

Izztak

- A short story in the Permaneo Humanus universe -

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Izztak ran euphorically across the green, fertile field, enjoying life. All while the sun bathed the colorful landscape with its caring warmth.

The long blades of grass swayed slowly in the warm wind and Izztak felt that it was a wonderful day.

Izztak was a small, two-legged creature who lived on the planet Steeh'rool K'vaida, which was on the outer edges of the galaxy. The world itself was a large gas giant with about ten moons.

The climate and atmospheric pressure on the planet varied depending on where you were, and at a particular altitude on Steeh'rool K'vaida the conditions were perfect for life. Here Izztak and scores of other life forms lived on giant floating islands that sometimes took the form of small mountains. They floated because the rock material had a very low density and these islands were everywhere in this particular part of the atmosphere.

Izztak was a Babo and it was an animal that had a very special ability. It had no fur at all and its bare skin was very sensitive to temperature. It had a large green eye on its head and its vision was perfect. Two long sensory spikes stuck straight up from its head and these could generate energy from the environment.

To communicate, they produced little songs that they sang to each other, which to an outsider would have sounded beautiful but rather complex.

The breed had no gender and this is where their special abilities came into play.

In order to reproduce, it was enough for them to use the power of thought and focus their energy using their long sensory spikes.

After this, there would be a powerful energy discharge and a newborn Babo would then be created right in front of them.

They had lived this way for thousands of years and now there were endless numbers of them all over the floating islands.

They were always friendly and their food consisted only of the green grass that grew there.

One day they saw a large, unidentified piece of metal flying gracefully through the sky high in the atmosphere above them.

They studied it with great interest and followed its trajectory across the sky.

Suddenly, several new flying metal objects appeared in the sky and beams of energy traveled lightning fast between them.

Suddenly one of them exploded and a great cloud of fire formed, spreading its fingers through the atmosphere. Shortly thereafter, the others disappeared from there, and meanwhile the curious creatures stared up at the fiery cloud.

A long while later it dissipated with the wind and the animals eventually lost interest in it and returned to their daily grazing.

Izztak had found a good place to eat so it quickly ran there to make sure it was the first to partake of the juicy grass.

The animal started its meal and was eating with great pleasure when a large piece of metal suddenly hit the ground some distance away.

Very frightened, it ran away and hid behind a large stone. For a long time it lay there shaking but when nothing happened, curiosity took over and Izztak cautiously peeked out from behind its hiding place.

Up ahead, a few meters away from him, there lay a large piece of metal on the ground with an irregular shape. Heavy smoke danced across its surface and the grass around it had turned black from the heat of the impact.

A short while later, Izztak skittered cautiously forward and approached the mysterious object.

When the animal arrived, it reached out and sniffed the thing. A pungent scent attacked Izztak's sense of smell and it immediately froze in discomfort.

With newfound interest, it studied the metal and tried to figure out what it was that had landed in front of Izztak.

"Hmm... Is it another Babo perhaps?" Izztak wondered curiously. "It looks very different. Maybe it comes from one of the other islands."

The black metal was distorted and deformed and the animal stood still right in front of it for a long time, looking puzzled.

- "Maybe it's sleeping?" it continued in its mind. "I can try to wake it up."

Izztak whistled songs in different tones but got no response from the piece of metal.

- "Hmm... It's not responding. That's strange. Maybe it's really tired." it thought and scuttled off to the other side of the metal piece.

- "There! Maybe it will only work if I sing from this side." the animal thought happily.

Again, Izztak produced the special songs but it still received the same cold response as before.

It looked disappointedly at its newfound metal friend and wondered how to solve this problem.

As our friend stood there thinking, a warm breeze caressed Izztak's bare skin and it shivered with pleasure listening to the sound of the swaying grass.

The animal looked up at the pink sky and saw the beautiful color contrast between the sky and the green grass. At different points in the air, Izztak also saw the intricate network of islands floating in peaceful serenity.

- "This is my home and I love living here. It really is a wonderful place to be. I hope I can show all this to my new friend soon." the animal thought with a smile.

A long time passed without anything happening and the animal suddenly felt a bit sad.

It stared deep into the metal, trying to make sense of what it saw.

Suddenly Izztak realized something.

- "That's right! Maybe my friend hasn't been born yet." it thought excitedly. "That's why it hasn't responded to my songs."

Slowly, Izztak closed its green eye and concentrated deeply as the emotional spurts became stiff and shot straight up into the air. Shortly thereafter, it began to produce a deep, trance-like sound.

Suddenly, the area between the feelers began to flash and after a while a ball of energy formed in the air.

The ball of energy grew larger and larger, and as it was being created, lightning bolts were fired everywhere and the surrounding grass swayed violently with the process.

Its musical sound also became more intense and Izztak was now in a deep trance-like state.

Suddenly, there was a powerful discharge and a shockwave spread everywhere, permeating the surrounding landscape. After this it became quiet and still and the only thing that disturbed the calm was the wind that gracefully traveled through the tall grass creating a numbing noise.

In front of Izztak, a metal-like shape had been created out of thin air and it looked as black and lifeless as the other one it had encountered before.

Izztak lay flat on the grass in front of it for a long time, breathing heavily and laboriously. Slowly it opened its eyes again and looked around in a daze.

The animal scrutinized the new metal shape with a curious energy and eventually jumped up and sniffed it.

- "Why doesn't it say anything?" Izztak wondered. "Is it mad at me or is it still asleep?"

Izztak started singing again to see if it got any reaction from the metal, but nothing happened.

Suddenly, an eye opened in the metal and Izztak jumped in fright and hid behind a rock again.

After a while it peeked out from behind its hiding place and looked at its new metal friend.

It quickly spotted Izztak behind the stone and a big smile grew along its black metal surface.

Izztak stood up and crept up to its new friend, all the while being inspected by the metal creature.

When it saw Izztak approaching, it produced a happy, purring sound as it continued to smile.

Izztak noticed this and felt happy to finally get some sort of reaction from its new friend.

- "Hello! My name is Izztak and I live here." it said politely. "I am your friend and I hope you will like it here with me and the other Babos."

- "**Huuuuul! Gool! Gradonsk! Gradonsk! Dael...**" it replied slowly.

Izztak didn't understand a word it said and looked at its new friend in amazement.

- "I don't understand what you're saying?" Izztak apologized and wondered why it didn't understand what the metal creature was saying.

- "All newborn Babos can communicate directly, but apparently not this one. Very strange. I wonder what it could be? Maybe I should sing to it again." Izztak mused.

Suddenly the metal animal slowly stood up and stood uncertainly on its new legs. Izztak skipped along happily, inspecting the metal animal with a curious nose. In response, it continued spinning and produced a wide smile for its curious friend.

Izztak thought the animal's mouth was unusually wide but perhaps something had gone wrong when it had performed the special birth ritual before.

The furless animal thought no more about it and instead continued to study the metal creature with great interest.

Suddenly, and with extreme speed, the metal animal opened its jaws and ate Izztak voraciously and without any warning.

Shortly thereafter, it shot out a long tongue that licked its wide mouth with pleasure.

Now the metal animal suddenly saw other Babos grazing some distance away so without wasting any time it sped towards them with a newfound hunger in every movement.

Once there, it was greeted by four friendly eyes that happily greeted the metal beast and invited it to their pastures.

A few seconds later, the four Babos were missing and the hungry animal looked full and satisfied.

Shortly thereafter it flattened the grass it was standing on and lay down to rest for dinner.

A couple of hours later, it was suddenly awakened by something tickling its face and it got up to see what it was that had disturbed its nap.

To its delight, it saw several hundred Babos around it, grazing peacefully in the warm sunshine.

It purred happily and smiled as it realized that it was almost time to eat again.

As for the Babos, they were still blissfully unaware that they would soon be totally extinct.

For this would be one of the last days that the Babos would live peacefully and in harmony with each other on the floating islands of Steeh'rool K'vaida.

Namely, a new life form had arrived to the planet that would soon take over completely and it was a metal beast with an unquenchable hunger for the cute little critters, and it was nothing less than a... Metal Babo!