

High above, trees rustled in a chilly breeze. A somewhat ominous fog rolled through Sulow Grove; although, to one, it was fascinating.

A puptual, with white fur and blue waves, and a glittering, yellow, amcorn-shaped chymojewel excitedly slithered around tree trunks with his tangerine wings and curiously prodded about sticks with his front paws. His ears would perk whenever a busy town-goer approached, and he would slip beneath a bush before another's eyes could catch him. He'd watch with wide eyes at the array of creatures around him: Feathered, furred, hooved—it was all so interesting!

A scuffle caught his attention, and he turned to see a small creature skittering in the loose dirt under the shelter of the bush. He pawed at it, and it buzzed at him with wings he hadn't known were there! He instinctually jumped back but quickly leaned in again to sniff at it.

Its wings had retracted underneath a sturdy elytra that held an enticing sheen. He could see blues and greens, all depending on what way he looked. The thing sported a strange set of horns and clicking mandibles that he couldn't resist teasing. He reached forward, and it snapped! He giggled to himself and continued toying with the strange creature until he heard the bush rustle.

He turned on his heels and came face to face with another puptual. He was black and white with simple spots here and there. A lime chymojewel, not quite the shape of a spiral, shimmered on his forehead. He smiled at the amcorn puptual with his tongue out, and in return, our puptual did... nothing.

He hadn't interacted with another being who seemed conscious. He wasn't sure what to do. He wasn't scared—he was infatuated.

The other puptual, after a few moments of silence, cocked his head and stopped smiling, although his tongue was still out. He smiled again and jumped onto the other before pushing off and flapping out of the bush with plush wings.

With a yelp, the amcorn puptual shook himself and gave chase.

The two puptuals chased each other through the town, weaving between many willows and causing a few dropped goods along the way. When one caught the other, they would pause for a moment, panting, before switching roles and the chasee would become the chaser.

This time, it was the spiral puptuals turn. He zipped back and forth, hoping to lose the other puptual, but Amcorn continued his pursuit.

But suddenly, Spiral jumped into the arms of a willow, surprising her.

"Willy— There you are!" The willow held him up in her arms.

Spiral—or Willy, as it turned out—barked at her and looked toward his new friend, but he was nowhere to be seen. He cocked his head and looked between the bustling willows and the clustered shops before his folded ears drooped.

The puptual didn't feel like meeting anybody new, so, as the willow greeted Willy, he withdrew into the crowds again and flew off back to the quieter edges of town, where he continued his exploration of this vast world he now found himself in. He looked back again and smiled. He'd visit Willy soon enough.