

High Nutritional Value

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Now it's time to go back to the cooks, to try to make some pizzas. Fuocoblu is gone to help an injured wild amphibian bear, and shi has left me alone. This is the first time that Fuoco leaves me alone here. Shi has suggested me to go to the stables of the small beasts, where at 'zero ninetyfive' there still will be Tigrerossa that shall show me something else useful for me. I'd like to find something that I can use as mozzarella for the pizza; but here it's difficult. Even having some milk it's not easy to make mozzarella. I can't give to the chakasa the artificial milk produced by my shuttle. They produce some chakasian cheese produced with their own milk, but they use it only in particular occasions, it's quite precious, and surely I don't want to taste it. Maybe I shall try something vegetable-based, like a kind of tofu, because they have soya from earth.

I'm near the stables for small animals, so I enter. There are some balls covered by long spines, they are animals, similar to big porcupines. Tigrerossa is still here, sit near one of those animals. Shi greets me happily. I can trust hir, so I approach hir.

This is very interesting, it seems that shi is milking the animal. I think shi has milked some others, because shi has already collected a full bucket, and another bucket is inside a hollow in the ground, where he can collect the porcupine milk. With hir hand Tigre is doing the rhythmical movements that I have seen in the old images from earth, but shi is more dainty.

"Good morning Father! I see you have found the fruits for you recipe."

"That's right, I have found very good tomatoes, and much more are in the central kitchens. I hope to find or invent the other ingredients. I hope to give you all a good surprise, I've seen that you can appreciate good tastes too."

"Oh, yes! We are frequently forced to change our alimentation, but there are foods that we don't want to drop off. Please taste this, it's the substance more similar to our milk and milkwater that we have found until now. It's very good, and fortunately those animals produce a lot of it. It contains lots of proteins, and many kind of sugars."

Tigrerossa is very kind, usually shi speeches much less. I suck a small quantitative of it with a small tube. After about two minutes the food analyser of my suit confirms Tigre's analysis, it says that it's full edible for me too, and it's *even a HNV food!* It just says it requires some sterilisation. This small analyser isn't perfect, it cannot detect all kinds of pathogens that can survive the sterilisation, and it's not designed to judge tastes, that can be even awful. So I sterilise a small quantitative of it, and then I smell it. It has a strong odour of the animal, a bit nauseating for me, but this is normal. Beside it, the odour beneath is nice, it reminds me of the

true milk, it's just a bit more spiced. I try to taste just a drop of it...

Well, it's not bad at all. I have to admit that this is better than the artificial milk of my shuttle. It's slightly sweet, but with all those sugars it can be even more sweet. It seems thick cream, just a bit unctuous. I'd loved to try the just milked milk on the earth.

"Mmm, for me it's a discovery to find here an animal that produces milk with big glands like ehm... yours. All the other animals that I have seen here just produces a kind of thick cream from the abdomen," like echidnas. It's very strange that just this species has developed a kind of mammal glands.

"This is a Spineball," shi says looking at me a bit astonished, "But note that their females too produce the milk like you have just said."

"Ah... but then how you can... ?" I can't finish the question, I don't have air in my lungs anymore, I don't feel the stomach anymore...

"Oh, but this is obviously a male, you see? I can't show you the testicles because they are full internal, but I assure you that they are as big as a fist, and they have many of them, you can see the proof of it. Every day adults can produce even two litres of sperm, if they are periodically drained and if the animal is trained from young age. If you masturbate them correctly it doesn't annoy them, they can even appreciate it. Do you see his dilated nostrils? Now he is feeling lots of pleasure, he's on the climax, just half done. The periodic masturbation can even make them ignore their females... Their metabolism is very efficient, most of the food goes into sperm or body mass. During the mating the males compete to fecund all females, that's why they can produce so much sperm. The females are useful for meat and necessary for reproduction... oh, Father, do you go away already ? Well, see you..."

Oww, my God! My stomach! And I have tasted it! I'm not fit to be an explorer! Water, I need some water...

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Sigh! Now I'd have to go back to the cooks, in the middle of... - my Lord - chakasa food? And almost surely there will be *that* too. I don't feel my mouth anymore.

Well, let's face reality, more washing is useless. The water filter of the suit needs time to regenerate itself, and I've promised that before night I'll try to make some pizzas. The milk mozzarella... I don't want to think about it now. It will be tofu-like or nothing.

But in the end it's a food like every other.

Well, *no*. I'll try to repeat it again to myself some days from now, maybe I'll be more lucky. Maybe I'll have appetite again in two days time. I'll never again taste something before knowing exactly what is it; I don't care if the analyser says it's edible and wonderfully nutritional.

Chakasa Fuocoblu and Tigrerosa (c) leonardo maffi.

Chapel, Father Giona, chakasa species, planet Sava (c) leonardo maffi and Alessio "Scale" Scalerandi.