



Repetition is hell

Peter Cameron

Nora was scared of spiders. Nora always had been. It started when she was very young. When Nora awoke to find a single spider in her room, it was as though all of the spiders in the world had crawled into her bed. Despite not having much on her head every hair Nora had on her arm perked up like a stray cat. She was distraught. Of course, we couldn't kill the spiders either. She no like that. Nora already knew Death. She banged on the office door and we took her into our room. She like. *Stop coddling her.*

Nora was scared of spiders. Even at the zoo the glass cages weren't enough. We'd hoped that Nora would learn they weren't that bad. We ended up cleaning her bed sheets for the rest of the week. I read that fear is inherent, but Nora was petrified of spiders. I had a fear of clowns as a kid because I thought one lived in the forest near my house. I used to imagine that he had a little tent that his oversized body and chainsaw would emerge from. *At least her fears are real.* His painted-leather face and spooky smile made me run home to my mummy. I learned to take the long way round when I was coming home. *I'm taking the tent.*

Nora was scared of spiders. Nora had been left alone for the day while I had errands to run. Nora was nervous to be left alone. Nora had never been left alone before. She was watching TV and the walls. Always on the walls. I hadn't planned to be out for long. Nora knew my office was off limits. *How many times does she have to be told?* When I came home to find her curled up on my seat, with snotty tissues and a hurt tummy. It broke my heart. *Rules are rules.* I enjoyed her company for the next few months.

Nora was scared of spiders. When she came back from her weekend visits, I used to make her bedroom up nicely. Whenever Nora would come home, she would ask me to look for any spiders in her room. Having already looked, I looked again. After a short while of this, Nora began to join in and helped me look for the spiders. *I feel left out.* She would use her magnifying glass like a tiny detective. She no like looking under da bed. Dad looks under da bed.

Nora was scared of spiders. She liked her new room. It was on a high floor, and was incredibly sterile. There were no eight armed bandits to contend with in this room. *Well I'm here now, that has to count for something.*

"Why it do the beep dad?" she would ask.

I told her it was because it meant things were okay. She got used to the beep. When I took her home, her room wasn't made up. *We're both tired, it's okay.* We had been gone for a long time, but I didn't think we'd ever have to leave again. I told her she'd been so strong, and that we had won. This would be her room for as long as she liked. She felt lonely. She found a ball of dust in the corner, which made her cry. She thought it was a spider nest. I disposed of it, and cleaned her room four times. It didn't matter. *She doesn't want to sleep alone.* She wanted to stay with the other kids again, and she said she missed da beeping.

"Daddy can you play the beeping," she whispered.

Of course I obliged.

"I love you daddy. Will mummy ever come home?" she said before falling asleep.

I didn't sleep for the next month.

Nora was scared of spiders. But she wasn't scared of dying. She didn't understand what was happening to her. *What is happening to her? Why? Why us?* I didn't know why we had to suffer. I couldn't understand why God had done this to her. In the following weeks someone said to me

"God wanted his angel back."

The only reply we could think of was

"So do we."

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