

And Tomorrow, it'll Be Yellow

*50 supplements and meds*

*crowd my head*

Jesus, I'm not Plath—just a lousy one, at best. I shot my eyes back up at Dr. Doctor. He straightened out his white coat and took a long sip from his vanilla iced latte before clicking away at his computer. Bony knuckles mountained his sweaty hands.

“Wow, this is just—fantastic! It's so rare to come by someone that has a history like yours...you don't mind if I publish this, right? I mean—this could be life-changing!”

“Well, I guess—”

“Great. I can't believe I was so lucky to come across someone who was in this anaphylactic allergy research group. I mean—you were the first—the first ever—to do oral desensitization. What a privilege! Can I have your full name, medical history, social security number, and fingerprints while we conduct this first skin examination on you?”

On, and on, and on my head spun like drunk Russian ballerinas.

*I don't know, can you?*

*Can I?*

*Can you?*

*Fuck you——*

My hair tickled—that riff sounded nice. Our game played back and forth in my head, bouncing around like little pinballs.

“So, to clarify, miss, even with this information, it still isn’t quite extensive enough before we begin the tests. There is some more recent information that would help clarify our soon-to-be, new findings!”

*The fuck? Would you like my dating profiles?*

“Now...do you still maintain your daily oral intake of the allergen?”

“No.”

“Oh. Hm. Why? Why would you do that?”

“I didn’t want to anymore.”

“Why?”

“Because I’m an adult now.”

“Ah, yes. Freedom. I’m sure you’re living out your college years right now,” he said with a wink.

“Something like that.”

“Ha! This actually works out great! Without us knowing if you still even maintain immunity, this raises the stakes even more! Just think of what we’ll publish!”

“I’m sure.”

“Alright then! Let’s start the skin test!”

He jumped out of his chair and rushed toward the table like a kid for candy, grabbed the box, then quickly sat and counted down: 3, 2, and poked me on 1.

“Sorry, it’s a habit—the kids usually back out if we count all the way down!”

“Don’t tempt me.”

“Ha, you’re a real funny one! It’s nice to have that energy in the office.”

*I’m actually dead fucking serious, you slimeball.*

I glanced down at my arm. Dr. Doctor had pricked it with 15 small needles.

I’ve never seen them so close, or rather, I’ve never seen them at all. My accidents—my mistakes—were the only times my eyes had caught sight of them. So ugly, so invasive. They’d protrude beneath my lips and scale my jaw like snakeskin. But I sure as hell made a fine specimen for the doctors at the research. Some might call me Michelin Man, they called me Monroe. Fine like Monroe.

Those were the times when Nurse Paulie would give me a hug, draw my blood, and spoon-feed me what killed me.

I got so good at games, though. Especially Crossy Road. So many hours on there.

“Stay still, please,”

“It’s hard when they itch.”

“Try and relax.”

“Do you have something I can fan them with?”

His face wrinkled at me.

“It’s just, they always used to do that in the research group, so—”

“Oh, then definitely!”

God, he should have known better! Groupthink, Groupthink, where are you? He hurried to the counter and turned around to hand me an acrylic sign holder with his face and practice name on it.

“Dr. Doctor’s Haven of Hospitality,” the sign read.

“Are you fucking with me?”

“Miss,” he cleared his throat. His eyes flickered up and down from the bleached linoleum floor.

“Please, please refrain from saying those words. Our office doesn’t tolerate profanity. We feel... it infringes on our worker and patient privacy.”

His white teeth sparkled at me. I forgot to floss today.

“That’s my bad. It won’t happen again.”

He handed the sign holder to me.

“Please, fan yourself. I want you to feel as comfortable as possible. I’m going to step out for a minute, but please try and find the pdf of your social security card in the meantime. We need it to publish our breakthrough here. You’re doing *so* much good for us!”

“Ok.”

Dr. Doctor gave me a nod and slowly slung the door shut.

I used to like Beyblades. When I was six, just after starting the research study, my crush, Matthew, and I would sit in our white and blue chalk squares outside the school classroom. Rip it!—he’d tell me. A little stronger—wind it up now, see that 3rd ridge? That gets it to spin for like, 42 seconds!—and I’d do it, and we’d watch, and we’d smile, and we’d count ‘til our fingers melt into one. We’d do this almost every day, and every two weeks, I’d come out with bruises in the crevice of my arm.

*Oooh, it’s more blue today!*

*I know! I think they took extra blood to try another test!*

*That's so cool!!*

Dr. Doctor came back and hit me with his hands-on hip pose, like I'd done something wrong, or, he was modeling for me. He moved closer, grinning at my bumpy arm. Definitely modeling.

“Miss—I can’t—I can’t believe it, but the one we wanted negative turned out to be negative! All of your research, work—it was worth it! I just—can’t believe—I’m here to witness this firsthand. You must be so proud!”

“Ecstatic.”

Dr. Doctor cleared his throat. “Even though the negative one came back negative here, which we are *so* excited about... we still need to do a blood test, just to confirm that you’re negative antibodies we *think* you have are actually negative! Sounds good?”

“Sure.”

“Do you have any questions so far?”

“Yeah. I hope it’s purple.”