

The Emerald Herald quickly stretched the rubbery object in her gloved hands. Pulling its neck and body as far apart as possible, she let it snap back into place with a sharp crack. Her petite shoulders rose as she took the object by its neck, lifted it to her lips and clasped them around the green latex. Her cheeks rounded as she blew her first breath into the balloon; the latex bobbed to attention for a long second, resisting more than she'd clearly expected, before suddenly expanding with a loud, hollow hiss.

It had barely swollen to the size of her fist before the Herald squeezed its neck shut, lifted it free from her lips and inhaled another deep breath. Her shoulders rose, the outline of her breasts moving with them beneath her ragged clothing. Setting the rubber mouth of the balloon back between her lips, she clasped it between her teeth and exhaled another lungful of air into it. This time, it expanded more than it had with her first breath, rounding out as her warm air flooded through its neck and into its body. Lifting her left hand, the Herald cupped the growing object, holding it steady.

She inhaled through her nose, shoulders rising for a long moment before falling as her third breath whooshed into the balloon, making its body stretch further. As it expanded, the balloon caught the crimson rays of the twilight sunset, light lancing through its semi transparent skin. Seeing this, the Emerald Herald tilted her head back as the last of her latest breath flowed smoothly into its body, basking in the sun's warmth.

Pinching its neck between thumb and forefinger, she deftly dragged it away from her lips, while her teeth remained clasped around the rubber nozzle, to stretch it again. Lowering her head back into a comfortable position, she blew another breath straight into the balloon, cheeks puffing up as her warm air was forced into its confines.

It creaked in her hands as its neck began to elongate and take form. Again, the Herald gave it a practiced tug with her hand, stretching the latex to give it as much room to grow as she could. Half another breath and the balloon squeaked ominously as its curves swelled dangerous tight, its neck smoothly lengthening until it practically touched her lips. The Herald's eyes narrowed as she paused midway through her exhale, judging just how much more pressure it was likely to take. The answer was an obvious one, even at a glance.

Lifting it clear of her lips, trailing a sliver of spittle, she nimbly swung its bulbous head under her left elbow and pinned it gently in place. Between the gloves, her flowing sleeves and the white bandage she'd wrapped around the majority of her forearm, she scarcely felt the latex against her body.

Even coated in leather, though, her fingers were quick and sure as she gave its neck a hard tug to slacken the screeching latex just enough for her to tie a knot in its short length. As stretchy as the rest of the toy had been before she'd filled it to the brim with her breath, its

thick neck had left her very little to work with when it came to tying it off. As soon as she'd pulled the knot tight with a pained squeal, the Herald let it snap back into the body of the balloon with a hollow thump.

Then, catching the knot between two of her fingers, The Emerald Herald held it up to the light, watching as it was instantly caught by the cool wind and buffeted from side to side in her grip. Turning slightly, she lifted it towards the sun, watching as its twilight rays shone through the green latex, gleaming across its tight curves. The sight was enough to bring a smirk to her thin lips. On her long vigil, it felt good to smile again, even at something so simple.

Bringing it back towards her chest, she cradled it there in her right hand as she turned towards her favourite rock to sit on, perched perilously on the very edge of the cliff. Walking across to it, the Herald shook out her cloak behind her with her free hand and settled her rump onto the smooth shelf of stone. Comfort was a rare commodity in Majula, and she'd begun to favour the rock for what little it offered. Behind her, the bonfire crackled away, while what could optimistically be called a tree groaned on her left, swaying in the constant wind.

Gently, The Emerald Herald settled the taut balloon in her lap, the latex rustling against her clothing and squeaking against the coarse leather of her gloves. Resting her elbows on the cushion of air, she reached into a pouch at her side and pulled out a second balloon, this one a shade of scarlet to match the symbol stitched into her chest. Again, the rubber squeaked as she stretched its neck, her motions practiced and smooth.

She took a deep breath that swelled her petite breasts tight against her threadbare tunic, set the nozzle between her lips and exhaled into it. Its neck snapped open, body bobbing to attention for a heartbeat before suddenly expanding with a hollow hiss. With the first balloon pinned firmly in her lap, the Herald lifted her left hand to cup the body of the second, fingers splaying around it to hold its slowly forming shape steady in the breeze.

She inhaled another long breath through her nose and exhaled it into the thick latex with a loud, lingering hiss. The first balloon, pinned in her lap, creaked loudly as her stomach expanded against it, shifting with a pitifully soft squeak. Pinching its neck shut, she lifted its nozzle free of her wet lips and filled her lungs with another breath of air. Slipping the rubber back into place, she closed her teeth around it to anchor it firmly in place as she stretched the balloons neck with a soft creak. Letting it bob back taut, she blew a long breath into it, watching as its body swelled. Its expanding form caught the sunlight, gleaming a deep, arterial crimson colour almost as deep as her hair.

Another breath whooshing into the toy had it growing closer to the size of the first balloon resting comfortably in her lap. It swayed from side to side in the intermittent breeze as the Herald squeezed its neck between thumb and forefinger, before lifting it from of her lips.

Holding it at arms length, her one visible eye roamed over its surface as she took a second to appreciate the sight of the crimson sphere in the sun's rays. The sight was enough to bring another of those all too rare smirks to her lips.

Glancing down at the emerald balloon in her lap as a reference for size, the Herald saw that the red one had already reached the same size, but felt the sudden urge to see just how much bigger it could get. Bringing it back to her lips, she closed her teeth around the nozzle and, while the balloon's body bobbed in the breeze, gave it another firm stretch. It creaked under the treatment and she smoothly lifted her left hand to rest under it, holding it steady as she pinned the first in place with an elbow.

Another slow, almost hesitant breath hissed into the balloon between her lips, its neck standing taut and quickly lengthening as its body grew visibly firmer. She started to feel surprising resistance to her breaths, the pressure steadily building. The Herald gently squeezed it with her left hand, leather clad fingertips squeaking softly against the taut latex. Figuring it could still at least one more breath, her cheeks rounded out as she inhaled through her nose. Filling her lungs to the brim, she exhaled into the balloons body with a long, low hiss.

The latex creaked for a long second before suddenly exploding in her face, making The Emerald Herald jerk backwards in surprise. Eyes wide, she stared at the empty space where the balloon had been only a second before, her ears ringing from the blast. Looking down at her hands, she saw the tattered remains of the nozzle still held between her forefinger and thumb. Letting out the breath she hadn't been known she'd been holding after the explosion with a soft sigh, The Herald tossed the shredded latex off the edge of the cliff. Contentedly, she dropped her left hand back onto the balloon in her lap with a soft, hollow thud.

Her fingertips squealed down its side and curvaceous neck, before closing firmly around the balloon's knot. Rising smoothly back to her feet, The Emerald Herald held up the first balloon she'd inflated, gleaming the same deep shade of green as her namesake. She let it tug against her grip in the breeze, watching the sunlight pierce its murky depths.

Opening her fingers, she let the wind whisk the balloon past her shoulder, out towards the depthless ocean. Clasping her hands before her, The Emerald Herald turned to watch it go, her eyes following the green sphere as it wove this way and that, borne ever onwards by the wind, until at least, it disappeared from view on the distant horizon.