

Tale of the Juggernaut Fly

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Sixth of September, the Pervian equinox. A date that will forever remain etched in my carapace. The date our infestation made the social climb from the back of an albino rug rat to the left head of a Simian – definitely a step up the status ladder.

Mako One never combed his furry hair and that was just fine with me. Made for some real nice nests to lay my nits in when the time came. His oily scalp had a real personable reek, and there were nice flakes of dandruff for the nymphs to climb on.

Mako Two, however, was constantly preening. He washed and he combed and he gelled and he dyed. His head was so *clean* you could see your eye tubercles reflected in his scalp.

Talk about a toxic environment. I wouldn't wish a head like that on any louse.

But that's just me. Another louse might think differently. Not all lice are alike, you know.

Take me, for example. I'm just an ordinary people louse. Simple louse, simple ideas. Nothing special here. Oh, my abdomen is nicely elongated, but it's a bit on the round side. Not nice and flat like Tellula's.

Then there's Fritz down the scalp. A real horse sucker if you know what I mean. He's married to Sally, a short-nosed ox louse, a super nice gal, yellow with perfect black spots. We work out together on Tuesdays, while the nymphs are all napping.

All lice being equal, we lead a pretty good life on Mako One's scalp. Matted hair overhead protects us from the elements and the mysterious flying objects that Mako seems to attract. Sucking blood and mating are our primary activities. Laying nits and caring for nymphs are the females' work. The males take care of pruning the paths and patching thin hairballs.

Mako y Mako's favorite place for libation is the Two Fer One Saloon. Every evening at planetfall, Mako y Mako head to the Saloon to hear the latest gossip and get drunk on Pervian wine.

We go along for the ride – and for the action.

There's something always going down at the Two Fer One. An entire tangle in the Pierce & Suck (a real lousy establishment located on Hairline Drive) is hung with pictures of alien customers served at the Saloon. Our Saturday night favorite is the Clairvoyan salamander with his extendable tongue. Sally's an authentic slime bucket, puke green with opposable thumbs. A

real smart alien. Unfortunately, his tongue is always getting him in trouble. Has a lot of great stories to tell, though. Keeps the nymphs well entertained.

Yeah, a lousy life is a peaceful life, all in all.

Except for the Scrubbings.

I lost my husband during the last Scrubbing. One minute he was there; the next minute he was gone. Washed away by Mako Two's pressure hose.

Scary. Real Scary.

The neighborhood changed after that. An entire flock of bird lice moved in. Not that I mind bird lice. They're tiny and cute and we all have our place in Nature.

But they never shut up.

Yak yak yak yak yak.

And party, let me tell you. Those lice really know how to itch and scratch.

Then came the exotics – transients stopping in for a quick bite. Fortunately, they don't usually last too long – there's something about a Simian's blood that doesn't agree with lice from out of head. They end up with Mako Madness, a terrible wasting disease that leaves a louse drained for days.

Yes, Mako One's scalp definitely changed with that last Scrubbing. The entire lice colony finally got their lives back together.

Just in time for another Scrubbing season.