

Stay Still

The curved steel walls of the capsule close in around him, trapping him inside its depths and imprisoning him in dimness.

He tilts his head upwards and he manages to catch a glimpse of a tenebrous silhouette looming down over him.

“PLEASE! DON’T DO THIS, I BEG YOU!” he sobs, voice gasping through a dry throat craved of water.

“This is just how it’s done,” a cool voice answers. “You know the punishment for desertion of the clan.”

“WAIT, I’M SORRY!”

There is a sigh, then, “Your only chance: stay still. They won’t bite unless they feel movement.”

A direful screech of metal on metal—the lid seals shut.

Blackness swallows him.

“NOOOO!”

Abruptly, a sharp impact collides with the wall at his back and he feels the tank roll sideways, his insides giving a sickening heave. He gains speed at a disorienting pace and can no longer tell which way is up or down, his brain dulled in a dizzying stupor.

Then, the ground ceases to exist beneath him and he careens over the edge of a cliff into a great abyss, feeling his body plummet ahead of his organs as the agony of plunging into unknown depths overtakes him.

Finally, he hits bottom and pain pulses through his being. Total silence surrounds him, but soon, he hears it: an eerie stirring, growing steadily nearer with every pound of his racing heart. He can tell that they are upon him, surging up the sides of the capsule and engulfing it.

A creak groans above him as the lid unseals and falls away, exposing him to whatever horrors lurk beyond. As the opening appears, he can see a mass of small white worms with lethal fangs seething inside.

Panic seizes him and he tenses his body for escape, when he remembers the figure’s chilling warning: stay still.

Goosebumps race up his skin as the creatures’ slimy forms squirm over him, a noisome reek overwhelming his senses. Silent tears of terror pour down his face as he forces himself to stay as still as he can while they crawl over every inch of his flesh. It becomes harder and harder to stay frozen, but he knows that if they sense his slightest motion, he will be devoured. One writhes up his nostril, another begins to slowly creep down his ear canal.

His resolve crumbles as a shudder racks his body. He can no longer stay still.

He screams, flailing his limbs, and the swarm erupts and surges into him, ripping skin, ravaging flesh, and razing tissue in a bloodthirsty frenzy. He tries to pick them off his face, but they latch onto his hands,

slicing through tendons and rendering them useless. He watches helplessly as he is consumed before his own eyes.

Before long, the only evidence left of his existence is a messy smudge of gore and a scattering of bone fragments.