

Sleep of Doom

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It's like an episode of Zim I wrote in my sleep.

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Chapter 1 - Sleep of Doom

2

1 - Sleep of Doom

Sleep ofDoom

Yeah I know the title sounds stupid, which gives the impression the whole thing is stupid. Which it is. Hope you can make it through the whole story without screaming bloody murder or having a heart attack. Enjoy! ^_^

Outside, in the fresh before-noon air, where the birds were singing, and the sun was shining, the wind blowing and the trees swaying, there was a stink to end all stinks. It was such a stink, oh such a terrible, terrible stink.

Dib was the very source of that stink, which flowed from him in a way that sent the majority of the children running to the other side of the playground. But one stayed behind to laugh . . . and laugh . . . and laugh. That one was called by the name of Zim.

"*Ah ha ha ha ha!* Your smell! Your . . . heh . . . horrible smell! *AH HA HA HA HA HA!*"

Dib was not amused. He was very infuriated, in a way that he did not even take the time to even try to show. He just sat there on the bench by the trash, staring at Zim with a look of pure hatred. Zim's evil triumphant laugh sent Dib's mind into a rage. He felt his eye twitching from just looking at the creature.

Zim wiped a tear from his eye. "Dib, I . . . *heh* . . . would *almost* feel sorry for you! . . . *Ha ha ha ha ha!* That is, *if* . . . you didn't smell like rotten, meaty . . . er . . . meat!"

Dib clenched his fists. Oh, how Zim would pay if he lived long enough. Because if he didn't, that would mean Dib had already struck. Which, would mean he already got revenge, and . . . oh, forget it. Zim would pay, that was all there was to it.

On the opposite side of the playground, all the other kids were laughing as well, pointing and mocking and spreading the most horrible lies. One kid, Keef, cried out, "Zim dumped a trash can on Dib's head!"

Zim had indeed, earlier, dumped an entire trash can full of oozing garbage all over the now-smelly Dib. It was punishment for what Dib had done; something so terrible and hideous that even Zim would never attempt it.

Dib had stuck his tongue out at Zim. And now, here he sat, a breathing germ if there was anything of the sort. The smell that snuck from him was enough to make any normal human vomit all over himself, but Zim, before executing his plot, had implanted special sense-dimmers on himself so he would not be able to smell the Dib at all. Thus, he could stay close enough to torment him while the others laughed.

And he was thoroughly enjoying himself.

"Dib, I don't even think the Armada will *want* to come to Earth now! One sniff and they'll be running for their lives!" Zim threw himself into a harder version of his laughing fit.

Dib still stared. Yes, Zim would pay. And the day would come. The day would come all too soon as they knew it . . .

Gaz was playing video games in the kitchen, waiting for Dib to get home for no reason more than

so she could yell at him for drinking the cola that she had claimed to be her's just that morning. She had taken much less time to walk home from school than him, and had gone a different way before getting a whiff. Now she was prepared to scream at him. But she never got the chance to begin her thought-out statement.

"Eew! What is that *smell*?"

Dib opened the door, and the stench seemed to flood the house unlike anything had ever flooded any place before. In a slow, suspenseful moment, Gaz stared at her older brother with a sickened expression, wondering what had happened. Dib stared back.

"Not . . . a . . . word," he mumbled, and walked to his room sorrowfully. His incredible stoic act awed Gaz; for she had never seen him behave this way before. Obviously something had gone down between him and Zim, the kid he always claimed to be an alien. Of course, Gaz knew the truth. She knew it all too well. But she didn't care. Zim meant nothing to her, alien or otherwise.

Dib's expression hadn't changed since the playground. He still showed his extreme hatred for Zim. He sat down at his computer and opened some of his spy files to see if there was anything he had missed. He constantly tried to catch Zim in the act of being alien on film, but almost never succeeded. When he did, one way or another, the evidence was destroyed. It had more than started to bug him.

Whether it was just an unlucky streak or supernatural forces that kept him from exposing Zim for the evil alien he is, he never lost his intense determination. In most cases, he trailed his enemy home every day, hoping to implant new pieces of spying equipment or at least discover new evidence of weaknesses.

He sighed heavily, opening some surveillance project he had just started. It involved hacking into his security systems and being able to watch, live, whatever Zim was doing by the viewpoint of a certain camera. This brought back memories of the time he had tried this once before. He didn't want to think about that.

Stepping through the front door of his base disguised as a house, Zim was very pleased with himself. He had brought on a new way to enrage Dib, one that worked one hundred and ten percent better than most of his ridiculously stupid plans. He was still giggling.

Gir was watching TV as pre-usual. "You're laughing!" he exclaimed to his owner, glancing away from the mindless program.

An evil smile was spread across Zim's face. "Yes, yes I am," he said casually. Then, in his invading voice, he boomed, "The *Dib* human thought he could irritate me and *distract* me from the mission by exposing his *disgustingly* pink tongue! And I had my VENGEANCE! *Oh*, so sweet vengeance!"

Gir squealed, "You gave him a monkey making biscuits!"

Zim scowled at Gir's idiotic joy. "No, Gir. And I thought I told you *never* to mention biscuits again."

A robotic hand pointed to the kitchen with a smile on its owner's face. "Waffles!" screamed Gir with unnecessary loudness.

There was silence for a moment as Zim took the time to glare evilly at his stupid android servant. Sometimes it even scared him to try to understand what went on in Gir's mind. Gir's limited knowledge consisted of mostly monkeys, waffles, biscuits, and anything else that had to do with stupidity and tacos.

Ignoring the relentless dumbness beaming from Gir's head, Zim walked into the kitchen to go down to his main lab and work on new plans to destroy the human race. All of his old ones had failed horribly.

His fingers tapped away at his almost completely holographic keyboard, displaying images and data on the screen in front of him. He was currently reading a bit about the humans' sleep process. It involved fascinating facts such as that their bodies had the need to halfway shut down for repair each day for about eight hours. The mere idea sent a shiver down his spine.

"Oh, these humans," he said with mild rage. "They spend one third of their lives sleeping! What kind of race wastes such valuable time on dreams?!" Then something hit him like a brick. He could almost feel his brain working on his next brilliant plan.

"Wait a minute . . . To *know* your enemy, you must *study* your enemy, and at times . . . *copy* . . . your enemy." He smiled. "That's it! To better understand how to defeat the pitiful humans, I must take the time to *behave* like them." Over the microphone, he yelled, "Gir! Come here! I have another idea for Earth's downfall!"

Gir slid down the trash can / lab entrance and said, "Yay! I like downfalls!"

Zim sighed. And even though Gir wasn't listening in the slightest, Zim explained his new plan.

These humans, they had certain weaknesses that he was picking out. One of which intensely interested him, which was that humans seemed to suffer from extreme emotional overload. This new strand of information would be useful to him in the future if any of his 'brilliant' plans flawed. Though the Dib creature appeared a match for some Irken soldiers, he was still, as Earthlings put it, only human. This meant that he *also* experienced emotional problems.

As he had seen on television, the humans 'felt' for each other. If one of them were injured or harmed, or even saddened by something or another, the ones who loved him would sink to their knees and weep. Understanding long ago that crying was a sign of extreme weakness, Zim felt he could use this to his advantage. Even between humans who hated each other, they would still break down into tears if their enemy was harmed once he 'understood his wrong ways'.

If anything in his next plot went wrong because of the Dib human, he could simply put on an act to end all acts. He had it all planned out. He would pause once Dib said something terribly hurtful (that is, after pushing him to say it), and slowly show an expression of being emotionally scarred. He would send brain wave patterns to his ID Pak, telling it to force tears from his eyes. As he would slowly sink to his knees, he would look as if he were on the verge of crying. Then, after a few sniffles, he would cry as well as he knew. He would tell Dib how sorry he was, and how he didn't mean to do such harm. He would say he knew it must sound stupid, but he finally understood that Dib was right. It was wrong to destroy the human race.

Dib, his feelings wrapped tight around his heart, would after some time start to feel sorry for Zim. He would maybe even cry as well. And just when he would think that he could actually trust his former greatest enemy, Zim would turn on him and capture him, throwing him into an unbreakable laser-guarded cage. True, if Dib escaped he would no longer fall for the trick -perhaps, perhaps not- but would be more enraged than ever before. He would completely dedicate his life to destroying Zim, more than he had now.

But Zim would figure out what to do then when the time came. He was only lucky that Irkens didn't revert to permanent keeping such horrible emotions. If they had, they wouldn't be where they were today: at the top of the universe, about to conquer the remaining free planets. The proud Irken Elite Soldiers, the Invaders, were each on their own mission to make a planet ripe for the Irkens to use. Zim had been assigned Earth at the last minute, and was now bound to destroy all life inhabiting it.

Irkens had always been known for their awesome ability to destroy planet after planet without the slightest emotional disturbance. This was because they had gotten rid of it. They had completely destroyed their main emotions when they decided to go with a new system, called 'The Jinkferian System', a way of living that consisted of annihilating all reproductive processes and traces of emotions. Irkens were no longer *born* after the council voted for the Jinkferian System. They were grown.

No actual live born Irken had been since the year of twelve thousand nine hundred thirty-seven. But the whole thing is an entirely different story than what Zim had been thinking about anyway.

"Gir, using my *incredible* research skills and knowledge, I have found that all humans spend a third of their lives sleeping. I have decided to try this so-called 'sleep' just to see what I'm up against.

Tonight after I go to . . . *bed* . . . I want you to monitor my energy levels and make sure they are balanced. If they aren't, there are endless possibilities to what kind of nightmares I could endure."

Gir saluted, saying, "Yes, my master!"

Zim raised an eyebrow. "And you're *sure* you can handle this?"

His eyes flashing to their combat-moderated color, Gir said, "Yes!"

Nodding his head, Zim responded, "I'm impressed. We'll just see how you do tonight. *Now* . . . "Turning his attention to another matter, he continued, "I must go insert some new programming into my Pak to tell it how to handle the 'sleep' mode. *You* try not to blow up anything important."

Bright glowing red eyes watched as Zim left this section of his base to go work on his new program. Then they flashed back to green, noticing a garbage can.

Gir squealed with joy and ran over to the trash, pulling out a discarded soda can and smashing it against his head multiple times while giggling insanely.

Back at his *own* 'base', Dib had managed to hack into some of Zim's superior cameras. Each of them was opened on a different file screen at once, all of them showing absolutely no action. But nevertheless, he was still receiving live feedback from his enemy's house, which was better than he had *been* doing lately.

"I'll show you, Zim," he said to himself darkly, in the perfect mood for revenge. "I'm recording these transmissions -*all* of them- as evidence showing what an evil creature you really are. And once I have enough proof, I'll call the EyeballNet, or maybe the FBI, or maybe even the whole *world*, to expose you without any disguises. Let's see you try to talk your way out of *this* one!" Dib laughed an evil laugh of his own.

His sister's voice was from another room of the house and muffled, but he could make out her screaming the words, "Be quiet! Your voice is giving me a headache!"

Dib took in a deep breath, ignoring his sibling's comment, and continued to hack into Zim's systems. File after file popped up, until the entire computer screen seemed flooded with video feed from the alien's secret underground base.

That night, at the end of a cul-de-sac where a mysterious green and purple house stood, Zim was standing in the walkway staring up at the stars for reasons only he knew, his genius disguise covering his bright red eyes and antennae. He showed no emotion.

He sighed slowly and sat down, feeling slightly drained. He had finished the sleep program hours ago and set it to the time limit of seven hours, from midnight until thirty minutes before school started. For some reason, he didn't feel like working on world conquest. It was already eleven fifty.

"So this is what the humans experience right before they shut down," he said aloud to himself. "It's peaceful. I've never really felt this way before." Scowling, he added, "I *hate* it!"

Glancing at his watch, he noticed it was very close to the begin time he had set. He stood up and ran inside.

"Gir!"

The little robot arrived before him in a flash, holding a weenie in his hand. He saluted. "Yes, my master!"

Zim crossed his arms. "It's getting late. I suppose it's time for me to . . . 'sleep'." He had said that last word with a tone that expressed tension, almost fear. He shuttered. "Turn on the energy monitors and wait until they all drop to forty-two. Then make sure they stay that way until seven thirty."

"Yay! I'm gonna eat weenies!"

Zim clenched his fists with the little strength he had left. "This is *serious*, Gir! This is *very* serious! With me asleep, *anything* could go wrong! Make sure it *doesn't*!"

Gir nodded cutely, squeaking his understanding.

"Good." Zim yawned, and rubbed his eyes. "I'm . . . I'm going to bed," he said slightly wobbly. He closed his eyes and immediately fell over backwards, the sleep program having kicked in.

Gir clapped, giggling. "I don't know what to do!" he exclaimed with amazing enthusiasm. He ran off to the lab underground and stared at the energy levels. They were all at forty-two.

A bead of sweat ran down Dib's face, his expression very tense. "Got to . . . find Zim . . ." he said, his eyes bloodshot as he typed away at his computer. More and more camera views appeared on screen, but none of them gave away where Zim was.

"*Have to . . . find . . . ah HAH!*" His last typed codes revealed a camera showing Zim was on the floor of his living room, his disguise on. He was curled up on his side, his hands together under his head for support. He subconsciously rolled over to his other side and brought his feet closer to him.

Dib had on the most confused look. "Zim's . . . *sleeping*? But I thought . . . and he . . ." Suddenly he realized what it meant. Zim's guard was down, and he was one hundred percent defenseless. This was perfect! Just perfect!

"Oh *man!* He's *sleeping!* This is perfect! It's absolutely *perfect!* I mean, what better timing?"

Grabbing some of his things and a few experimental supplies, Dib ran downstairs and was about to go out the front door, when his Dad stopped him.

"Where are you going, son? It's past midnight!"

Dib stopped in his tracks and turned momentarily, answering, "I'm gonna go get revenge on an alien that dumped a garbage can on my head by injecting him with-"

"Fine. Just be home before school starts."

Dib smiled and raced out the door. He made his way to the alien's main base, using his infrared goggles as guidance. This was the greatest moment ever in history; the day Zim slept. Well, actually, the *night* Zim slept. Dib would have no trouble ruining Zim's life now. The war for the worthless dirtball Planet Earth would be over in a matter of minutes.

A bit of slimy green drool drizzled out of the side of Zim's mouth, then he turned over and popped his thumb into it, starting sucking on it like a smet. He wasn't completely sure of what he was dreaming of at the moment. Consciously, he logged in his mind, "These 'dreams' are very hard to comprehend, even for me, the mighty Zim! But at the same time, they are almost . . . *enjoyable.*"

Dib made his way around the lawn gnomes and past main security with no problems, having done it many times in the past. He silently crept up on the door and creaked it open, entering the strange alien environment with Zim lying right in front of him.

Kneeling down and opening a case full of science equipment, Dib whispered, "This is almost sad. Zim's completely helpless. But if I don't act now, I may never get another chance."

He took out a glass test tube and a large needle, looking them both over carefully. He used the needle to suck the glowing liquid out of the test tube, then set it aside. Reaching into the case once more, he replaced his infrared goggles with a pair of x-ray sensitive ones similar to his 'Organ ID Goggles' from the time Zim had decided to steal human organs to appear normal (long story).

"Now . . . so he doesn't feel anything . . ." Dib took out a small disinfectant can and sprayed Zim all over. Zim coughed, making Dib jump a little. But he didn't wake up, thankfully.

Dib turned the knob on his goggles, making it so he could see through the alien's exterior and into his putrid insides. He could make out *some* parts, but most were hard to understand. The heart was the most recognizable, but unfortunately wasn't Dib's target. He was looking for something that would cause Zim a pain unlike any pain ever known.

He turned the knob on his goggles once more, making it so he could read all the substances in

his vision and what they were made of. He pinpointed a few different places until he found the goggles blinking the words he had been hoping for.

"Yes. Yes! It's over, Zim! It's all over!" Dib held the needle high in the air, seemingly victorious. Smiling almost as evilly as Zim himself, he brought it down hard. But just when it was about to puncture Zim right through his skin, someone yelled.

"Hey! Dib! Whatcha doin'?"

Dib practically jumped out of his stealth suit! He gasped, and looked around him, finding himself face-to-face with Zim's stupid SIR unit, Gir! Gir was staring mindlessly into Dib's eyes.

A no longer terrified Dib let out a moan of relief, thankful that it wasn't something like a ninja robot or *other* evil space aliens. He felt his heart racing at the speed of light. Dropping the needle, he felled his upper half to the floor, supporting himself with his palms. He took in a few deep breaths, calming himself down.

"I scared you!" exclaimed Gir loudly. "Scared you! Scared you! You were scared! You want any donuts?"

Dib regained his posture and stood up, saying to the little mini, "Listen, I don't have time for this! And be quiet, will you? You're going to wake him up!" Dib motioned towards a peacefully sleeping Zim, who had put his thumb back into his mouth.

Gir stared at his helpless master, creating something that was very hard to create for him: silence. Then he broke it, crying out, "No I'm not!"

As Gir yelled on, Dib tried desperately to motion to stop before the idiot ruined the whole plan.

"He *can't* wake up!" continued Gir just as loudly. "He said his little backpack made it like that! . . . Anyway, have you seen the Scary Monkey Show? I want a headless clown! And some ice cream! Maybe some soda, too! Did I tell you about the headless clown? I did. I *did!* I told you about the headless clown!"

After this point, Dib had paused his motions to glance at Zim. Still asleep, as impossible as it seemed. Obviously Zim's PAK could make it so he could sleep through *anything*.

"-and then the giant moose flew away to planet Vort, where he lived in taco land with all his little pig friends! Yay! The end! Hey, tell me a story about a giant baby! TELL ME! TELL ME! TELL ME! TELL ME! TELL ME! TELL ME!"

Ignoring the terribly irritating words streaming from Gir's mouth, Dib knelt down once more and adjusted his goggles. He picked up the needle and once more was about to stick it into Zim.

Gir suddenly screamed, a scream that would have carried on forever it seemed if Dib hadn't stopped him.

"Hey!" cried Dib to the little robot.

Gir shut up and looked down at Dib.

"Go away."

Making a series of worthless noises as approval, Gir ran away and went back down into the lab.

Dib shook his head. "That thing is so annoying! How can Zim live with it?" Looking back to his serious work, he lifted the needle and hovered it right above Zim's middle area, using the goggles to show where to puncture.

The needle was brought down very hard, striking Zim's skin and making a sucky noise. Dib maneuvered it around places of the organs that he wasn't interested in, taking care not to harm anything else besides his target.

Slowly, he injected Zim with the bright glowing liquid, which spread around inside the organ like bacteria. Zim shivered and moaned, his body already reacting.

Dib yanked the needle out immediately after the junk was inside of his enemy. He put his things away and got up. As he was on his way out the door, he said evilly, "Sleep peacefully now, Zim. It'll be the only peaceful sleep you'll ever know after this." And laughing, he ran out, slamming the door behind him.

The oblivious Zim tossed and turned now, no longer even dreaming of anything. He wasn't awake, though. His PAK assured that. But he was very uncomfortable for the moment, his body fighting to keep everything in order down in his squeedyspooch while his mind fought to keep everything in order with his subconscious.

The next day, Zim awoke to a horrible feeling, something that he had never known possible. Opening his eyes slowly, he realized he was still in his base, on the floor. He stood up, feeling almost normal, but then it hit him. Like a tidal wave, the intense ache in his belly spread, forcing him to collapse to the floor with his hands squeezed tight around his middle, screaming.

"What happened?" he cried, the pain becoming overwhelming. "I, I-I-aaaaaaaahhhh! Aaaaaaaaahhhh!!! The paaaiinnn!!! It huuurrts!!! Aaaaaaaahhhh!!!!" He continued screaming, becoming increasingly louder as the seconds dragged on. After only one complete minute, his terrible screams of pain turned into full-out crying, something that Irkens were known to never do.

It took a little while, about thirty minutes, but Zim was finally able to stand again, and with this small amount of energy he ran as fast as he could to the school, knowing class had already started and the Dib human would have the technology to help him.

Dib was sitting in class feeling pretty good about himself. He had on a sly expression as he whistled, waiting for Zim's arrival to he could rub it in his face. This was going to be so sweet for revenge!

"Hey, where's Zim?" asked Keef, still liking Zim as a friend. "Is he sick?"

Dib snickered. "Oh, he'll be here, sick or not. And once he gets here, I'll finally have the proof I need to show *all* of you that *he is an alien!*"

"You're crazy," said Melvin.

"Yeah, Dib," added Sarah.

A twitch affected Dib's left eye. "Oh, *you'll* see! You'll *all* see! You'll believe me once he *get* there! You *will!*"

Ms. Bitters, the evil teacher who taught the class day after terrible day, yelled in her raspy voice, "Be quiet, all of you! No more crazy talking about Zim being an alien! Now, today's lesson is about something horrible. Get out a piece of paper and take your horrible notes on the horrible lesson about black holes. Which are horrible!"

Everybody moaned, taking out a piece of paper and a pencil.

"To start, black holes are horrible!" said Ms. Bitters. "They're actually stars that have burned out, like your brains did a long time ago. *I saw a black hole once. It was-*"

Suddenly, the door burst open, revealing Zim, one hand around his middle, the other used to open the door. He had tears in his eyes as he slowly walked in.

Ms. Bitters growled, "Zim! You're late! What's your excuse?"

Zim coughed, which sent another wave of terrible pain through him. "Aaaaaahhhh!!! The pain! The paaaiinnn!"

Dib smiled even bigger. "What's wrong, Zim? Can't handle a little upset stomach?"

Zim scowled at him, realizing something. "Dib! You! It was *you!* You did this! YOU DID THIS! YOU DID THIS!"

"Yes, yes I did."

Zim screamed, and lunged out at the enemy, knocking Dib out of his desk and onto the floor, where Zim landed on top of him. Trying his hardest to ignore the hurt inside of him, he clasped both of his hands tightly around Dib's neck and squeezed as hard as he could.

Dib desperately clawed at Zim's strong grip, suddenly not so smug anymore. "You . . . stop . . . can't . . . breath . . ." Dib said as well as he could. Zim was choking him to death!

Zim laughed. "Now *you* see what it is like, pitiful human! Understand what you have *done* to me!! want you to *suffer!* Feel the pain! FEEL THE PAIN!!"

A cough escaped Dib's throat, and he managed to kick Zim from underneath, throwing him off screaming in pain. As fast as he could, knowing Zim wouldn't give up, he ran out the door and started down the hall.

Zim gritted his teeth and bit his tongue, tears streaming down his face from the unbelievable pain he endured. He ran after Dib, both of his hands still around himself.

Dib ran as fast as he possibly could, still recouping from having been almost choked to death. He ran this way and that, turning here and there. He heard Zim's footsteps not far behind, following his own. He had to make it out of the building! He *had* to! If he didn't, there would be such *terrible* consequences.

There! There was the door that would allow for his escape! He was almost there! He would make it!

Zim, seeing what was about to happen, activated his robotic legs from his PAK and hoisted himself into the air, using them to chase after Dib even faster. If he didn't catch Dib in time, all would be lost! There would be no way of ever having the human reverse the effects!

"Dib! Wait! WAIT!" he called painfully.

Dib, still running, turned his head and yelled, "No! I'm not letting you kill me!"

Zim's eyes flashed, realizing what to do next. It was obvious! And it came to him very fast. "Dib, please! I won't hurt you! I need you to reverse the effects of whatever you did to me! DO IT NOW! Do it, or I *will* kill you!" Not exactly as innocent as he had hoped it would sound, but it surely was a good start.

Time seemed to pause for a moment as Dib comprehended this. Zim, however revenge-crazy he was at the moment, was truly in undeniable pain. Dib had actually harmed his enemy. And it awed him to know this. But hearing Zim's desperate tone sent a pulse of pity through the deepest parts of his mind.

"He . . . he really feels it," Dib thought half aloud and half in his mind. "That really hurt him . . ."

One of Zim's robotic legs tripped over a jagged tile on the floor, sending him crashing face down. The legs pulled themselves back into his PAK and he instinctively rolled onto his side, his real legs drawn close to him while he was screaming louder than ever. His eyes were pressed tightly shut, tears finding their way out somehow.

Dib had made it to the door, and slammed it open. He was just about to run out of the building to freedom and safety, but turned and saw his enemy completely helpless, lying on the cold floor.

"I . . . I have to get away, but. . ." stammered Dib, his mind gears grinding with the pressure of decision. "But if I just leave him there . . . and he's so helpless . . . but . . . if I *don't* leave . . ." He cringed. "It's just not *human!* I can't just *leave* him here like this!"

Zim, his screaming died down and was now just moaning, was still curled up on his side on the floor, crying about the hideous pain that squirmed inside of him. It was as if he were actually dying, though it was impossible under the circumstances.

"The pain . . . *ooohhhh*. . . the pain . . ." Zim mumbled, knowing it did no good but still saying it anyway.

Opening his eyes, he saw Dib staring down at him, looking confused. He thought the human was still triumphant about having caused him so much discomfort.

Dib sighed. "Zim, I . . . I can't leave you here like this."

Zim coughed and cried a little, saying, "Just kill me! I can't continue my mission this way! I'll have to let the Tallest down. Tell Gir he can self-destruct now."

He didn't understand, Dib realized. He shook his head. "You don't get it. I'll *give* you the cure. I just don't feel *right* about winning like this for some reason. It should be a fair fight. I mean, injecting you with a poison while you're sleeping? I can't *live* knowing I defeated you like that!"

Still not understanding, Zim said, "So you're going to kill me later?"

"No! Well, actually, yes. But not while you're like *this*." Dib held out his hand to Zim. "Come on! I'll take you to my lab, so I can get you fixed."

Zim was still unsure, but reached out his hand anyway, allowing Dib to help him to his feet again.

"You . . . you're helping me?" asked Zim weakly.

"Yes," said Dib. "But we have to hurry! If we don't, someone'll catch us!"

Too late. A hall monitor, walking up and down the hallways, happened to spot the two. He started running toward them. "Hey, you!" he growled. "Where's your hall pass?!"

Dib started to get nervous, more than he already had been. "Come on!" he cried to Zim, tugging on his arm. "Trust me! Just this once!"

Zim's PAK tried hard to take in everything at once. The overwhelming pain in his squeedly spooch, the Dib human announcing temporary peace, the hall monitor running right at them . . . it was becoming too much to handle!

Forcing himself to focus on only one subject, Zim said to Dib, "Fine! But as soon as you have reversed the damage you have done to my Irken body, we are back to hating each other like the Planet Jackers hate empty planets!"

"Deal!" agreed Dib, turning and racing away while pulling Zim with him. They made it out of the school with little harm just as the hall monitor would have caught them if they had stayed.

Dib dragged a hurting Zim from the school to his house, talking as they went.

"-so I just wanted to apologize for what I did. It was . . . horrible!" Dib sighed. "From now on, we don't attack each other while one of us is helpless. Okay?"

Zim coughed and stopped in his tracks long enough to gag. The pain inside of him had suddenly changed somehow. "I think . . . I'm going to be sick . . ." he stated wobbly, covering his mouth.

Dib rolled his eyes. "We don't have *time* for you to puke! Come *on!*" Grabbing his enemy's hand once more, Dib continued to run to his house. Things went smoothly from there, mostly. Zim didn't stop to complain about anything.

Professor Membrane was in the kitchen, working on electrocuting something over and over. The thing, whatever it was, kept crying out like a tiny pig. The whole experiment was interrupted when Dib burst in the door with Zim by his side, looking exhausted and nauseated.

"Dib? What are you doing home so soon, son?"

"No time to talk, Dad," said Dib, feeling rushed as he ran upstairs to his room. "I've got to reverse the bad deed I committed by injecting Zim with-

"Yes, fine. As long as this doesn't have anything to do with your usual crazy nonsense talk about aliens and ghosts."

Nodding, Dib raced through his door and slammed it behind him, Zim next to him, still holding his hand.

Dib sighed and walked over to another part of his room. He sat Zim down in a chair and handed him a tube that protruded from a clear glass container. At the end of the tube was a half-bowl stretched part of it, its reasons unknown for the moment.

Zim desperately tried to hold back his stomach contents from flying out of his mouth. "I really . . . am going . . . to be sick . . . *whmm!*" He quickly covered his mouth again.

Dib was almost ready for things. "I'm surprised my mixture had such a powerful effect on you. It seems like Irken immune systems haven't built up a tolerance to pretty much anything, or maybe it's just you." He noticed Zim's expression. "Anyway, you can go ahead and vomit now. What do you think *that* thing's for?" Dib pointed to the tube he had handed Zim.

Zim moaned. "Dib human, the moment *-whmm!* . . . after you cure me, I will be sure to *-whmm!* . . .

kill you very slowly and painfully. *Whmm!*" Zim held the end of the tube close to his mouth with both hands and threw up into it.

"Sure. Fine. Just - hey!" After turning around, Dib noticed the container had sucked the Irken liquids up, and they were glowing purple. It was disgusting. In fact, the details were so horribly putrid that you wouldn't want to know the half of it. Dib allowed his mouth to hang open, stunned and a little grossed out.

Zim coughed. He gave Dib a deathstare. "Could I just ask . . . *WHY YOU HAD ME-*"

"Because," said Dib, cutting him off. "Whatever happens here I'm gonna use for study. Even your vomit."

There was silence as Zim stared at Dib questioningly. He was quite a bit confused.

"You're . . . gonna use my vomit against me?" asked Zim, confirming Dib's weirdness.

Dib shrugged. "Yeah." Then, remembering his mission, said, "Now! I've studied what effects certain chemicals have on you, and I've come to the conclusion that an acid-based liquid mixed with sulfur oxide *should* do the trick."

Becoming impatient, Zim said, "Yes, yes, now can you hurry things up?! I have evil to be working on, yaknow?"

Dib, also becoming impatient with his enemy, said while staring dully, "Or maybe you're *already* cured. Am I right?"

"What?" cried Zim. He looked around, nervous. "Uh . . . of course not! I'm still in agonizing pain!" Then, acting terribly, he wrapped his arms around his middle and moaned. "Oh, my squeedly spooch! The pain! The paaaiinnn!"

Eyes becoming big, Dib realized something. It was so obvious! How had he missed it? He was beginning to question his own theories. "Zim! You faker!"

Zim paid attention. "Heh?"

Walking up to him, Dib said, "Of *course* you feel fine now! But you're staying here so you can capture me and experiment on me! Well, I'm not falling for it! Get out! GETOUT! You never needed me to cure you in the first place!"

"Uh . . . yes! Yes, filthy Dib human! You have found out my ingenious plan!" Zim cleared his throat. "That was my plan all along, ya know. To capture you. . . . The whole thing was a set up! Ah ha ha ha ha ha ha!"

Dib growled. "JUST GET OUT ALREADY!" he cried, pointing to the door.

Zim shrugged. "Okay. But what happened to me, anyway? How is it I'm cured, just like that? Tell me! Explain to Zim!"

"Well, I injected you with water, which I know is like acid to Irkens," Dib started. "Then I just let the whole thing take its course. But I missed something, and you *knew*! You *knew* after your body rejected the tissue-ripping acid that you would feel just fine, so you decided to play my emotions to get inside my house. And it worked! But you didn't know that the effects would wear off so quickly, so it messed up your plan. Well, I figured it all out. So . . . leave."

Zim got up and started to walk out the door, not even considering the possibilities. Then pausing and turning around, he said happily, "Well, g'bye, Dib slime. See ya tomorrow." He walked down the stairs and out the front door. He started his way back to his base.

Dib had his arms crossed as he watched from his window. "Yes, Zim. Go back to your base! And never come to me for help again!" He sighed heavily. "I'm glad *that's* over. It was just weird, having my greatest enemy sitting right before me in my own house, where I could have easily captured him and studied him to find his weaknesses."

Suddenly realizing something, Dib screamed at the top of his lungs, "NNOOOOOOOOO!! Curse you, Ziiiiimm!"

Later, Zim was sitting on the sofa in his living room, watching television with Gir. He was thinking over what had happened earlier.

"Angry Monkey!" screamed Gir mindlessly. "Don't leave me! DON'T LEAVE ME!!" The show had gone to commercial break. "I like moose babies!"

Shaking his head, Zim commented, "Sometimes I feel sorry for you, Gir, for being so stupid." Then, to himself he said, "The Dib was just weird today. He took me to his house to cure me from the terrible thing he did, where I could have easily captured him like he said I could."

Gir nodded. "I know," he said dreamily.

Suddenly realizing something, Zim cried, "Wait a minute!" Then, yelling not unlike Dib, "NNOOOOOOOOO!! Curse you, Diiibbb!"

The end! Don't tell me it's stupid 'cause I already know! ^_^ ~and yes that is my favorite smiley face there. Look and bow down to its cuteness!!!