

We Are Queen: Coronation

The cold winter air blew and leaked past the boarded-up windows of the abandoned store. Once in this city, this small brick building once was host to a small supplement and pharmaceutical manufacturer, from the years-old expired vitamins left in packaging that was never opened and the labels left on the trashed shelves fallen over from disuse and crumbling from water rot. A thin layer of dust coated most of the floors, only broken up by my recent footprints. Holes dot the rotting floor tiles, from where other shelves used to sit. Abandoned buildings like this one dot the city, signs of better days unlikely to return. The ferry routes have been abandoned for years, and despite my dad's pestering, there isn't the political will to reopen them.

Gunshots rang out across the city. Another gang fight between the E88 and the ABB. My little hideout was unfortunately located between their two territories, and the frequent shootings nearby were one of the many downsides to the place. In the week since I've claimed this hole in the wall, I've luckily haven't seen any of the capes in either of the gangs. Quickly I ducked into the back room of the shop, to check on my project, and keep an additional wall between me and the gang war going on several streets away.

In a little terrarium was the oily droplet swaying around. A Rainbow of color slashed and rippled across its black skin. Over the winter break, I keep thinking Emma was planning something. That she didn't simply start letting off, that it was some sort of plot. Slowly my mind started to fill with ideas, like the one that was sitting in the terrarium, waiting for me to feed it. Reaching in, I pulled out a jar of dead crickets and other bugs, that were sold at a discount at the pet store. They were meant to be live feed, but the electrical short in the fridge they were being stored in killed the fridge and them with it, according to the bored-looking clerk at least. "There you go, just eat it up now." I tipped the jar over, spilling out the meal.

The oily puddle slithered overtop the dead bugs, leaving only a thin residue of the rainbow film behind. Expired ground beef was dropped in the containment as well, and was just as quickly eaten up. No matter how much I fed Oily, its size never increased to more than that of my fist. "Still so much to do," I said with a sigh. It was still a very incomplete project, even with the all the time from winter break, I didn't have the resources I needed to program the slimy little dot. School was going to be back in session in less than two weeks, and I wasn't even half-way finished with Oily.

It happened in an instant. I felt the glass shattering and cutting into my skin before I saw the bullet hole in the wall. The sound was deafening at this range. The gunfire wasn't aimed at me, just a stray shot from a gang war that moved closer to my hideout while I was lost in thought and plans. From the shattered remains on the terrarium, Oily jumped onto me, its basic survival instincts reacting to a threat. In a flash, Oily had already covered my arm and was rapidly climbing up my arm. "Get off!" I tried to scrap the slimy creature off my body. Would I even be able to control my body? My project continued to spread across, covering every part as it seeped into the cuts, and passed into my mouth and eyes. Behind my eyes I felt it wiggling around,

trying to take over my body. The control and teaching nodes were never installed. Oily was a creature with just basic instincts at this point, seeking a host to give it better chance against threats it didn't understand.

Just before the world went dark, I saw my reflection in the shattered glass. A featureless drone, coated in black. A facsimile of a person. Everything I cared about, every attachment to my mother gone. Just a drone being puppeted by my own failure. I couldn't feel anything, but I knew Oily's tendrils were still moving around in my brain. Connecting to the nerves. I was trapped and betrayed again my something I trusted. Ideas and devices poured into my mind, yet it was hopeless. Despite my efforts, my arms didn't twitch. My legs didn't spasm in a run. I couldn't move. I couldn't see at all. I was being taunted by my power with solutions to my problem with no ability to enact them.

Faster and faster concepts poured into my mind. Faster than my mind could think. Faster than any computer on earth could process. Then it suddenly stopped. Two large creatures larger than twin spun and swirled in my mind's eye. An image I had already forgotten, but remember again. An image I've seen countless times. Current configurations can't help my host. Memories began to mix. In the backroom, the symbiote wrapped around the node in mine/my host's brain. The separation between us was breaking down.

In a world held between binary stars, a race like a that resembled humanoid beetles was our host once. A crown made of horns ripped from the losers of fights sat atop its head. They were just one of many hosts. Our body slipped into the crack caused by the symbiote mindless lashing out at the world. A stormy night when we ran into our parent's room. Mom comforting us, until we calmed down, and promised us a guard to keep the monsters away. On the desk back home still sits the knight owl plushy with his little lance.

Memories of hosts and cycles, and memories of Taylor mixed. Of being one of many humans being flung from a world of grey sludge. Of being a crystalline being sitting in a classroom filled with such beings. Where one set of memories and data began and ended no longer had clarity. Our parents of Annette and the Warrior, or Danny and the Thinker, what was true and that was no longer was certain. The concept of self faded with a blurred view of us, union, and we.

The oily bubble of warped space that we created and was wrapped around us was reformed twisted and altered based on our memories. We didn't recall what we looked like, only grabbing whatever trait we agreed as beneficial. A crown of horns, wings of hardened force. A humanoid shape. Our body was held in a core, while the symbiote made of twisted space became our form.

With countless hands that existed only between the barrier between worlds, we twisted the walls in front of us. There was a threat nearby. What was an ally and what was an enemy was still unknown. We needed time to understand what happened. We were still in flux. Dashing through the hole in the wall, we hide in darkness, lashing out at everything that could cause us harm.