

TALES FROM THE OTHER PLACE
E3: ITCH

Written by

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EXT. A SPACE STATION

NARRATOR

(VO)

I wonder if anyone will notice.

INT. THE SPACE STATION

A few people mill about, going through daily business.

NARRATOR

(VO)

I know I didn't at first. Took me a while, but I'm sure now.

FOCUS on the NARRATOR, a middle-aged man sitting at a table, eating his food. He takes a pepper shaker and sniffs it. He puts it down. Rubs his nose.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

(VO)

I can't sneeze.

SOME TIME AGO

INT. NARRATOR'S BATHROOM

The Narrator looks at himself. He's got shaving cream on, and raises a razor into view.

NARRATOR

(VO)

The symptoms first arose some time ago. Well, rather the lack of symptoms.

As the Narrator moves the razor into position to shave, a slip of the finger causes the razor to fall into a trashcan.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

(quietly, to himself)

Shit.

The Narrator bends down to look into the trashcan. But hesitates.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

(VO)

I was preparing to groom my face when I dropped my shaving device into a nearby disposal unit.

(MORE)

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

I was about to reach in and take the device back, but then I remembered something.

The Narrator looks behind him, into his room. A cat licks itself.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

(VO)

I honestly don't remember why even though I'm allergic to cats I got a cat. Things move so slow in a space station that you learn not to pay attention to anything. What's my purpose here? My purpose before here? What is my name? Let it flow. But, the important part was that I had cleaned my room recently enough for the hairs of my cat to still be in the disposal unit.

The Narrator looks back into the trash can.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

(VO)

I considered several options at that point. Call for help? Call for the cat? Just get a new razor? But, before I could consider any more options-

The cat bumps into the Narrator's leg, sending him face-first into the trash can.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

(VO)

My cat came into contact with me, causing me to lose my balance and sending me face-first into the trashcan.

The Narrator takes a breath of air.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

(VO)

I knew I had to get out of here. But first I took a breath in. Then, it struck me.

Another breath.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

I should be sneezing.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
(VO)
But I wasn't.

INT. NARRATOR'S ROOM

The Narrator sets down several objects on the floor: a pepper shaker, a dust pan, dirty laundry, the cat.

The Narrator stands back up and looks at the objects proudly.

NARRATOR
(VO)
Now, I had considered several possibilities. Perhaps this was a test from God. To see, with this new power, if I was worthy.

The Narrator rubs his face in all of the objects one by one.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
(VO)
And so I decided. I was to put this power to use.

The Narrator stands up, cat in hand.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
(VO)
I was to prove myself.

INT. VENT SYSTEM

The Narrator crawls along the cramped vents with his cat.

NARRATOR
(VO)
I started out small. We had a vermin infestation.

The Narrator pets the cat and lets it go. It scurries off further down.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
There ya go.

Sounds of fighting further down. The cat returns, scruffled and carrying a mouse.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
(VO)
My plan worked perfectly.

INT. MESS HALL

An OFFICIAL reads from a clipboard. The inhabitants of the space station sit, bored, listening. The Narrator stands next to the official. The official produces a medal and places it on the Narrator.

NARRATOR

(VO)

Before long, my hard work had been recognized by the station officials, and they promoted me. Again.

INT. MESS HALL - DIFFERENT TIME

Another official places a medal on the Narrator.

NARRATOR

(VO)

And again.

INT. MESS HALL - DIFFERENT TIME

Several officials place several medals on the Narrator.

NARRATOR

(VO)

I didn't even know there were that many promotions you could have. But I had them all.

INT. NARRATOR'S ROOM

The Narrator prepares a complicated and makeshift-looking set of equipment. He puts it on himself. It includes a harness for the cat.

NARRATOR

(VO)

I went further from there. Odd jobs here and there, seeing what my cat could do. But I knew my goal. This wasn't my cat's power. It was my power. I had to outgrow the use of my cat.

A QUICK SUCCESSION OF SHOTS FROM THE SAME ANGLE IN THE ROOM, SHOWING THE NARRATOR'S SET OF EQUIPMENT GROWING MORE COMPLICATED. IT EVENTUALLY ENDS WITH THE REMOVAL OF THE CAT HARNESS.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

(VO)

As my expertise with odd jobs grew, so did the equipment I had. But I had to go even further than that. I had to become the weapon. I had to become the ultimate, non-sneezing lifeform, with nothing to aid me other than my power.

ANOTHER QUICK SUCCESSION OF SHOTS, EACH SHOWING THE NARRATOR GROWING MORE FERAL AND DIRTIED AND THE EQUIPMENT GROWING SMALLER, EVENTUALLY BECOMING NONEXISTENT.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

(VO)

But now I had a problem.

INT. MESS HALL

The Narrator sits in a corner, eating his food with his bare hands. He looks around suspiciously and sees people eating, people conversing with each other.

Nobody is sneezing.

NARRATOR

(VO)

I had never proven if I was the sole bearer of this power. What if others could not sneeze? That would get in the way, get in the way of everything I had ever worked for. If there were others like me, they would conspire against me. I was one of the highest-ranking people on the station now. And so I began the tests on the station.

INT. VENT SYSTEM

The Narrator pours a sack of pepper into a vent. He coughs, but does not sneeze.

NARRATOR

(VO)

The first test was pepper in the ventilation system. Just to see the limits of the others' powers.

INT. MESS HALL

Everyone goes about their business as usual. The Narrator watches carefully and eats his food.

Nobody is sneezing.

NARRATOR

(VO)

That did not work. And so I escalated.

INT. VENT SYSTEM

The Narrator pours a sack of tear gas powder into the vent system.

NARRATOR

(VO)

I broke into the armory and took some tear gas, powder form.

INT. MESS HALL

People are crying, but nobody is sneezing.

NARRATOR

(VO)

That did not work either. Nobody sneezed! Nobody sneezed at all! And, come to think of it, I hadn't seen anybody sneeze since I first took notice of my power! I look around me.

FOCUS on random crying people.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

(VO)

I see others with the same power. I see competitors. Enemies. They're out to get me. I know it, but they don't know it. And so they leave me with only one choice. They've forced my hand.

INT. MESS HALL - DIFFERENT TIME

The mess hall is filled with dead people, most lying on the floor. Some gasp for air. There's a green haze in the air. Alarms go off. There is otherwise no movement.

One INHABITANT hears footsteps and the sound of a gas mask. She strains to look.

Through her hazy vision, she sees a figure approaching, carrying something. She coughs and squints.

NARRATOR

(VO)

And thus, I come to the final realization.

Her vision clears. It is the Narrator with a gas mask, carrying his cat which also has a gas mask. She reaches out to him.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

(VO)

This wasn't a test for God. I didn't have to prove myself to anyone.

INHABITANT

Water... please... it burns...

The Narrator looks at her, and keeps on walking forward. The cat meows.

NARRATOR

(VO)

This was a test to prove if I was God.

The Narrator sits down in his seat. He places the cat next to him. It runs off.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

(VO)

And I passed.

The Narrator suddenly pretends to sneeze. He looks at his hands. He starts laughing. And he sneezes again. And again. The cat brushes against him and meows.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

(VO)

I wonder if anyone will notice.

We PULL OUT as the Narrator laughs maniacally, mock sneezing, coughing and crying. He pulls off his gas mask. We PULL OUT past the space station, to reveal that it is sitting in the middle of space, the middle of nowhere, alone, with no other stations by it.

Fade to black.