

Biohazard

By Aurelie Jones

Speed-walking through the airport, Dr. Allen clutched his satchel with the vacuum sealed metallic container concealed inside. He checked his watch as he got in line for security. His ticket said he had thirty minutes to get through security and be on the plane. He could make it. He showed the security guard his ID and his ticket, who allowed him through. Other people were removing their shoes, and their electronics from their bags, while Dr. Allen tightened his grip on the strap of his satchel.

“Sir, you have to put your bag down on the conveyer belt and walk through the machine hands free,” a second security guard said.

Dr. Allen shifted uncomfortably, he looked at the guards who were watching him. But he finally gave in and placed his bag on the belt. He watched it while going through the x-ray machine, they cleared him. But the moment he attempted to get his bag, two security guards stopped him. They escorted him to a private room, with his bag in their grasp. They forced him to sit, then proceeded to gingerly remove the container from his bag.

The words FRAGILE, BIOHAZARD, DO NOT OPEN were labeled across all sides of the round container. The security guard examined it before placing it on a table nearby. Another guard sat across from Dr. Allen.

“What is in the container, Dr. Allen?” he asked, his expression cold.

“An experiment, I am on my way to a meeting about it with the company that employs me,” Dr. Allen responded.

“You aren’t allowed to carry pressurized containers onto the plane – let alone something marked “biohazard”,” the guard said, shaking his head as the other guard handed the container to him. “So, what is in here exactly?”

“I can’t say any further, it is... classified,” Dr. Allen said, raising his hands nervously.
“Please, be careful and do not open it, this isn’t a confined or bio-safe environment . . .”

“Dr. Allen, you brought something dangerous into an airport, the police are on their way. As for this container, they will confiscate it,” The security guard gingerly nudged the container away from him.

Dr. Allen tried to grab for it, the guard blocked him but inadvertently knocked over the container. It hit the hard floor with a loud bang, everyone froze. The tiniest hint of hissing filled the room; the sound of pressure being released. Dr. Allen stumbled back over his seat and made a run for the door. The security guard outside the door stopped him.

The guard who had been sitting at the table had leaned over to look at the broken container. There was nothing visible coming out, just the continued sound of air escaping. Suddenly he felt a twinge of pain in his foot. He pushed away from the table, stood up and looked down at his leg in horror. His action was immediately met with immense pain followed by a sound that filled the room - his shin cracked. He buckled to the ground, with an unearthly cry of pain.

All the guards immediately forgot about Dr. Allen, running to their fellow guard’s aid. Dr. Allen managed to slip out the door and take off running, the door closing behind him. Sounds of terrified screams echoed down the hall, encouraging more security to rush to the private room. Meanwhile Dr. Allen was attempting to put as much distance between that room and himself as possible.

“I messed up, the container, it opened, they got out!” Dr. Allen said, panicked, into his cell phone.

“Then there’s nothing to be done, you know what this means,” the voice replied, it was female.

“But... what do I do!? Is there a safe place I ca— he was cut off, the female hung up.

Dr. Allen stared at his phone, swallowing with difficulty over the lump in his throat when female shrieks of terror reached his ears. He turned just in time for someone to run into him, knocking them both to the floor. A young woman, maybe 20, scrambled off him and kept running, leaving Dr. Allen horrified, staring at her calf, in her short dress, because he could see her bone. Her flesh was disintegrating before his eyes.

She limped away, tears streaming down her cheeks. The woman didn’t make it very far, perhaps five feet before she finally collapsed to the floor. Dr. Allen watched as his creation devoured and made disappear this young girl in mere minutes. Leaving only her clothing and shoes behind. Dr. Allen stumbled to his feet, giving the clothing a wide birth. The exit was in sight, he could make it! He could....

There was a sharp pain on his skin, stopping him in his tracks.

###

“Jacob, you won’t believe how long I have been waiting to get on this damn plane. How is it we have people living on Mars but taking a plane is still this unbelievable pain in the ass?” Jonathan said, video chatting on his phone.

“Jonathan, you should’ve just come up here with me, it is pretty legit,” Jacobs said, with a grin on his face. He glanced out the window, taking in the gorgeous view of Earth, from the space station.

“Yea yea, you’re literally on top of the world I get it. You don’t need to rub it in every time we talk,” Jonathan said.

“Well if you were up here you wouldn’t be stuck waiting in some airport!” Jacobs laughed, leaning back in his chair.

“Thanks for tha— ha-hang on man,” Jonathan said, his phone angled down.

Jacobs frowned, forced to stare at the ceiling of the airport, muffled screams came through the speaker. Jacobs sat up, alert.

“Jonathan what’s going on?” Jacobs asked, but was met with only more screams, closer and louder.

The phone hit the floor, giving harsh feedback on the speaker. Feet kicked the phone around, panicked people running throughout the airport while Jacobs kept trying to get Jonathan’s attention.

“J-jacobs d-don’t come... back,” Jonathan choked out, somewhere close to the phone, Jacobs barely able to make out the words over the screams before the signal cut out, the phone going dead.