

The pair walked together, well, Arkay was doing the walking while Duster looked into the distance, having a look at the grandiose attractions this fun fair promised to deliver, he was excited just thinking about it, the possibilities of such fun activities, the good, everything seemed to just be so exciting for him. His tentacle hands held onto the flier while his actual hands held onto Arkay's head horns for balance.

"It's getting closer and closer, we should be almost there" the nautipod announced to his crooked partner, who nodded his head slowly as to not disturb the balance off of Duster "Aye, I think I am starting to see some lights too" Arkay commented, although something seemed strange, he would still give this place a chance.

When they finally arrived, Arkay's fears were confirmed, the place.. or lack there of was still being set up? Like, tents were still on the ground, stuff was all over the place and the event organizers were seemingly rushing around to pick up the pieces. Apparently, either the fliers were sent way too soon or they bit more than they could chew, either way, Arkay was frustrated, he groaned and covered his face with his winged ears, a habit he picked up for self soothing when he's frustrated, what he can't see can't hurt him or something of the sort.

Duster wasn't deterred though, this seemed like a fun challenge for him, he already got Arkay here which was the hardest part of all, what is a little setting up of a few tents and organizing a couple of things? It's absolutely no challenge at all, Duster told himself, he did much harder stuff a ton of times before, this is a cake walk, a walk at the park... a swim at the park? Whatever, it was easy and Duster would prove it. The nautipod climbed off of Arkay's shoulder, his tiny feet hitting the ground and making a small dust cloud form around them. He cleared his throat, catching the attention of his partner Arkay.

"We could help them!" Duster offered, much to Arkay's dismay.

"What?" He asked, hoping he heard the pod wrong or that his mind was playing tricks on him.

"Come on, they need help, clearly, and to their luck we are here" Duster gestured to them as a pair, giving Arkay an almost pleading smile.

"They don't need our help, they clearly got it covered" The crook gestured toward the organizers, who were clearly having a rough time setting up. Two crowned clown cats were very poorly setting a tent up, one of them dropped their eye on the other one's foot, causing both of them to drop everything and making the tent collapse on top of them. Well, that at least was entertaining. And further back, a couple of crooks were trying to set up decorations, getting a few of the ribbons ripped in the process. The food stalls weren't even built yet. The entire thing was a mess and it was obviously not going to build itself at this rate, especially for a one night only sort of thing.. Arkay thought about it, his target eyes along with his clusters took in the sight, considering his options. Well, he could just walk away and find something better for him and Duster to do together but.. Duster was so excited about this place, even if he definitely didn't expect to be doing the work for it like this. So he closed his eyes, sighed, opened them again and glanced down towards Duster and smiled softly.

"Yeah, you're right, they definitely could use our help" He finally accepted Duster's offer. The two of them walked toward a very visibly distressed nautipod who was holding a very long paper list.

"Excuse me" Duster spoke up, making the nautipod turn around with her list in hand. "We are here to help ya out" he added with a sly confident smile.

"Oh you two must be sent from the gods themselves" She spoke, the mention of the gods made Arkay cringe but he tried not to show it too much. "our planning is going.. not so great as you can see, any help is greatly appreciated so we can get this up and running in time"

she added, looking around and taking in the absolute mess that the place still was, nowhere near a proper fun fair attraction yet, but that could be changed, and she was still determined to make it work.

"Just give us directions and we will get this done before you notice" Duster spoke in his usual confident tone. The other nauti smiled, looking down at her list and then back at the two.

"The crook could help with setting up the tents, we are very behind on that.. and you, you could help me with the food" She explained, the thought of Duster making food for a bunch of people almost made Arkay burst out laughing, Duster looked nervous, which made the girl pause. "We can.. find another job for you if this one doesn't seem like the right one..?"

Duster's eyes widened and he replied in a hurried and nervous tone "What? No, I'm the best cook around! You can count on that" He replied, hoping he sounded confident enough to convince her. And it seemed to work, she nodded with a small smile.

"Awesome, there's a lot to do, so please come with me" She hurriedly walked away, expecting Duster to come too. The nautipod gave Arkay an awkward scared smile and walked off. Arkay finally got to laugh a bit, oh that would be entertaining, but he did make a note of not eating anything in this fair.

Arkay stepped toward the still unbuilt tents, cracking his knuckles before starting. With little to no effort he carried the heavy parts, working with patience and attention to detail while still being quick and efficient. His big hands helped him a ton during all of this.

"Hey tall guy" A voice called out from behind him, it was the same two clumsy crowned clown cats from before. He raised an eyebrow in response to their calling. "Could you help us hang these ribbons up? You're so tall you'd have no trouble reaching it" They spoke, Arkay cracked the slightest of smiles, well, he certainly didn't mind the little compliments to his height, even if it was probably just so he would feel more inclined to help them. Well, it worked, so he moved on to the ribbons, hanging them up around the tents, the light poles, just making the place look more lively and festive for the fair.

While Arkay helped around with the decorating, Duster was tackling a whole other devil: preparing food. Honestly, he has no idea why he just agreed to this, it would be way easier to just say he didn't know how to cook anything that requires more than two steps but no! Duster would never step down from a challenge, it was just not like him but.. this is difficult. "Okay, I'm going to cut up the shrimp and you can stab them with the sticks" The nautipod from before explained, pointing toward the wooden sticks she had saved for the grilled foods.

Duster nodded, hoping that this wasn't somehow going to catch fire or explode in his face or something ridiculous like that. When she cut off the shrimp heads, Duster grabbed them and stabbed their sides with the stick. He stacked around 5 shrimp per stick, a good portion for people to enjoy. Stick after stick, they got a ton of things done, and for now things are going fine in the kitchen and Duster hoped it would continue to be like that.. oh he could only hope.

"Okay we can leave those aside for now" She said, they were doing pretty good. Now for a classic, popcorn. How hard is it to make some popcorn? Duster asked himself, but to be honest, Arkay always made the popcorn himself. Goddammit!! Why is this so complicated, why did he say yes to this?

Duster deposited the corn inside the machine, completely underestimating how much popcorn would come out of it. He turned the switch on and waited, silently hoping he somehow didn't fuck this up massively. The machine heats up the corn until it begins to explode, turning into popcorn and filling up the machine's storage.. and it didn't stop, and it wouldn't stop at all. Duster started freaking out, trying to desperately fix this situation by

grabbing some random plastic bucket on the side. It quickly filled with popcorn too, but the machine released what seemed like a never ending stream of delicious popcorn, the nautipod was trying to scoop the fluffy white treats as fast as he could, tears in his eyes when he heard the cloth rustling. He turned his head, eyes wide like a deer in the headlights. Thankfully it was just Arkay, who just stood there for a moment, taking in the situation before his eyes. Before he did anything, first he wanted to comfort Duster, kneeling next to him and placing a hand on his back.

"Hey it's okay, it happens. You just put too much in" Arkay explained, petting Duster's back until he calmed down. The machine finally seemed to stop, giving them a break. "Come on, I'll help you clean this" the crook started scooping up the popcorn with his hands and placing them in bowls until the floor was all cleared. Maybe they couldn't sell those but at least the situation was under control.

"Thank you..." Duster finally spoke, rubbing his left eye.

"It's nothing, Dusty.. You know you don't have to know everything, yeah? Don't beat yourself over this" Arkay offers him a comforting smile. "It's really easy to blow too much popcorn up, everyone does it at least once" he chuckled, bringing Duster closer and kissing his forehead.

"You did great, I'm proud of you"

Duster smiled weakly, while he still felt super embarrassed, at least it was Arkay who found him like this and not some random person who would definitely make it a big deal. Arkay is just the patient partner he needs.

"I'm done with the setting up, I'll help you guys with the food" Arkay announced, which made Duster sigh with relief, at least Arkay knows his way around a kitchen and Duster could 1000% admit that.

The two are back to the food tasks, with Arkay doing most of the work as expected, and Duster proffered it honestly, the food will be way more edible if Arkay is doing it anyways, no comparison.

Arkay made chocolate coated strawberries, caramelized apples, and all sorts of stuff that seemed like magic to Duster. How can he simply make these things with seemingly no effort even if obviously it did take effort to make those things. It's confusing to him to think about it, but hey at least things are being done.

"Thank you both so much for the help, without you we would be so behind on stuff" The nautipod spoke, slightly bowing her head to the two men who helped this event immensely and made it so they could do things in time. "For helping us, I'd like to offer you guys free entry to any attractions and free food to your hearts content! Please, help yourselves, you two are amazing people" she didn't even have enough words to express her gratitude to them, but she could try.

"Thank you, we will make sure to enjoy ourselves" Arkay nods his head along with hers.

"Can't wait to try the things you made" Duster added, of course he's a sucker for Arkay's cooking. Always have been. Finally, the lights of the fair flickered and then turned fully on, accentuating all the rides and attractions. The place looked so much more lively now. And of course, people started showing up.

"Come on" Duster grabbed Arkay's hand. "We have to be first in line for the ferris wheel!!!" He exclaimed while running toward the just opened ferris wheel ride.

Arkay smiled to himself, quickly catching up to Duster.

"Let's go, then"

What a night this would be.