

Skittering Things

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Skittering Things

by [Sixteenthdays](#)

Summary

[GRIAN]

I'm starting to think a lot of these people just don't want to put their real names down. Statement of- *Stress Monster*, I guess, regarding the contents of her terrarium. Original interview transcribed July 2nd, 2018.

Notes

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Statement:



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[GRIAN]

I'm starting to think a lot of these people just don't want to put their real names down. Statement of- *Stress Monster*, I guess, regarding the contents of her terrarium. Original interview transcribed July 2nd, 2018.

[GRIAN (STATEMENT)]

Y'know, I always loved caterpillars.

Silly, colorful little things, inching along the bottoms of leaves. So... soft and vulnerable. I felt bad for 'em, as a kid! Poor sweet little babies. They're not fast, they're practically gift-wrapped for hungry birds and things... I always had this sort of urge to look after them.

I had this little terrarium, growing up. You know, the sort with mesh sides, for bugs? Can't quite remember where I got it from, originally. Maybe from some relative. But I loved keeping bugs. Caterpillars especially, but I loved all of them! Spiders, dragonflies, moths... I would always be so excited if I found a worm or a caterpillar on the underside of a leaf, 'cause that meant a chance to bring it home and take care of it and watch it blossom into a moth or a beautiful butterfly.

Well, around... mmm, I think about six months ago? I found a little grub on the front walk of my apartment building. Nearly stepped on him, at first! He was just sitting out there on the concrete, all horribly exposed to the sun or birds. At first I thought he was dead, to be completely honest, but when I went to pick him up he sort of curled into my hand, away from the light, and- well, my heart just melted. I know it's not the word most people would use, but it was cute!

He looked like a normal enough beetle grub at first, but when I tilted my hands he almost shimmered in the light. Like- iridescence! That's the word. I knew right then he would be *beautiful* once he was fully grown. So I dug out my old mesh terrarium, set it up with a few twigs and leaves and some soil in the bottom so the little guy would have something to burrow in, and waited.

Now, I wasn't expecting such quick results. Like I said, I hadn't really raised beetles before, but I did some Googling, and depending on the sort, they can stay tucked up under the dirt for years before crawling out as grown-ups! But my little guy was special. It was only two weeks before he was crawling out with a shiny new shell, and he was *gorgeous*. His shell was this lovely dark purple, and it glittered so wonderfully.

I reached down and had him crawl onto my fingers, and let him explore up my arm, just watching the play of the colors on his shell. I don't even know how long I was sat there, to be honest! I only realized I'd zoned out a bit when I heard my roommate get home and had to jump to it to help her put the shopping away.

For the next few weeks, whenever False- that's my roommate- wasn't home, I'd let the little guy out of his cage and let him sit on my shoulder or in my hair while I was doing work. I worked from home most days, so it was nice to have the company. He never seemed to want to wander off, so I didn't worry about him too much. I knew he loved me! It was like having a pet, y'know?

Only when False wasn't home, though. I wasn't sure what it was about her. I love her to death, I really do, but I just felt like I couldn't trust her with the little guy! I just had this feeling, like this absolute certainty that if she knew about him, she'd want to get rid of him, and I couldn't have that!

I didn't even notice, at first, when he laid his first bunch of eggs. I just noticed he'd been settled on one place on my shoulder for a long time, and then when I got up to the bathroom, I happened to catch sight of a little cluster of teeny tiny dots, tucked right in the groove between my shoulder and my neck.

I was flattered, honestly! He trusted me enough to look after his little ones the same way I'd looked after him. I wanted to move their eggs to a leaf or something, but they were so tiny I worried I'd crush them if I tried. So instead I figured I'd just leave them there and wait for them to hatch, and then move the larvae into the terrarium. It wasn't like they were bothering me or anything. I just needed to make sure I wore my hair so you couldn't see 'em, and that was it!

Well, it didn't end up working out *quite* that way.

A few days later, I woke up in the middle of the night with a sharp little point of pain right there in my collarbone. I didn't understand at first; I was all sort of bleary and half-asleep, you know, but my first thought was that one of the little babies might have hatched, gotten scared, and bit me. But as I was lying there, I felt another little pain, and another, and another, until it was finally enough to make me drag myself out of bed and go check the mirror.

At first, I didn't quite understand what I was looking at. It looked like the eggs were all just gone, and there were little dark spots in my skin where they had been. When I ran my finger over them, though, I could feel... lumps. Tiny little bumps right under my skin.

Do you get it? It did take me a moment! They'd hatched, and decided that instead of waiting to burrow into dirt, they'd dig right into me. Now, I didn't mind! It didn't even hurt that bad. Didn't bleed or anything! I stood there, running my fingers over the spot, and my heart just went all warm and soft and protective. I knew right then I'd do whatever I needed to do keep the little guys safe.

And the first thing I needed to do was leave.

False had been putting me more and more on edge. Oh, she was as nice as ever, but I could tell something was up! She thought something was wrong with me! Always asking me if I was okay or if I was feeling alright... I *knew* if she found out about the beetles, she'd want me to get rid of them, and especially now that I had such vulnerable little babies under my skin... well, I just knew I had to get them somewhere safer.

It wasn't all about her, either. That apartment was just all wrong. Too dry, too stale, not enough sun and air and water... well, it just wasn't any place at all to raise children, I thought! Honestly, I don't know what I was thinking in the first place, moving into a horrible little box like that. It simply wouldn't do any longer.

So one day when False was out, I just... wrote a note and packed a little bag for myself, and left. And, you know, when the baby beetles eventually dug their way out of my skin and they were shining every color of the rainbow, I knew I'd made the right choice, for them. They're so cute. It's better for them, you know, to grow in meat than in dirt. More nutrients!

It's been... oh, goodness, I'm not even sure how many generations, now! Maybe six or seven? I've raised so many little ones. And sure, they might leave holes, but that's perfectly fine with me! It doesn't even hurt anymore.

Say, do you want to hold one?

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[Click]

[GRIAN]

Well, first of all, I'm quite glad that Etho didn't take pictures of this one. Because... ew. Gross.

At the risk of glossing over... the main story here, what I'm most interested in is the reappearance of False Symmetry in this statement. I spoke to her just a few weeks ago- er, that's Statement 0220517- about a separate incident, and she did mention that her previous roommate had vanished on her, but she didn't say anything about... beetles. She didn't leave any followup contact information with us, unfortunately.

I wonder if the unease Ms. Monster felt around her was a result of her altered mental state, or...
hmm. Given that so far as I can tell, the events of this statement seem entirely unrelated to those of
Statement 0220517... worth looking into further, for sure. Impulse still hasn't dug up that
statement he said he was looking for for me.

...Actually, I don't think I've seen Impulse in the last few days. I wonder if he's sick or
something? I should ask if anybody else has seen him.

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Supplemental:

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[GRIAN]

Well, bad news, everyone. Regarding case 0180206- I had Pearl do some follow-up poking around, and apparently Artefact Storage had, uh, well.

I really thought Etho would have had enough common sense *not* to take the bug Ms Monster offered him, but apparently not. In fact, not only did he take it, but he seems to have killed it, pinned it to a corkboard, and handed it over to Storage.

Pearl brought it back for me, and it... I kinda hate to say it, but it really is beautiful. In a weird, buggy way, but... It's got this gorgeous iridescent sheen like nothing I've ever seen. I turned off the lights and its scales were still sparkling a little, years after its death, throwing rainbow colors of light across the room like the sun's reflection on the moon.

I'm glad it's dead. I don't usually like bugs, but a bug this pretty....

I can see why she was tempted. I can see why Etho was tempted, too. I hope I never meet her.

(pause)

It's harmless now, though, I'm pretty sure. I mean, I'm getting it sent right back to Storage just in case, but I don't think I'm about to turn into a bug nursery or anything.

Knock on wood.

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End Notes

a shorter one, but one i've been planning on doing for a bit! this is one of the two i mentioned setting up for in the end notes of [the not deer](#)! we'll get to the other one eventually. first we gotta find impulse, though! wonder what he's been up to?

man i have SO many ideas for this series. i have the next... five or so statements planned out and there are some in there i'm QUITE excited for.

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