

EUPHORIA



DAVID J. ROUZZO

“What... what are you? Are you friendly?” He asked the creature, slowly reaching his hand out towards it. The creature looked at him and started to move towards him slowly, but then suddenly stopped and looked at him in fear.

KWAH! KWAAAAAH!

The creature quickly climbed up a nearby tree, and Damien watched, startled by the quick and sudden reaction of fear it had displayed.

“What’s wrong?” He asked, curious what he had done to frighten the creature.

Then, he felt it. The shaking of the ground around him, the presence of something else in the forest, coming up behind him. Damien turned and saw the shadow of a large, dinosaur-like creature through the trees, and could barely see enough to know that it was heading straight towards him. He turned and started running, the ground beginning to shake more and more as the monstrous creature drew closer to him. Damien ran as fast as he could, but regardless of how fast he ran, the creature seemed to move even faster. As the gargantuan creature got closer, it saw Damien and decided he looked like a great snack, so it began to pursue him aggressively.

Damien thought at that very moment that his life was going to be meeting a very terrible demise, but then several people came out of the surrounding trees and bushes and launched spears at the large creature.

“What is going on?!” Damien asked, overwhelmed by everything he had experienced. He didn’t know if these people were friendly, but at this point it didn’t matter because the creature had fought them off and stared right at him. He looked around for a way out, and noticed a girl staring at him and pointing off in the direction. He looked at her, realizing she was trying to get his attention.

“Run! The ledge! You have to jump!” She shouted. He nodded and realized she was helping him.

Damien charged towards the ledge and was ready to jump, but then as he reached the edge he realized it was going to be quite a jump, and he was not at all prepared for it. The girl saw him stop, and realized the danger he was in as the creature was catching up to him. She charged towards him and tackled him off the ledge just in time. The two of them toppled down the ledge, falling through trees and bushes, until they landed in a large pond. Damien had the wind knocked out of him and desperately tried to swim out of the pond and onto land, on which the girl who rescued him from the large creature had already made it to.

Damien crawled onto the land and spit out the water he had gotten in his mouth while trying to breath after having the wind knocked out of him. He rolled onto his back and looked up at the girl who had saved him.

“Who...who are you?” He asked.

“My name is Sienna.” She answered, helping him to his feet. He looked up at the ledge they had jumped from.

“And, what was that?” He asked, looking surprised to have survived the attack.

“That was a baby Gargun. Don’t worry, it doesn’t enter this part of the forest very often. It usually stays near its nest on the other side of the jungle.” Sienna explained. Damien looked at her, complexed.

“A... did you say a *baby*? That was a baby? They... They get bigger?” He asked, terrified.

“Well sure, at least a little. Maybe twice the size?” Sienna answered casually. She smiled at the fact that Damien seemed so concerned.

“And the other creature, the monkey looking creature, what... what was that?” Damien asked. Sienna thought for a moment, and then laughed.

“What, you mean a Kwah? Those are harmless, they just like attention.” Sienna explained.

“A Kwah. Of course, that, well, it makes sense.” Damien stuttered.

“Okay, now it’s your turn. Who are you?” Sienna asked.

“My name is Damien.” He answered. “I’m not really sure how I got here, there was this flash of light and then...”

“I know how you got here, we’ve seen it all take place before.” Sienna interrupted. “But you seem different than the others.” Her words caught him by surprise.

“Wait... others? There were others who came here... however I did... before me?” Damien asked, confused.

“A few. Not many. We thought the doorway was sealed.” Sienna explained.

“How did you even know I was here?” Damien asked.

“We didn’t. We were chasing the Gargun, trying to scare it out of our area of the woods. It’s easier to scare the babies away, and if we don’t do so soon enough the parents come looking for it. That’s when things get messy. We just lucked out that it was preoccupied by whatever that scent is you’re giving off.” She answered. Damien laughed.

“What? Oh... my cologne! Well, had I known it could have brought me an untimely death, perhaps I would have skipped it today.” He joked.

“It’s time to get you back home.” Sienna insisted. “It’s not safe for you here, things are dangerous, and your prolonged presence will alarm the others.”

“Speaking of here... where am I, Sienna?” Damien asked, curious where he had ended up. He followed her to another ledge and watched as she brushed back the leaves of the trees, revealing a beautiful land with

waterfalls, trees, wildlife and villages. Damien stared in awe at the beautiful scenery they were overlooking. Sienna looked at Damien and smiled.

“This is Euphoria.”