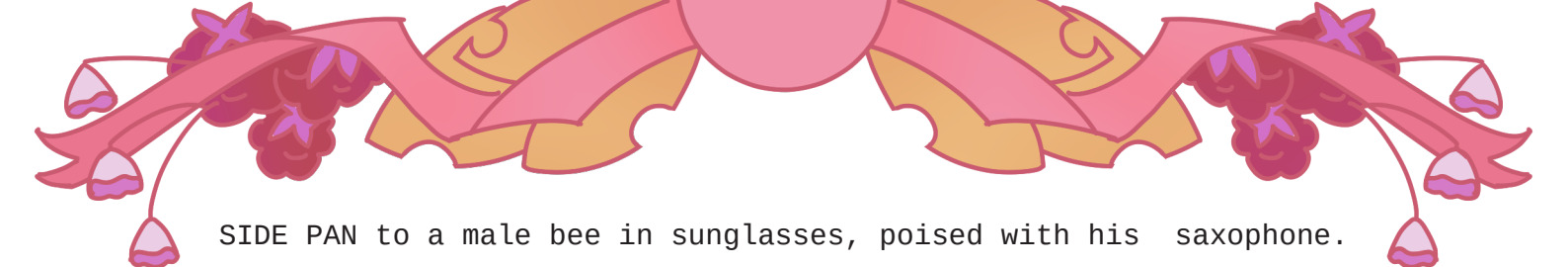
This is Worker Bee #16, she collected all of today's pollen from Moon Alpha.

This is #15, they were in charge of the crew that turned today's pollen into today's honey.

#14, well, he's one of the queen's personal secretaries.



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SIDE PAN to a male bee in sunglasses, poised with his saxophone.

#17 (CONT.):
#13 is one of the queen's royal bards. He's, um, he's new. I hope all of you like jazz.
#13 plays a dramatic jazzy riff on his saxophone. PAN BACK OVER to BEE, PUPPYCAT, and #17.

#17:
So you must be Puppycat. And you, human, what's your name?

BEE:
...Bee? My given name actually is Bee.
All the WORKER BEES perk up excitedly, and dash over to her.

#17:
Really??

#15:
But where are her wings?

#14:
We could always lend her and the Puppycat those mechanical wings we have on hand for temps.

PUPPYCAT:
<Don't call me 'the' anything.>

#13:
What about her antennae?

#15:
She has all that hair, she doesn't need 'em.
#16 jumps up and ruffles BEE's thick hair, but some leftover honey on her "hand" gets stuck in BEE's hair. Grumbling, #14 flies up with a pair of scissors and snips off the sticky lock of hair.

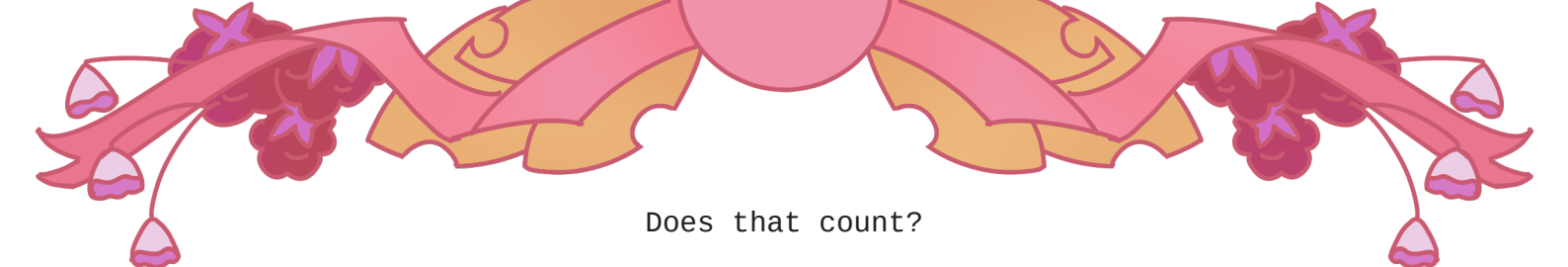
BEE:
Aww my hair

#14:
Honestly, you all act like you've never met a human before.

#17:
To their credit, we've never met a bee-human before. Oh! Do you have an exoskeleton?

BEE:
Well...I have a robot exoskeleton.
(knocks on a hollow metal arm)

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Does that count?

#17:
Of course!

#13:
So you're a bee-android, then, that's even more exciting.

(beat)
You're going to make such a wonderful addition to our hive.

BEE & PUPPYCAT:
What??

PUPPYCAT:
<Hold on, we were both just hired for a temp position.>

#17:
Don't worry, Mister The Puppycat. We have no interest in you for our hive after today.

#15:
(mock whispering to #13)
He doesn't even have antennae.

#13 & #15 chuckle. #17 glares at them both and they shut up.

#17:
But Bee-Android, you're hired full-time on the spot!

BEE:
Actually I can't commit to full-time right now –

#17:
(ignoring her)
Bee Planet has never had an android worker before...

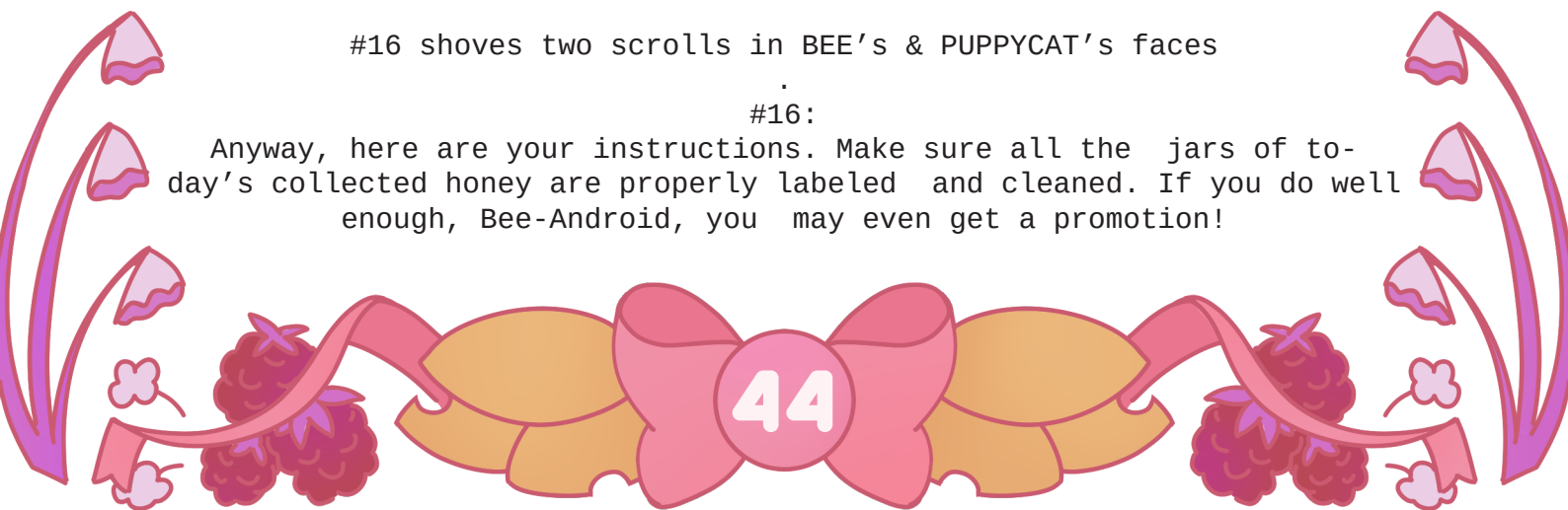
BEE:
Me and Puppycat actually have to get home by 7 –

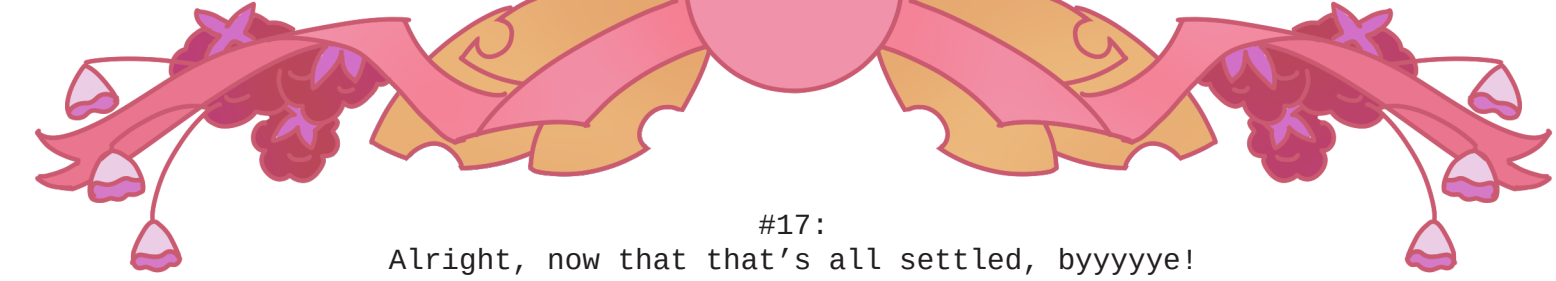
#17:
(still ignoring)
The Queen will be so proud of you. And me, since I scouted you.

#16 shoves two scrolls in BEE's & PUPPYCAT's faces

#16:
Anyway, here are your instructions. Make sure all the jars of to-day's collected honey are properly labeled and cleaned. If you do well enough, Bee-Android, you may even get a promotion!

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#17:

Alright, now that that's all settled, byyyyye!

All the BEES buzz away to their other jobs. The door slams shut behind them as they leave.

ZOOM OUT on the pair alone in the massive room, filled with crowded shelves of honey jars that stretch all the way up to the ceiling.

BEE:

This is even more work than making a pie.

A quick MONTAGE follows...the pair strapping on their mechanical wings and testing out flying to the top of the shelves and back. Both buzz around with their scrolls, checking off which jars they've inspected. They turn their labels to the front and polish them with little tubs of yellow beeswax.

PUPPYCAT grumbles to himself as he zooms around the highest row of shelves. Suddenly, his eyes fall on a tiny jar of honey, with a purple glass bottle. He gasps in excitement, eyes getting starry and sparkly.

PUPPYCAT:

< Bee!! Come quick! It's the -- >

QUICK CUT to the jar looking very fancy and sparkly, containing nothing but pure...

PUPPYCAT:

(singing it out)
< Miel de Azafrán ~ >

CUT BACK TO our heroes, as BEE zips over to look at the jar. She gasps.

BEE:

Whoa! It's too bad we can't ask the bees to lend it to us. Then we wouldn't have to pay anything for it.

PUPPYCAT:

<Anything is free if you steal it.>

BEE:

What!

(now whispering)

We are not stealing from these bees. They would all hate us for life.

(beat)

And if they hate us, then they'd "fire" me for sure so I can go home with you.

PUPPYCAT nods

BEE:

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Wait, what if Tempbot finds out? Won't she fire us?

PUPPYCAT:

(sighs at her stupidity)

<Tempbot never checks in on assignments after giving them. It's company policy. >

BEE:

Well alright then, it's perfect.

Both turn to each other and nod. Together, they reach a hand (and paw) out for the jar. The second they nab it off the shelf, a loud flashing burglar alarm goes off!

The door into the room BOOMS open as #15 kicks it down with one leg. All the other WORKER BEES from earlier clump behind them, glaring furiously.

#17:

After them!

BEE and PUPPYCAT yelp, then swoop back down towards the ground floor.

BEE:

Open the portal, open the portal!

PUPPYCAT frantically shakes around his bell collar as all the WORKER BEES swarm in from the sides. But luckily, just in time, they both fall through the portal before any of the WORKER BEES can follow them through.

4 BEE'S LIVING ROOM - INT. LATE AFTERNOON 4

BEE and PUPPYCAT fall back on the living room floor with a thump.

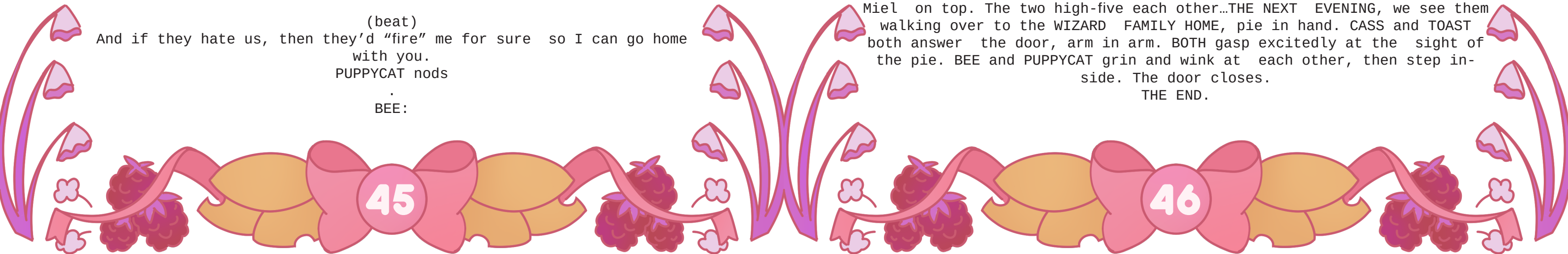
BEE:

(sighs)

So glad that's all over.

A MONTAGE BEGINS as both roommates flop off the couch, and head towards their kitchen table. We see them roll out and place the pie crust, lay in the blueberry filling and top crust, put it in the oven, then later take it out full-baked. PUPPYCAT excitedly waves around a honey dipper with a pink bow attached to it, as he finally gets to drizzle the fancy Miel on top. The two high-five each other...THE NEXT EVENING, we see them walking over to the WIZARD FAMILY HOME, pie in hand. CASS and TOAST both answer the door, arm in arm. BOTH gasp excitedly at the sight of the pie. BEE and PUPPYCAT grin and wink at each other, then step inside. The door closes.
THE END.

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Rock Me Gently Violently

B y M o o d y

Bee and Puppycat are watching clouds drifting over the sea when they hear strumming across the water. Puppycat bolts upright and sees the iconic *Wesley* practicing guitar in his fishing boat. Puppycat, now on high alert, is mesmerized by how cool Wesley looks nonchalantly honing his music skills.

“Must be a slow fishing day,” says Bee, “Or he’s actually scaring the fish away with his guitar?”

If you can play an instrument, you don’t need any other skills

Puppycat chirps in his special beep-booping dialect.

“True. Being in a band is very chic.” Bee agrees before laying down on the grass and closing her eyes.

Puppycat’s eyebrow twitches. He imagines himself performing for a stadium full of screaming fans. Lights shine down on giant amps, Wesley with his guitar, and Puppycat with long, unruly hair and the coolest leather jacket.

The glittering road to glory is revealed before me... Puppycat murmurs to himself, but it requires one vital component that I lack...

The ability to play any instrument at all!

Puppycat considers this perplexing dilemma momentarily before coming up with a spectacular idea.

WE NEED TO GO TO TEMP SPACE! WE NEED MONEY FOR INSTRUMENTS! ME AND WESLEY ARE STARTING A BAND!

Puppycat screeches frantically, startling Bee awake from her impromptu nap.

“What? Puppycat, you’re starting a band? With Wesley?! That’s AWESOME! What do you play?”

Before Bee can ask another question, a jittery Puppycat smacks the bell on his collar, grabs Bee’s hand, and signs the magical contract with his paw print. The two dissolve through the ether and emerge in the depths of Temp Space.

The pair float before Temp Bot, where a flustered Bee eyeballs Puppycat suspiciously.

He is pretty sweaty for someone being honest with themselves about their musical capabilities, Bee thinks to herself.

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“Hello, lil’ muffin tops,” Temp Bot greets the two in a different voice than they remember last time. They hardly notice.

“Hellooo Temp Bot!” says Bee, “Guess what? Puppycat is starting a band!”

”

“Yuck! Music? I can’t stand it,” Temp Bot scoffs, “I did know a very charming radio once, though...” Temp Bot giggles.

Puppycat seems impatient and cuts Temp Bot off.

Yeah, yeah. I’m sure that’s a nice story and all... but we’re kind of in a hurry! Now give us an assignment!

Puppycat shakes his little paws furiously.

“Puppycat!” Bee scolds, “Your rage is out of control. No good can come from being such a hothead.”

Puppycat fumes, steam practically pouring from his furry brown ears. Bee is disappointed in her friend’s outburst. Temp Bot simply gets back to work – she is used to dealing with emotionally unstable temp workers from all over space.

“As it happens, you are in luck. I have a job with someone who can be very useful in your cacophonous endeavor. Hold for uniform assignment!”

Temp Bot shoots a beam of light on Bee and Puppycat, “BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOP!”

Bee’s cloud-gazing overalls are magically transformed into a black skirt, high black boots, and a purple long-sleeve top that shines in amethyst jewel tones. Her hair is tousled and teased into a fountain ponytail, fastened with a diamond-studded bow. The leather bracelets around her wrists have decorative spikes on them. Her earrings are shaped like skulls and sparkle like moonlight. She looks just like a rockstar!

“I feel the star quality,” Bee radiates.

Puppycat’s eyes widen with jealousy. He wants to protest his typical lack of outfit change, but Temp Bot swallows them up, spitting them onto **Studio Planet**.

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Bee and Puppocat land on entanglements of colorful wires leading every which way. A giant, iridescent glass separates the two from another room.

They see a furry blue giant – their employer! He has phonograph ears, each with a violet swirl. His antennas look less animal, more radio. And he flaunts a loooooong snout that (honestly) makes the two feel uneasy. Bee can see her reflection in his elegant sunglasses. She waves, but can't tell if he sees her.

*This guy looks familiar,
Puppocat boops.*

Bee stiffens. Should she anticipate a foe from Puppocat's mysterious past?

"Right on, right on. You must be my workers today," The blue icon speaks with an ethereal cadence that sounds like music. The pair relax, absorbing the pleasant sounds.

Bee sees the tangles of wires hooked up to towering amps. When she looks up, she can see nearly every twinkling star in space.

"Oh don't worry about that one bit," Their employer chants, "Space makes for excellent soundproofing! Only the most spectacular musical phenomena reverberate across the galaxies. You ever hear a tune so outstanding you think it's out of this world?" He snaps each of the six fingers on his hand.

"Nice! Crazy dexterity!" Bee wiggles her fingers. She doesn't come close to replicating the skill.

Puppocat focuses on the platinum records glistening on the back wall. His eyes shift to a framed news article. It's a photo of their temp boss.

He looks younger, holding a three-necked guitar. He has stringy hair held back with a bandana. He is flashing devil horns – it's the universal sign for ROCK, even in Temp Space!



Puppocat jolts, suddenly recognizing the legend before him.

53

OHMYGOSH! IT'S CELESTIAL EDDY!

Puppocat bwoobwoobops in a mild panic.

"Uhh... who?" Bee asks innocently enough. Puppocat whips his head around with a CRACK! Bee laughs nervously.

Celestial Eddy is THE premier intergalactic rock virtuoso. Ranked number 1 on every esteemed music chart across at least 60 galaxies. Surely you have heard of him?

Puppocat chirrups a long-winded narrative.

Bee interrupts before he gets riled up again.

"Oh right. Celestial Eddy. Of course!" She fakes to defuse the situation. "Hehehe. Groupieeee..." She whispers under her breath.

Puppocat disregards Bee's ignorance. He sees musical instruments from Earth and beyond. His jaw drops. He races to an electric guitar. More complicated than Wesley's acoustic, but undeniably cool.

"You've got the right idea, tiny mortal. I want to create the perfect snazzy sound for my final album release. I'm 'bout ready to retire. Think I got one more supernova in me, though." Celestial Eddy sighs. It sounds like wind chimes.

"An astronomical being in the biz for this long? Seems like everything's been done, ya feel?" Celestial Eddy carries on wistfully.

Bee picks up a pair of drumsticks and stands awkwardly next to a dazzling drum kit. She bangs the sticks around chaotically. She looks the part, but drumming is harder than it seems.

"Now that's pretty unconventional! Unique, but not quite right?" Celestial Eddy adjusts the knobs on his side of Studio Planet. The equalizer lights blink on and off. They match Bee's offbeat drumming.

Meanwhile, Puppocat struggles to reach all the frets on the guitar. His arms are too short. He can only play a few notes and they sound...

"BAD! Oh no. That's bad, bruh. Just bad." Celestial Eddy shakes his head as Puppocat reddens from shame.

54



“How about this?” Bee blows into a foreign horn instrument with both holes and bells. It’s shaped like a pretzel, so she isn’t exactly sure how to hold it. It screeches heinously, “Err.. nevermind.”

“Hey, hey now. I can work with that, maaaybeee.” Celestial Eddy adjusts buttons and knobs on his end while Bee moves from instrument to instrument in the studio. Alien or domestic, they all sound wrong to Bee. Celestial Eddy carries on nonetheless.

Puppycat is in a losing battle with the guitar. He can only hold the bridge or the neck, not both. It’s a disaster! Celestial Eddy gets more stressed with each of Bee and Puppycat’s sour notes. No matter how skillful he is as a producer, the melodic colossus can’t find the beat.

“Aw shucks! I thought there was something in this din, but we’ve tried every instrument in space! Maybe everything really has been done before.” Celestial Eddy folds his large ears over his face and sighs. His whimpering reminds Bee of the haunting themes in music boxes.



Puppycat zeroes in on the tuning pegs, still determined to reach his rockstar ambitions. He turns the knob furiously. Wait... which direction is correct?

Suddenly, one of the guitar strings breaks and whips Puppycat in the face with a SLAP! Bee looks at Puppycat anxiously. A red line develops on Puppycat’s cheek, hardly visible under his skin, which is now scorched with shame.

Puppycat’s body rattles with pent-up aggression. He shakes so much that when he tries to set the guitar down, the remaining strings snap one by one. They viciously **SLAP! SLAP! SLAP! SLAP! SLAP!** Puppycat across the face in perfect time.

Celestial Eddy looks up, intrigued. His antennas start sparking. His ears perk up, the swirls start rotating. This new inspiration already has him gliding across the mixer. A bass-heavy voice bumps through the speaker.

“Wanna take another shot?!” Celestial Eddy’s visionary mind began synchronizing.

“Should I start with some easier instruments? Wait, I’ve tried these. And those. Maybe just clap hands? Or...” Bee suggests nervously, hoping Puppycat’s freakout subsides.

Too late. Before she comes up with a new plan, Puppycat lifts the guitar above his head and starts

smashing it into bits. **BANG! BANG!**

“Agh! I think you’re supposed to wait until after the show to do that!” Bee holds Puppycat back, cautiously avoiding his violent rampage.

“WAIT!” Celestial Eddy booms over the studio speakers once more.

Bee and Puppycat freeze.

“That’s it, kids! That is the kickin’ sound I need!” The equalizer lights glow like stars, “Keep going! This slaps!”

“Soo.. like this?” Bee asks. She punches a hole in a drum.

“Yes! We call this the BEAT!” Celestial Eddy’s hands move at light speed across the luminescent buttons and knobs, “Give me more of that bangin’ flow!”

Celestial Eddy is entranced, nodding rhythmically in his illuminated booth. Strobos and light trails flicker with every bit of equipment that Bee wrecks. Puppycat thinks while Bee maniacally breaks the colorful space instruments.

It’s so simple. The device I require to fulfill my destiny is not the guitar. The intention can be fulfilled using a power that already lies within me. The only instrument I need... is VIOLENCE!

Puppycat shouts incoherently before executing his strategy.

He takes his angst out on the instruments around him. He punches and kicks each one into shimmering dust. The heroes pummel the equipment in a frenzy. A shower of sparks ignites from every direction. Celestial Eddy seems equally electrified throughout the erratic collaboration. Puppycat is reminded of his daydream as he stands in the hazardous debris.

Celestial Eddy throws up  DOUBLE DEVIL HORNS  and laughs deeply as the studio pops, fizzles, and smokes. Though he is obscured by the WHAM! BAM! jam sesh, Celestial Eddy’s lilted expressions of euphoria echoes all over Studio Planet.

Some say this frequency emits across Temp Space. Celestial Eddy’s stellar soundbite travels through the vastness eternally.

Bee and Puppycat stand amongst the wreckage, panting heavily. The smoke, fire, and sparks make them look like megastars after a loud rock show filled with pyrotechnics.

“Killer sesh, bandmates! Let’s play it back!” Celestial Eddy hits play. The cacophony of Bee and



Puppycat’s rampage has been artfully melded into a remarkable harmony. The temps vibe with their eyes closed, taking a moment to appreciate the complicated masterpiece. They exchange a look, both feeling lighter after their cathartic demolition.

Bee flashes her devil horns at Puppycat 🐾 and he tries his best to do the same with his little paws. Bee understands what he means.

The pair return home, landing on the couch.

In Temp Space, beings everywhere call Celestial Eddy’s final work “The Most Complex Composition of Musical Subversion in billions of years.” Prestige craftsmanship and fragments of amateur experimentation resulted in a special unity, which was then reflected in listeners. As it cycled through nebulas, audiences of every size, shape, and species remember that we are all *made* of star stuff.

Bee and Puppycat’s payment drifts down from an opening in the sky shortly after they get back. A moment later, a square object bounces off the couch onto the floor.

“It’s Celestial Eddy’s new track. That was fast! Light speed, I guess you could say!” Bee turns the gadget around and reads the back, “Hey! We’re listed in the credits. ‘*Special thanks to the two organic lifeforms that helped me find this booming groove.*’ Oh. I suppose we never told him our names.”

What! That record is a hit because of us! See?

Puppycat tries to prove his point by punching a flowerpot off the windowsill. It breaks loudly. Neither of them particularly enjoys the sound.

“I guess Celestial Eddy really is a virtuoso. I don’t expect to hear that on the radio any time soon,” Bee points to the mess, wondering who will clean it up, “We’re officially rock stars now, though. Right?”

Puppycat inspects the record,
We don’t have any device that is compatible with this. We can’t actually listen to it.

“Then we will just have to try the old-fashioned way again!” Bee puts on her coat, “Puppycat, you stay here, I’m heading to the store. We can still work on your dream. It will take a while. And there will probably be some mistakes. Your dream might even change eventually. Just know I will always support you along the way. Because you’re my friend.”



57

Can violence still be part of my dream?

“Your dream of starting a band with Wesley?”

He might find violence very cool!

“Maybe... but in this case, it might be improper to ask someone to start a band if you’re only offering violence and not music? It seems socially inept, but I’m not sure?”

No. You’re right. I trust your suggestion. You are my friend, too.

“That’s very nice of you, Puppycat! Maybe you aren’t harboring as much rage as you think. Bye now!” Bee closed the door behind her.

Puppycat tosses the unplayable record onto the couch. After a moment he grabs a marker and picks it up again. He draws an arrow from their fruitless credit to Celestial Eddy’s name. Puppycat scribbles underneath: *Featuring Bee & Puppycat the Destroyer*. Then he crosses out ‘*the Destroyer*’ after a second thought. He places the record on a shelf where it will still be enjoyed, even without a Temp Space music player.



Puppycat is daydreaming about performing in front of a cheering stadium once more, only this time he is karate chopping a keyboard. The crowd goes wild!

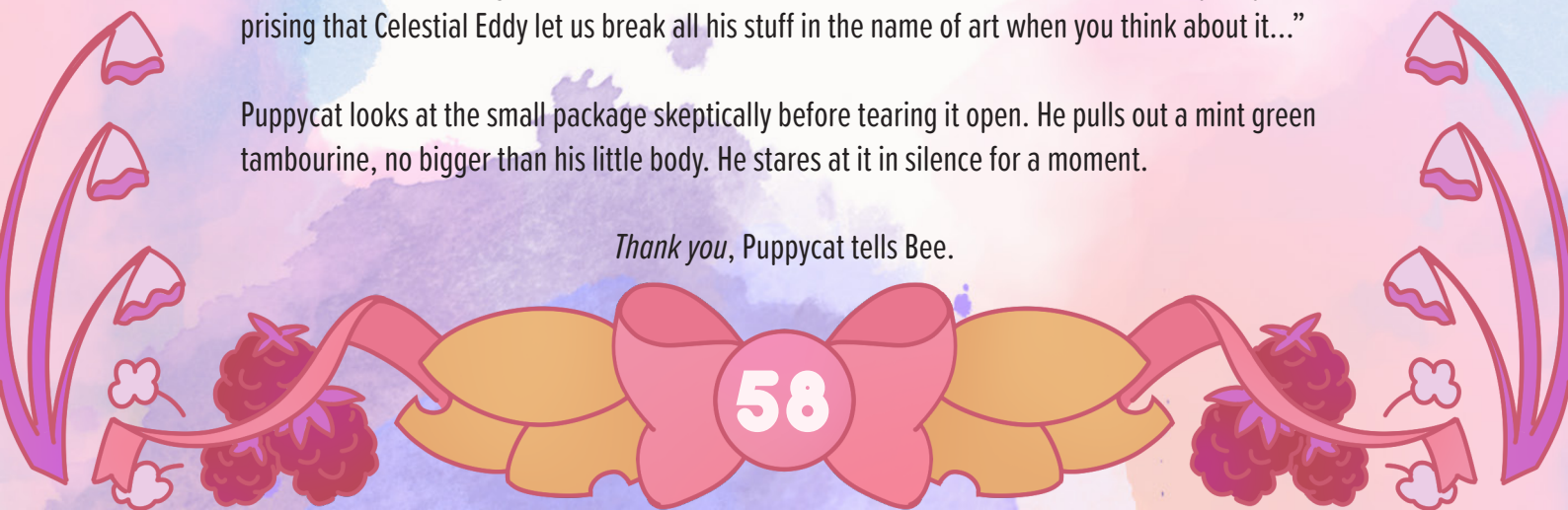
“I’m home, Puppycat!” Bee says. Puppycat meets her, trying not to appear too excited, but wondering what instrument Bee could have bought him.

“So, as it turns out instruments are pretty expensive,” Bee presents Puppycat with a pink and white striped paper bag. It is fastened closed with a heart-shaped sticker. “It’s actually very surprising that Celestial Eddy let us break all his stuff in the name of art when you think about it...”

Puppycat looks at the small package skeptically before tearing it open. He pulls out a mint green tambourine, no bigger than his little body. He stares at it in silence for a moment.

Thank you, Puppycat tells Bee.

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Sensing his dissatisfaction, but worried about the tambourine and Puppycat's proclivity for violence, Bee encourages her friend.

"Come on! Play something for your number one fan?!" Bee asks kindly.

Puppycat hesitates, but eventually shakes the tambourine, then smacks it against his butt a few times. *Shaky, shaky. Jingle, jingle.* It sounds okay!

"Amazing, Puppycat!" Bee claps her hands at Puppycat's success, "It sounds just like this lullaby I used to..." She starts snoring in no time.

Puppycat uses the tambourine to scoop up the broken flower pot. He notices a caterpillar resting on the flower at the top of the garbage pile. He makes sure Bee is still sleeping and smacks the caterpillar with the tambourine. The caterpillar isn't smeared on the tambourine head as he expected. He shrugs and hops on the windowsill, unaware of the caterpillar snuggly relaxing in between the silver zills.

Puppycat sees his reflection in the window, holding the gentle tambourine. He jingles it. The caterpillar doesn't mind. Puppycat shakes it again, he smacks his bum to the beat once more. He blushes when he sees his reflection, feeling super cool indeed.

THE END

**BEWARE SPACE
TRAVELLER,
SPOILERS
BEGIN PAST
THIS POINT!**















