

The itsy bitsy spider torments me

Natalie ChuAAAA

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If someone asked me to describe a spider, I would not be able to explain it in full detail. That's because I've trauma-blocked any memories having to do with them.

Since I vehemently refuse to look at any spiders, think about them or even exist in their vicinity, every time I see one, my reaction is to flee and make my parents deal with it instead. My strategy was challenged once, however, when my dad did not want to kill the gigantic spider on my bathroom floor because he was too tired.

Forced to weigh my grim options, I reluctantly attempted to take matters into my own hands.

I approached the ugly eight-legged behemoth slowly, praying that it wouldn't suddenly jump in my direction. Lifting my house slippers, I flung them viciously at my target as soon as I was close enough.

Though my slippers had been compromised, I believed I had succeeded since the spider was

not moving.

Thinking I would leave the carcass for my dad to pick up in the morning, I left the danger zone to brush my teeth. However, when I went to check on it again several minutes later, it was gone! After such a horrific realization, I refused to use the restroom for a week, fearing that the spider might show up and hunt me down.

My arachnophobia is so prevalent that I refuse to even glance at pictures of spiders. When TikTok, my fingers have never moved faster to swipe to the next video or refresh the page.

Maybe their creepiness comes from their disturbing crawling movement. Their thick and hairy legs move like those hideous crawling demons from horror movies. Maybe it's the way that their dark, rounded bodies mar my pristine white walls. Perhaps it's the zoomed-up pictures of their numerous unfriendly eyes, glaring at me hyper-realistically from covers of National Geographic magazines.

I just can't pin it down... maybe it's all of the above.

It's not only me who experiences this fear — seven of my friends have also faced traumatic encounters with spiders. In fact, six percent of the population worldwide would not dare come

close to these devilish creatures — whoever said they're too small to be scary is completely wrong.

When I confided in one of my friends about my arachnophobia, hoping to be understood, she instead thought it would be hilarious to use my phone to take pictures of spiders that she searched up.

After she told me about her evil prank, hoping to get a kick out of me, I immediately contacted my other friend and drove 10 minutes to her house so she could delete the pictures from both my camera roll and trash album.

Unfortunately, I will never be able to fully confront my fear. Though I have tried to face it by examining spiders close up, I always end up running away, begging my parents to kill them for me or blindly flinging my slippers at them.

Moving to Australia will never be on the table for me, since spiders over there have bodies as big as a human face and legs as long as two ICE sparkling water containers.

To ensure the preservation of my sanity, I've decided my future boyfriend is required to be able to snipe any spiders on sight. ♦



Butterflies and moths: Two sides of the same horrid coin

Me-hell NO

Meher Bhatnagar



We have all heard of irrational fears before — the fear of dark spaces, the ocean's depths and even of sleeping alone at night. But just how irrational can a fear be?

Let me introduce you to my biggest enemy, my arch nemesis, something that freaks me out so much I flee from the mere sight of it: butterflies.

You may be wondering why I am labeling butterflies, insects known to be vibrantly beautiful and majestic, with such a derogatory term. My answer

is plain and simple: Butterflies are simply disgusting wannabe moths.

Think about it — anywhere there is a bright light, a nasty gray moth hovers around the cobweb-covered glow for hours on end. In my eyes, a butterfly is just a moth with color that likes to be around people rather than light. Like seriously, don't moths have something better to do with their life than just fly around one spot day in day out?

I find their fluttering more annoying than graceful. Under their vibrant hues lie the same traits of the gray, cobweb-loving moth. Once you see it, it's impossible to unsee: 4 fluttery wings, small grappling legs and a tiny frame. Disgusting.

I recall several instances when I have been out with my friends or family, minding my own business and one of these demonic creatures decided

to land on my arm. One time, walking through a strawberry field off the coast of Davenport, an object fluttered in my peripheral vision as I crouched down in search of the ripest berries. I told myself I was seeing things and continued working until I felt the faintest pressure on my arm.

I could barely register the pale white wings flashing up at me. Within a few moments, I was letting out the loudest and most obnoxious screech, bolting around in circles trying to get rid of the repulsive insect.

In reality, butterflies are the masters of camouflage. They seem to serve no useful purpose and don't deserve the hype that they get for being graceful and beautiful insects. Bees already take the spot for the number 1 pollinator; butterflies are simply a useless extra. ♦



Teenagers who radiate middle school energy

Angela, not Devil-a

Angela Tan



I will forever be grateful for attending Saratoga High, as I no longer have to worry about bumping into a particularly terrifying breed of teenagers. To be clear, I'm not talking about that one superhuman who does speech and debate, orchestra and five sports, while also somehow maintaining a 4.0 GPA and a functional social life. Before coming here, I experienced my worst days during middle school in Los Gatos.

The students there would do ridiculous things like jump in the trash bins during passing period, or intentionally shoot an arrow over the fence during PE, leaving the teachers no choice but to cancel the entire archery unit.

Eating lunch came with the risk of being rained on by an exploding Izze, so my friends and I confined ourselves to a little corner in the back of the English wing. My impression of teenagers was that they were loud, confrontational and very tall, all of which I was not. Additionally, my group of friends were all quiet book club fanatics, so it didn't help my sense of inferiority when it came to being a "cool teenager."

Everyone else seemed so mature with their stylish Birkenstocks and inventory of cuss words; standing next to them, I felt childish with my Cat & Jack T-shirts and timid voice.

One of the most traumatizing moments happened as I was biking home in 6th grade. I had left immediately when the bell rang, so I quickly fused with the dense crowd of students. As I crossed the intersection of Los Gatos Boulevard and Shannon Road, I could sense the sea of curly blond heads and baseball caps swarming around me.

My gaze became fearfully motion-

less as they sauntered past, loudly complaining about the lunch meat and recklessly shoving each other off the pavement until a car horn blared at them. I was attempting to navigate past the bustling crowd when I heard a holler, and a swarm of boys' mischievous eyes honed in on me.

"Hey, are you going to run us down?" the tallest boy said, towering a foot over my cowering figure.

A group of lanky 8th-grade boys formed a wall in front of me, preventing me from moving forward. Confused, I tried to maneuver through them. The boys threw their hands up and hooted, "Whoa, whoa, calm down, are you trying to kill us?"

With forged confidence and what I hoped was an intimidating glare, I told them to please let me through. In response, the insolent boys laughed harder, and at this point, I wanted to burst into tears and squash them into roadkill.

Somewhere in my chest, I felt my dignity die as I was reduced to a help-

less wooden doll, burning with humiliation. I stared at their blond mops, mockeries of hair that flopped unapologetically on their heads as they snickered in front of me.

I sucked in a sharp breath, anchored my feet onto my bike pedals, and accelerated, making direct contact with one of their shoes. My victim yelped and the rest of them quickly scattered, not unlike a startled flock of geese, giving me the opportunity to finally speed off.

Since then, my definition of maturity has evolved. I no longer admire reckless teenagers who harass others for fun. As a junior in high school, I am still terrified of that breed of teenagers who can't be told what to do.

It's become a habit to turn away whenever I see a mob of freshmen boys throw beverages on each other or leave their trash flippantly strewn on the floor. These immature underclassmen might not seem scary to others, but their middle-school energy makes me shudder. ♦

