

Toxic
By Holo

Adam and Ada were at the beach, getting ready for a seafood barbeque together. Ada was up at the top of the sand, preparing the grill and charcoal and unloading the cooler. Adam had been tasked with going down to the tide pools under the boardwalk nearby to collect crabs for grilling. He picked his way over the slick rocks, being careful not to fall as he snatched up crabs and tossed them into a bucket.

All of a sudden, he felt a sting on the back on his heel, and he cursed and yelped. He set down the bucket of crabs and found a solid footing before lifting his leg to look at his foot. There was a red pin prick on it, with a pinkish, puffy circle around it. "Oh shit, that's not... not, uhh.. Oohg..." He suddenly became lightheaded and wobbly. He put his stung foot down to try and keep his balance, but the wet and uneven rock was hard to keep his footing on as his head spun. He stepped in a patch of seaweed, and fell.

He was expecting to hit the rock, but instead, he felt a pair of arms catch him mid-fall. They were fuzzy, and dry. He blinked to try and clear his vision, and it worked. Orange cat eyes blinked down at him from behind a beige-furred face. "Careful! Slippery out here," she said with a grin.

"I know, it's just..." Adam began and he felt himself get pushed back onto his feet. He was able to stand again, but he felt weak. "I got stung by something, and-" He turned to face the cat, and his eyes went wide in shock. The cat was... not quite a cat. She had an extra pair of arms, and two greenish-blue octopus tentacles waved about on her back, curling up over her head to suction themselves to Adam's shoulders.

"Oohh, a bite huh? A venomous bite? Like this?" She dragged him in in a flash, and nipped his shoulder with a low growl.

Adam locked up as he felt her teeth pierce his skin. They didn't go deep, but there was venom in the bite. He stumbled again, and the tentacled cat wrapped her octopus arms around his shoulders to keep him upright, even as his body grew weak and his eyes became red. He was panting weakly, trying to stay conscious.

"Aawww, weak already? That's too bad! I was hoping to have some fun, buuuttt, I guess you just can't handle it." The cat teased Adam and ran her spare hands over his body, before biting him on the snout in a mock kiss. His shuddered as the venom started to make his blood burn. He went slack jawed, and his eyes began to water. His toes and claws twitched reflexively to every shock of pain.

"Alright alright, I'm hungry. One more bite should finish you off, so, sorry, but I gotta eat!" The cat opened her mouth wide and made a move to bite Adam's shoulder, but she stopped, ears flicking.

There was a not-too-far-off voice shouting in their direction. Through the brain haze, Adam could make out Ada's voice calling for him. "Crap!" The octo-cat dropped Adam onto the rock, and he grunted, laying limp above the tide pools. The venomous creature snatched the bucket of crabs, and vanished into the water with them without so much as a splash.

Ada arrived to see Adam sprawled on the rocks, with various bites and red eyes, gasping for breath. She cursed and rushed over to him, lifting him with one arm while calling an

ambulance with her other hand. Adam was rushed to the hospital, and lucky to survive the encounter. He never wanted to go to the tide pools alone again.