

The Hunt

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Zim is chasing Dib again, but this time, he's enjoying it.

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1 - Untitled

The chase was on. Zim ran after his enemy into the dark woods. He had been working on his newest doomsday machine in the secluded forest when the annoying little human boy had stolen a very important device. The Dib had taken off into the woods, heading for the city, Zim guessed. He scowled and picked up his pace. Zim ran, his eyes shifting to the dim light. He moved swiftly and silently like the shadows around him. The air was cool and still. It was deafly quiet as his focus remained on the creature running somewhere ahead of him. Something about all this seemed eerily familiar. The Earth's satellite was in full glow. It was a hunting moon, as the ancient Irkens had called it. As he covered the ground, odd sensations washed over him. He felt himself start to blend in with the alien forest around him. He breathed steady. His heart paced with the movement of his legs. Every muscle, tendon, and ligament worked fluidly, allowing his body to move with ease. Something deep inside him smiled a wolfish smile. His blood was pumping. His adrenaline flowed. He felt the link between his natural self and his artificial one within his pak weaken. A strange excitement hit him when he realized he wasn't so much as interested in getting back the device as he was in chasing down the human. He was on a hunt. The full moon made it even more so. He silently pursued his quarry the same way his ancestors hunted down their prey to feed their pack. In a daring and surprising move, he let go of everything he knew of as an Invader for the moment and allowed the predatory Irken within him to take over. He was enjoying himself too much to look back. For once in his life he felt free and alive. Wild. Something almost completely forgotten except in those rare instances such as this one. All his senses were on edge. His eyes pierced through the shadows. He could see just as well as he could during the day but he knew, this time, it was without the help of the ocular implants. His antennae were held high and alert, ready to pick up the smallest of sounds or detect any changes in the air. His skin was graced in starlight and moonlight that seemed to give him energy. His face met the soft breeze that glided through the trees. With it came the scent of the human and Zim knew he was on the right trail. His tongue slid over his pointed teeth in anticipation, an old habit that dated back to the days when flesh and blood was an essential part of his specie's diet. Of course he wasn't going to eat the human, he suddenly reminded himself. Devouring meat from these dirty, filthy humans would be disgusting and unhealthy. But the thought of why he had dagger-like teeth and claws made the thrill of the hunt even better. He came to a small clearing and stopped. He stood stock-still, listening. He wasn't tired or worn-out yet. He felt rather calm. He took in a deep breath, exhaled, and sniffed the air. The scent he had been following in a straight line seemed to veer off to the left, away from the city. The human must think he could outsmart him. He raised his antennae a little higher and listened. In the distance he heard the sound of feet hitting against the ground in a quick stride. Zim grinned and ran after the footsteps. Between breaths, he tested the air with his keen sense of smell and found that the human's scent was now heavier. He was getting close. It wouldn't be long and he would spring up on his prey from behind, pinning it to the ground where he could deliver the killing blow. Zim became aware of rapid breathing just ahead of him. He slowly came to a halt as he reached where Dib had stopped running. He stood still in front of the human, wild-eyed and antennae pointed straight and forward. Dib stared at his nemesis, his heart pounding in his ears and his lungs taking in as much oxygen as possible. Zim didn't seem the least bit exhausted. Dib frowned. "Here, Zim! Take this...whatever it is back," he said as he put out his hand that held the device. "I'm not gonna try to outrun you all night." Zim stared at Dib's outstretched hand. He took his once-missing object back into his claws. He remained silent and still afterward, which Dib found very unusual. "Hey, what's wrong with you?" Dib asked, not in the friendliest of tones either. "You're

acting strange tonight. I should have gotten away from you by now after all that running. You've never been able to keep up with me like this before. And now you're just standing there with that dumb look on your face. You haven't even thrown any of your usual remarks at me yet!" Dib waited for a response but it didn't come, which made him nervous. Dib watched the alien carefully. "Are you alright?" Dib unwillingly flinched as an animal-like growl escaped from Zim's throat. The Irken's antennae fell back in a way that reminded Dib of a cat flicking its ears. He saw a glimmer of dangerously sharp teeth appear in the moonlight. Dib stepped back. "Zim?" The Irken looked frighteningly like a wild animal. "You weren't supposed to stop," Zim said softly, his features loosening up a bit. "You weren't supposed to let me catch you." "What?" Dib asked, confused. But Zim had already turned away. The spider-legs emerged from his pak and he took to the trees. Dib could only stare after the alien until his small form disappeared into the shadows. Zim swiftly leaped from tree to tree. He felt disappointed. It wasn't supposed to end this way. It wasn't natural. Prey didn't allow themselves to be killed and eaten. Zim reminded himself that he got his device back, that it was a victory for him. It just didn't feel right. He sighed and found his way back to the ground. He wanted to walk on his own two legs. Already his mind was reconnecting to his pak. It was over. His instincts were calming down. The ancient predator Irken inside him rested its teeth and claws and fell back into dormancy, patiently awaiting the next hunting moon. Zim became an Invader again, the echoes of his ancestors fading away once more. The End.