

Prisoner Of War

By ER Mixon

Slowly I regain consciousness. For a brief moment I entertain the thought that perhaps it had all been some terrible dream. I open my eyes, the dim red light of my surroundings is the first indicator of the alien environment. My eyes come into focus and I at last see the quivering membranous walls of my prison cell. As I regain my senses I feel myself hanging from a mucus like cocoon wrapped around my arms, legs, and torso.

My natural instinct is to struggle against it, as I do I feel it harden. Suddenly it is as though I'm being stung all over my body by a million fire ants. I have no choice but to still my efforts and surrender. "Why have you abandoned me god?" I moan as I hang my head in defeat. A bulbous growth on the sealing spews a foul and reeking sludge onto me.

I look up and open my mouth devouring the putrid slurry. It tastes like shit, for all I know that's exactly what I'm eating. But this is the only form of sustenance that has been offered to me. A hungry enough person will eat anything. A thirsty enough person will drink anything. Lucky me, this counts as both. I try with all of my strength to keep it down this time.

Soon my feelings disgust give way to horror, as I look up to see a whole in the membrane of the wall. It can only mean one thing, I beg god to kill me first.

I fall from my snotty cocoon, I fool myself into thinking that I am being freed.

But the tentacles slither out of the hole, I try to run but my foot is caught.

The tentacles soon snake their way up my leg, I try to pull them off but it's no good.

Before I can even blink they are pulling my body toward the gaping hole again.

"No not again!" I scream. Desperately I beat at the tentacles, trying to make them release me. I attempt to grab hold of the wall as I'm dragged through the hole. The strength with which the tentacles pull me forces me to release my grip.

The room I now occupy seems to be made entirely of tentacles. The walls look like hundreds of giant worms twisted together to form the shape of a room.

Different colors make up the mesh, there are both light and dark reds, greens, and yellows. I am pulled by the tentacles wrapped around my leg until I reach the wall. Several tentacles slither out to greet me wrapping around my arms. I am lifted to my feet and pulled into the embrace of the slithering wall. My arms and legs are spread apart as more tentacles wrap around me.

I look up, there is a clear membranous window allowing me to see my tormentor. Before I came here I never knew what one of their kind actually looked like. All we had fought were their creations, biological weapons designed to kill humans. His appearance was to me demonic. His body was draped in tentacles, as though he were wearing some enormous cloak made out of them. Beneath this dread cloak were two arm-like clawed appendages that would swiftly extend forth and manipulate unseen objects. His mouth is a gaping

radula with small teeth that went down into his throat. The eyes disturb me most of all, they are large and saucer like with a burning hellish red color.

His tentacles are wagging back and forth as he sways. This movement is usually an indicator that he is going to try something new on me.

A red tentacle wraps around my right arm. The red ones burn on contact with the skin. As it tightens the burning becomes more intense. It is a sharp and searing pain that feels like having my cooked on a grill. The coil becomes tighter and I can feel the flesh being cut through by what seems like hundreds of white hot razor blades.

I feel the last tendon cut though and my arm pulls away from my body. Though somehow the tentacle prevents me from bleeding to death, the pain is indescribably horrible. It is the most intense stinging, aching, throbbing, seething pain imaginable. I watch my right arm be devoured by the wall and feel a red tentacle wrapping around the left.

Before long I am missing both arms and then they start on my legs.

I'm just a living torso hanging from a slimy and slithering wall. The alien looks at me and is still swaying. I realize that he has done this to me once before, I must have blocked it out. What is it then that he is planning to do to me now? What can be worse than being like this?

A clear tentacle drops down from the ceiling. I have never seen a clear one before. It is disturbing, the size is twice as large as any other of

these appendages.

The usually pointed end opens up to reveal a jagged edged kind of mouth. It is dripping with red slime, and it isn't alone. There are three such tentacles in total, slithering down my body. The first one has stopped at my chest, its pulling my skin apart! My heart, I feel it being pulled at. I can see the blood going into and up the hollow tubing of the snakelike appendage. But worse my heart has been removed from my body, I actually see it being devoured by the tentacle. I don't understand how I can be alive after that but I am.

I feel a shooting pain in my lower side, another tentacle has attached itself to me. This time it is removing my liver. I see it being suctioned up through the tubing along with an obscene amount of blood. The pain is so intense I feel myself beginning to black out, but something keeps me awake. A long yellow slimy tentacle has inserted itself into my neck. It is pumping a cold liquid down my throat. It burns my esophagus, feeling as though I've been forced to swallow liquid nitrogen.

The final tentacle latches to my stomach, the same sharp pains as it rips open my flesh.

The intense aching of having my stomach pulled at until the tissue tears. I feel it leaving my body, and see it ascending the interior tubing of the tentacle.

I hang from a mass of squirming tentacles. They coil around my body. I am without limbs and without organs. I am alive, but if only they would let me die. I

see him, my tormentor. He is gyrating and twisting his slithering tentacles back and forth. "When I free myself I will rip off every one of those damn tentacles and force you to eat them!" I shout. I don't know if he can understand me, but I hope that he can. "I'll make sure that they dissect you, your going to be the guinea pig on that day and I'll laugh!"

The tentacles of the wall are squirming restlessly. I feel them wrapping around me, pulling me into their mass. My eyes are wide, the tentacles have completely covered my body. They are entering my body, I feel them drilling past my skin and into my flesh. Dozens of them wiggle their way into my stumps, like giant maggots wiggling into a wound. It stings, feels like having salt injected into my blood. I feel them wiggling around in my body cavity, squirming like hundreds of worms. I feel each of my organs being returned, or replaced I don't know which. I feel as though my insides are on fire, I don't think that I can take any more.

I open my eyes, wondering again if it all could have been some awful nightmare. But again I am met with reality. I hang from my mucus cocoon and am staring at the membrane wall. How many times are they planning to do this to me? What do they want? Are they trying to make me lose my mind? Maybe I already have, maybe this is all some kind of hallucination. What if I'm just some nut in a mental institution? That would be too easy though, I wish it were the case. I

have to face reality this is where I am, here on Mars, a prisoner of war.

I am a defeated soldier, who has surrendered to his enemy. I suspect that I am being punished for my weakness. But really maybe I am just a lab specimen to be experimented on. That being the case I'll probably die here.

I notice something new, my cocoon is oozing. Parts of it are dripping on the floor. This has never happened. I am prompted to pull at the slimy mass. I anticipate the usual pain but instead it gives way. My arm is still covered in slime but I have pulled it free!

I struggle with my other arm, pulling against the sticky substance. I free that arm as well.

I try to move my legs, it is harder than moving my arms. I need to exert myself in order to get my right leg free of the slimy mass. I pull at my left leg with my arms as I try to free it. Finally, after about three minutes of trying I pull the leg free and stumble backward.

"I'm Free!" I shout as I rush to one the membrane walls. "Or at least I'm free of that cocoon." I correct myself. But still there is something different about this place. The walls have turned a sickly shade of yellow and are quivering more than usual.

I try my luck at attempting to kick through one. It quivers a lot and puss oozes from my footprint. I decide that I might need to ram it and walk to the other side of the room. Just as I prepare for a running start tentacles pour out of the operation chamber.

I take to my heels and smash into the wall. My body crashes through the

thinning membranous material and I come out on the other side covered in puss and slime.

The environment I find myself in is the most terrifying thing I have ever seen. It is dark, illuminated by a twilight haze. A filthy smell overwhelms me. I stagger to my feet. Hundreds of buildings made of some biological substance form black cancerous clusters on the landscape. The ground seems squishy, almost alive but somehow not. I see rivers of ooze flowing from the rocky cave walls that surround this city.

I then for the first time see the inhabitants they resemble my tormentor. They have those same squirming tentacles and devilish red eyes and there are thousands of them. They all look at me and simultaneously shriek as they raise their appendages advancing on me with razor sharp claws. I run for my life, but they are everywhere. I hide behind a building only to find three waiting to pounce on me. I turn to run and bump into four more of them. Their tentacles sway in anticipation of my demise. I will not give them the satisfaction. I punch one of them in the face, popping it's bulbous eye. It screeches and quivers as it bleeds green ooze all over the place. The others are stunned, their shock gives me a chance to break for it.

I run, I run with every bit of strength I have. I don't know where I'm running to but I sure as hell know what I'm running from. The terrain slants upward, I push myself to keep running up the hill. I don't

know what I'll find but I know that the farther up I run the closer I get to the surface, and home. I hear something above me, like the howling of the wind on a stormy night. I look up to see them flying in the sky, they are like gigantic stingrays with gaping blue mouths. From those gaping mouths they spit balls of plasma at me as I run. There's a huge explosion as the burning plasma misses me by a hair. I'm knocked off my feet, the force sending my body spinning through the air like a rag doll. When I hit dirt I can feel my ribs breaking, I lay unable to move and begin to cough up blood. As my consciousness ebbs away I see the shadows passing over me and fading into the distance. My enemies think I'm dead, maybe their right but at least I'm free.

My eyes hurt, the light is so bright that I can't stand it. For a moment I think that I've gone to the other side, but as things come into focus I begin to make out the sickly white scrubs of the Mars expeditionary medical team. "He's awake" One of the doctor shaped blurs shouts. "Not for long," I hear the other say just before feeling a sharp poke in my arm. Then everything turns from bright white to deathly black. Maybe this time it is the end.

I open my eyes, at first I see nothing. Then I see orange lights flickering like candles or flame. Next as my eyes come into focus I see a figure before me. It looks almost like a face, the eyes are enormous, red, perhaps bloody. The

skin has scales, my god it's hideous! What a horrible grin it has on it's disfigured face, so many rows of sharp teeth almost like a shark. Am I really dead this time, have I gone to hell? Or worse have I been captured again? It's too horrible, too frightening, like a nightmare beginning all over again. I let out a scream and bat at the hideous monster. My hand hits some kind of hard barrier as the beast falls away from my sight. I then hear the sound of breaking glass. Instinctively I lurch over to see what made the sound and in doing so realize that I'm in a bed. On the floor there is a shattered vial, laying in the viscous fluid that was once inside is a horrible malformed creature about the size of a baby.

"What the hell is that thing!" I shout. Nurses come running in frantically as the doctor follows casually behind.

"That thing" the doctor says while pointing to the floor, "Is the reason they kept you alive. It was growing inside of you."

I feel sick at the mere thought of the hideous monster I see on the floor inside of my body. It makes the bile build up in my throat and I must struggle not to wretch. I gasp, shaking in horror as my skin begins to crawl. I glance down and the froglike skin and bulbous red eyes and can no longer hold myself. I throw up all over my bed, a brownish yellow slimy kind of puke that by very act of seeing it brings more to the surface. Finally when my stomach is completely empty and my muscles give up their vain attempt to

eject more digested food I look up at the doctor.

"Why in god's name would they do that to me?" I ask. "What could be gained by growing that thing inside of me?"

The doctor unflinchingly picks up the malformed corpse.

"I suppose that they wanted to learn for whatever reason if a hybrid was possible. If they could get the process right, they might be indistinguishable from you or I." The doctor explains as he places the creature on the table in-front of me. He laughs, "I figured you may want to keep this preserved monstrosity as a souvenir, we've got hundreds of them already."

Hundreds he said, hundreds of people have been through the same hell as I have. Thinking about it makes my blood boil and my skin crawl. Hundreds of people creating hundreds of monsters, it means that my case isn't even remotely unique. Even now there are probably soldiers being tortured the way I was. I suppose that this is what I can expect from a scum sucking race of inbred freaks. They don't know what civilization is, they are animals. I'll kill every last one of them.

Today's the day I finally leave the hospital, I can't wait to go back on duty. The next time I see one of those things I'm going to gut them alive and see how they like it.

Sample file

Extraterrestrial

By Nicole Bourdon

A dark hooded figure rushed past all the creatures on the stands. Everyone knew his name, but they dared not speak it. He took his place on the throne as everyone bowed to him. He gave a simple nod, the signal for everyone to rise.

A small creature with yellow, pale skin slowly made his way to the front of the throne.

"Your majesty," he said while kneeling, "we have accused Garth of wiping out an innocent species. That is against our code."

"What species?" the hooded figure asked in a cold, evil voice.

"We don't know. Donita and he were the only two researches on the project and he didn't give us any details.