

It's Not a Pandemic

Have you ever tugged out a booger so long it felt like part of your brain came with it?

I did earlier. That's why I'm dying.

Gross as it sounds, I was surprised to see not part of my brain but a translucent spider hanging on to the end of that long, gummy string of yellow mucus. It didn't seem happy about being dislodged from my nose, either. The intrepid little arachnid bit me twice on the hand before I managed to smush its spindly little body.

I had an absolute convulsion fit, roaring and waving as I danced around the room, sucking on my hand. It didn't help the result of the bite. Maybe if I had kept my calm, my heart wouldn't have sent all that venom around my body so fast. I'm not a doctor, so I don't know.

Here's what I do know: the sickness that's been going around, those sniffles that suddenly kill people seemingly out of the blue? Yeah, I don't think it's a sickness at all. I think it's an infestation.

See, I had all the symptoms they've been talking about. I had the runny nose, the loss of appetite, and intermittent fever, all of it. But I still felt healthy, it just felt like a bad cold. Then I pulled out that spider, and it bit me.

Now I have all the other symptoms they talk about. My hands seized up and wouldn't move when I tried to unlock my cellphone. My vision keeps blurring in and out. My legs jerk too much to walk. Now my heart's racing faster and faster and it's a chore to breathe. Soon my mind is going to get all confused, and I've got to get the phone working before then. Because this is the stage they say you're most infectious at, and my daughter Jenny is supposed to be here in an hour.

I don't know if I'll make it that long. She's still living with her mom across town. I tried to get her to stay with me way back when, and maybe if I hadn't screwed that up I'd have someone to get me to the hospital right now. It's hard, though.

It's hard to explain what goes through your mind when you cheat on your wife. It's even harder to confess your sins to a ten-year-old. So, I guess I never had a chance to get her on my side in the divorce. Her mom Michelle didn't help matters. She's filled Jenny's head with all the tales of what an awful person I was for ten years. I guess I deserve it.

When Jenny became an adult she quit talking to me altogether. Maybe she was feeling sentimental because of what's happening, or maybe she just needs money or something, but last week I finally managed to get Jenny to agree to come to dinner. Then this happens.

We're supposed to be keeping our distance from everyone else, but I just want to see my daughter. Is that really so bad? I may not love Michelle anymore, but I

still love Jenny. Now's my chance to be a good father, I couldn't let this outbreak derail that. That's what I thought when I believed it was just a bad cold, anyway.

I don't think it's germs we've been coughing on each other. I think it's eggs. Every little cough sending thousands of little spider eggs into the air, to be breathed in by everyone in the room. If that's true, I gotta keep Jenny from coming. There'll be eggs everywhere by the time she arrives.

I keep trying to get my phone unlocked, but the buttons are evading my stiff fingers, and I keep dropping it. She has to know not to come in the door. One breath is all it will take, and they'll have her, too.

Oh, God. This is really tiring. I think I'll just rest for a minute. What was I trying to do? Damn! But this cough is horrible. I can't think. Was somebody coming?

Oh yeah, Jenny...

I can't wait to see her.