

The Zing to the Zang



Authors note:

Doing this zine was very interesting because not only did we get to hear Eric and Chads story, but we heard what they went through in prison and how they were able to build a sense of friendship between them.

This story is based off of true events

It was a dark day in space, like it always was. Zing and Zang, two companions from distant galaxies, that both met at a radical party. Both of the men danced their lives away all night, getting caught up in the music and lights. In the next day, Zang, after slaving away at a job in hospitality that rotted his soul, he was getting sick of his life. Zang idea of freedom began to twist into something that looked more like escape. That's when Zing decided to come into the picture.

Zing was the partier, even more than Zang was. He was known through the galaxy as always having the right equipment to the right party. Birthday? He had the cake. Have an estranged uncle that 'iced' his new employer in one of the newer dwarf planets? Well he's there to lend a hand. Now at a newer job, Zing had to transport a new batch of Zandium Crystals to the new party. Zang sat, slumping on the metal chair. His face radiated tiredness. Zang felt down on his luck, ready to send a strongly worded space-mail at anyone that asked for a fresh towel, because everyone already knows to bring their own towel. Zing tapped his shoulder, asking him if he wanted to go for a little adventure and party. They both nodded, a silly grin spreading on their faces.

Behind them sat their small black squirrel, Derka Derka. She was their pet, their mascot, and the rare voice of reason in their chaotic lives. She nibbled on an energy bar while watching her two alien friends make another questionable decision. She sighed and told them, “Do not do it, guys. Just give me peanut butter instead.” They ignored her because they always ignored her when adventure was involved. Zang climbed into the cruiser anyway, and Zing revved the engine with excitement.



The cruiser zoomed through the Orion Expressway with loud music shaking the windows and the Zandium humming dangerously in the trunk when blue and red particle lights suddenly flashed behind them. A space officer approached their window and asked if they had clearance for the Zandium, and Zang tried to make a joke by saying there was plenty of room in the cruiser if the officer needed to check, which only made Zing groan because Zang never understood timing. Derka Derka covered her eyes and muttered that they were definitely getting arrested this time, and she was right, because the officer searched the cruiser and found everything they were hiding. He uncovered the Zandium Crystals, the illegal blue glops, the deep dops, the counterfeit nebula credits, and even Zing's expired transport license. He sighed and told them it was enough contraband to corrupt a small moon of teenagers. The trial was quick, simple, and embarrassing because the evidence glowed on its own, and by the end of the day Zing and Zang were sentenced to eighteen million years in space prison for trafficking illegal substances throughout the galaxy.

When Zang heard the sentence he nearly fainted, while Zing thought it sounded like a chance to finally learn space yoga and refused to take the situation seriously, which made Zang glare at him and say, “Read the room.” Derka Derka sulked in a tiny prison jumpsuit and complained that she had not done anything wrong besides exist. Due to budget cuts, the galaxy decided to send them to Earth where time worked differently, and their eighteen million years would convert into nine months, a system none of them understood but had no power to refuse. The transformation began as soon as they reached the planet as their alien features melted into human ones, their bright green skin fading into soft earth tones and their eyes shifting into simple brown pupils. Their arms twisted into long human limbs with fingers, and Zing screamed when he realized he had knees, which made Zang scream simply because Zing was screaming. Derka Derka looked the same but slightly smaller. Earth prison was nothing like space prison, and its slow routines and quiet days left them miserable and confused by the stillness of human life at first.



Over time, something inside them began to soften. Zing found peace in silence and meditation. Zang discovered he could finally breathe without pressure. Derka Derka joined a meditation group and achieved a level of calm that impressed everyone, even the guards. Zing and Zang started sharing their stories with other inmates. They talked about cosmic parties, mistakes, and second chances. People listened because their stories felt meaningful. Slowly they began to understand themselves better. By the eighth month they were no longer angry about their sentence. They had grown. On the last day of their nine-month sentence, Zing and Zang returned to their alien forms and were released onto a grassy hill overlooking the city. As they adjusted to being themselves again, a sleek space cruiser descended from the clouds and opened its doors. Zing and Zang stepped inside with Derka Derka perched on Zang's shoulder, all three waving goodbye as the ship lifted back into the sky. Down below, two human men named Chad and Eric watched the cruiser rise in disbelief. They looked at each other, cupped their hands, and shouted toward the disappearing ship, "Please sponsor us. Our number is 224505." The ship vanished, but Chad and Eric kept waving, hopeful and clueless and a little bit chaotic in their own human way.

This story was loosely based on real events, because sometimes hiding your life behind aliens and space adventures is a refreshing way to soften the edges of a cold world. Eric and Chad, or Zang and Zing in the story, met in prison and became best friends during one of the hardest periods of their lives. Eric once said, “I see this guy, and I don’t know what to think at first. He was smiling and it is hard when you are around a lot of negative people.” Their friendship, built in a place filled with tension and hopelessness, became its own kind of escape. Turning their experiences into a cosmic tale gave them a way to process what happened, find humor in the chaos, and share hope with others who might be struggling too.

