

Introduction

Sting.

My eyes shoot down to my hand, where the small wasp lay. It's wrapped around my pulsating finger, wanting nothing more than to escape from my capture. Annoyed by my discovery, I realize it's not worth it, so I flick it off of my hand and onto the airplane's floor. My shoe moves over the nearly dead wasp, and I have no second thoughts before it's crushed into the carpet. That area of my hand burned from the sudden injection, and I squeezed it tight. A small *ding* informed me of the seatbelt sign being off, so I move to the back of the plane for the restroom.

I'm the one who had taken the creature with me. While on a research trip to the Amazon Rainforest, I spotted a species of wasp I've never seen before. Not in any textbook I've read, or in any research I've done. I quickly and quietly cupped the wasp, and forced it into a small container that had been a spare for this very reason. I was looking to take it to a lab and have tests be done on it, and my plan from there varies. Opening the bag stupidly is not a part of the plan, though.

Running my hand under cold water seems meaningless. I watch my finger twitch and spasm. In a normal wasp sting, simple soap and water should usually take down the swelling. An uncomfortable, itching sensation is quickly moving through my hand and up my arm now, like it's longing to infect the rest of my body. I stand back from the mirror and up against the wall in the small bathroom. *Take a deep breath. It's not that bad.* My eyes revert back to the mirror, but the infection is spreading. Deep red hives cover my arm entirely. *Am I allergic? Should I get help?*

Bumps pop up rapidly across my shoulder and onto my back. My breathing is heavy and irregular, and I can't keep my thoughts straight. *What's... what's going on?* My body burns like it's too close to the sun; I groan and fall to the floor. I blurrily watch my infected arm reach out for the door, until a sudden loss of strength plagues me. A loud *crack* sounds, and my arm burns more than ever. It's deformed now, like my bone collapsed. I bite the inside of my cheek to stay quiet. My ribs widen and contort, and my legs shift out of place and grow. I clutch anything around to take aid from the pain.

"Ma'am? Is everything alright in there?" I hear someone outside of the bathroom yell. They sound like an echo. *I must've passed out.*

“What’s happening to me?” I growl. My voice is deeper, scratchier. I manage to grab back onto the sink and I pull myself up. *My strength returned.* It seems as though my sensitivity increased. The lights are brighter, the passengers are louder, and the pain is worse. *Shut up, just shut up.* My eyesight looks as though I’m looking through a fisheye. Everything I look at morphes and stretches. I see a hand that wasn’t mine before reach the countertop and scratch at the tile. *Is that... my hand?* Pulling myself up seems easy now as I get to my knees. A pair of eyes I don’t recognize are staring back at me in the mirror. My once brown eyes are now a foggy gray. They scan my whole body. I tower over the sink, almost two feet above where I stood before. My arms and legs are freakishly longer, and my hair falls in chunks to the floor.

The bumps from before are now turned into bubble-like blisters. All at once, they start to burn more than ever before. I scream, not caring about what the puny people will think. The blisters throb, and start to burst. I whine as each one pops. Large stingers start to protrude from within them, exactly like a wasps’. They rip my clothes even more than my body contortion did. The stingers stand tall on my back and shoulders, and I can feel the wasp’s venom coursing through them.

I can’t focus. *What have I become?* I’m making low, gurgling noises that don’t sound like me at all. I sway, slowly moving my eyes up and down the monster in the mirror. My skin is discolored yellow, my cheeks are sunken, and my height changed significantly. I growl as more people from outside the door shout.

Sane thoughts start to leave my mind, and get replaced by cruel ones. *Kill, kill, kill.* The yelling outside rings in my ears, and I can hear everything that they say. “Should we break down the door?” “Is anyone a doctor? Get the pilot’s attention!” I can feel my humanity slowly flowing away as I look into the mirror one last time. I twitch, not being able to keep my movements at bay anymore. My arm, no longer under my control, reaches up and smashes the mirror. My reflection splits into a million pieces with a loud *crash.*

“We’re coming in!” a man shakily informs. Three loud bangs sound, right before the door breaks down in front of me. The people crowd outside of the bathroom door before falling silent as they see me. My lips curve into a wicked smile. My humanity is gone.

To be continued...

