

Peter looked anxiously down at his phone. Already twenty minutes late. Shit. What was the point of getting anxiety meds if they made him miss class?

He looked around the small room nervously, sweating profusely. He had been the only one in the waiting room this whole time. What was taking so long?

Under normal circumstances he wouldn't complain. After all, his prescribed medications were free. He hadn't thought twice about signing up for the free clinical trials. Surely they would have to be safe to allow campus students to partake. With his meager income and his terrible history of mental health this was the best he could do. It was the only way to keep his mood stable enough to even attempt his class workload.

At least he was attempting to obtain a useful degree. With all that had transpired in the world in the last 25 years, a career in paleo genetics was guaranteed employment. Should he pass his course load, of course. That in and of itself seemed like a daunting task.

He turned his attention to the tiny tv in the reception area, set to a 24 hour news feed. The top story was the same as it had been the past few weeks. Tragedy on Isla Nublar. Endless debates on the ethics and practicality of saving the dozens of dinosaur species brought back to life that were left to fend for themselves after a series of accidents forced the park to close.

Now, they were facing complete extinction from a volcanic event. By now, the volcano had most assuredly erupted. He felt bad for the animals, sure. But sometimes nature had to take its course. It wasn't like they had evolved naturally, or were even perfect genetic replicas of the once-extinct reptiles. Part of him was glad. He couldn't imagine a world where dinosaurs could just roam around freely. It would completely change his way of life, much more than when they simply existed isolated on an island.

A fierce growl from his stomach reminded Peter that it was looking more and more like he wouldn't get a chance to eat before class. Shit. He rummaged through his backpack, hoping to find a hidden granola bar or anything that might sate his appetite. Nothing. Fuck, he had a midterm after this! Trying to write with anxiety was bad enough, but on an empty stomach as well was torture.

Finally the nurse called him in. He entered the tiny office, door closed behind him as he awaited a visit from the doctor. It was still to be at least a 10 minute wait. He'd make his exam, but only just. His stomach rumbled fiercely once more, reminding him of the price of his poor planning.

The doctor asked him the usual string of questions that came with such medication: how his mood had been, any side effects. Nausea, increased appetite, weight gain, skin irritation. Peter wondered why it was even worth it to take them, just to have a chance to decrease his

anxiety. The doctor then mumbled his usual cautions: don't take more than the prescribed dosage, call immediately if any side effects should occur, and other such rhetoric. Peter nodded nervously, taking the occasional glance at his phone, hardly paying attention. He'd heard it all before. He excused himself to leave as the doctor watched him with curiosity.

Peter ran out of the office, sprinting across the quad, his phone's clock ticking down the precious seconds to his exam time. He made his target with about 5 minutes to spare. Enough time to slip into the bathroom and down a pill. Hell, even the placebo effect would be better than nothing!

He looked at his face in the mirror, thick raccoon eyes, sunken cheekbones. Fuck, he really was depressed. He popped open the lid and set a pill in his mouth, filling up his water bottle to wash it down. Peter paused, noting a bizarre flavor he hadn't detected before. There was a pleasant aftertaste, sort of like a rare steak. It was rather delectable to his starving senses. He felt his stomach clench, as though the small sample was enough to help sate his appetite. Maybe one more wouldn't hurt....

Stomach rumbling, he tipped the bottle upwards. He barely realized what he was doing as dozens of pills fell into his throat, to be digested by his greedy gullet. He stopped himself, the quantity too much as he coughed and shuttered. What the hell had he been thinking?

He closed the half-empty bottle in shame. He wondered briefly if he should head to the doctor to ask if he'd be ok and get a note to exempt him from his exam. However, a pang of shame made him pause. He felt immense guilt for his actions, wasting so many pills he was freely given. How could he go back to the doctor after what he'd done?

Heading into his exam, Peter felt shaky. Had he overdosed? He willed the rumbling in his stomach to cease as he walked into the crowded room, every seat occupied for exam day. He sat down at his usual place at the back of the room, taking several deep breaths to calm himself but to little effect. His heart was racing. A million thoughts poured through his head, of what might happen as a consequence of his foolishness.

Peter could hardly concentrate on the paper in front of him. He filled in a few answers here and there but the gnawing hunger kept him distracted. It seemed worse now, the brief reprieve from swallowing his pills only stalling the inevitable.

Well after the allotted hour had passed, Jordan looked around the nearly empty room, only one of his students still working on his exam. He sighed audibly. Peter was sweating profusely, alternating between frantic scribbling and staring around the room. The class was relatively small; he recognized the poor boy still frantically writing, obviously under duress. He had seen it all too often.

He wanted to give Peter as much time as possible but something seemed off with the pale young man. His skin was slick with sweat, making him appear off-color, as though he might be ill. His skin seemed strange somehow, almost as though it was writhing and twitching from something trapped underneath. Yet, Jordan assumed it to be a trick of the light.

In the end, Jordan couldn't just let him suffer. A doctor's note would allow him to retake the exam and it was clear he hadn't done well.

“Peter? Are you alright? Would you like to be excused to visit the clinic?”

He walked up to his student's desk, seeing that Peter had hunched over, eyes giving a glassy stare. There was something unnerving about his expression, though Jordan couldn't quite place what. His pupils seemed off, almost slitted...

“I don't feel so good...” Peter moaned, slumping into his seat. He had a pained expression, as though his body was tightening, stretching. The discoloration had spread across his face and arms, his skin seemingly dry and cracked. Peter looked as though he might be dying. Jordan had to call the young man an ambulance!

Jordan turned to grab his phone but stopped as something sharp dug into his arm. Peter had grabbed his wrist and Jordan stared in shock at what had become of the poor boy's hands. Two of his fingers seemed bizarrely swollen but more frightening was the state of their nails. They looked for all the world like the claws of an animal, thick and sharp and growing longer still while the boy's other fingers cracked and slipped away into his palms.

“H-help meee...”

Jordan gazed in horror as Peter's hair began to fall out, his skin turning sickly yellow and dried out, looking more and more like the scaly hide of a lizard. Or perhaps a dinosaur...

Peter moaned as his muscles cracked and spasmed, shirt tearing as his barreling chest and bulging stomach ripped their way free. There was a terrible ache in his spine as something massive bunched up in his increasingly-tight jeans. All of his body hair fell away as his jaw stretched and popped, nose clearly visible in front of his distorted field of vision. Peter trembled in fear, a few fleeting tears falling down his scaly cheek as his thoughts began to slow, to cloud over.

Most of all, he felt hunger, a painful gnawing sensation more intense than anything the young man had felt in his life. It was a deep-seated need, a *primal* need. To feed, to satiate the requirements of his devolving psyche. He shook his head a few times, trying to eliminate the instincts and desires of an increasingly-reptilian brain.

“NNNNNNNNNOOORRRRRRRRRRRRRROOOOWWWW!”

Peter was shocked by the deep baritone of his voice, barely recognizable as his chest expanded and his vocal chords shifted. He was getting massive, body seemingly putting on hundreds of pounds of muscle in mere moments. His pants strained and ripped as his spine pushed through, hips widening to better support an alien growth. His feet felt massive in his shoes; toes were splayed, the growing digits ripping apart the weak leather of his runners.

Most frightening of all was what was happening to his face. He could see his snout now, thick and heavy as his jaw crunched forward. Teeth ached in his jaw as new ones tore painfully through his gums with a coppery flavor eliciting another wave of hunger. Peter tried to reach up to touch his face with his free hand, feeling the ridges and bumps he knew were forming. However, his arms had not grown like the rest of him. If anything they seemed to have shrunk a little, tiny in comparison to the rest of his form. Somewhere in the recess of his mind he knew what that meant, knew what he was becoming. But it was irrelevant in the face of the powerful needs that were overwhelming his psyche.

Jordan, meanwhile, watched the change, paralyzed as Peter's growing claws dug into his arm. A primal fear rose in him from staring at Peter's growing form. He had to get away! Jordan was terrified, shocked at the bizarre turn of events. Students simply could not turn into dinosaurs! Yet, Peter could not deny that his former student was shifting, growing, looking less human and ever more like the most infamous predator ever to grace the planet.

Jordan turned to run, ripping his arm away from his former student's claws with a spray of blood. Digging furiously for his phone, Jordan desperately wanted to find his only means of salvation. He had no idea who to call; surely campus security or even the police would be ill-equipped to handle the situation. Any animal control specialists would take hours if not days to get here, assuming they were still active since the park's closure years ago.

The flurry of movement encompassed the entirety of the former student's attention. His eyes narrowed as the relatively tiny man scampered away. The motion triggered some deep-seated instinct, overriding the terror of his unexpected transformation. Peter's nostrils flared, detecting the spicy scent of fear and perspiration in the air. The aroma made his mouth water.

Lost in his fixation, Peter could scarcely feel his body ache and groan as he put on more muscle. His tail creaked as it took the rest of his pants along with it, thrashing wildly back and forth. His feet burst free from his shoes, massive clawed toes splayed out, better supporting his ever-increasing bulk. It helped balance his weight as his chest barreled further out, making him top-heavy.

His new neck muscles were powerful, better able to support the massive maw that had stretched out of the former student's face. His hide was thick, leathery with yellowish-brown

scales. His heavy tongue swished back and forth in his maw, salivating at the tantalizing aroma that his animistic brain simply recognized as prey.

He felt cramped, confined in the relatively tiny classroom. How had he gotten here? In frustration, he raised his massive jaw and roared, his head nearly hitting the ceiling.

Yet, soon, the scent of prey washed over him, amplified in the tiny space. He drooled, staring down at his quarry. Escape could wait. His stomach rumbled; he was ravenously hungry. His body trembled with exhaustion, as though he had not eaten in weeks. That would simply not do. A few simple steps were all it took to be in range of his meal.

His changing psyche could no longer comprehend the strange mutterings of the relatively tiny mammal in the room with him. It was no matter. Prey often vocalized when about to be consumed.

Jordan swore furiously, throwing his papers in a tantrum to find his phone. In his haste he hardly realized that he had attracted the attention of the now much larger former student as he walked forward, heavy footfalls shaking the classroom. Jordan looked up in awe at the jaws of the now fully-formed rex, a beast he'd only seen in documentaries about the park.

A passing clip of such a show made him recall that a rex's vision was based on movement. He stood as motionless as he could, willing his body would stop trembling, hoping to God that the beast would pass him by.

The rex stared down at his motionless prey for a brief moment. He could see his meal just fine and he was ravenous. The prey wasn't running; he had no need to expend unnecessary energy. He simply opened his massive maw and descended upon his meaty morsel.

Jordan screamed as he felt the sharp teeth dig into his chest, squirming as the daggers painfully pierced his flesh. He nearly passed out from the shock as the dinosaur lifted him in the air, tossing him before letting him fall into his waiting maw. Peter's thick tongue forced him downwards, a muscle more powerful than every one in Jordan's body combined.

Peter felt the warm blood trickle down his throat as he swallowed his prey whole. It was immensely satisfying to feel his prey writhe and squirm, powerless to escape as his massive jaws forced the tiny mammal down into his eager gullet. He stood there, savoring the sensation of his meal in his throat, the taste of hot blood and meat still fresh in his jaws. He raised his head slightly, forcing his dinner down as his tail rocked back and forth in contentment.

Jordan was still alive as he felt himself forced down the dinosaur's throat. He screamed and kicked but he was rapidly losing oxygen and blood as the rex's muscles forced him down into

the toxic abyss. He felt intense agony as his skin hit the burning inferno of the beast's stomach acid. Mercifully he quickly lost consciousness as his life faded away and his body began the process of being broken down to feed the newly-minted rex.

The beast grumbled in contentment as he felt the warm body fill him up. He groaned as the hunger pangs started slowly to subside and he lay down to properly digest his meal. He would rub his belly if he could, though his new arms were not up to the task. His thoughts were drifting away but the notion of losing himself no longer terrified him. He was full, immensely satisfied, fulfilled in a way not possible to the former human. An apex predator who had made a successful kill. Content in his superiority, the rex's eyes fluttered shut as he drifted away in blissful slumber.

Sometime later, the stray rex was darted and was loaded into a former Ingen transport unit. It was not the first sighting of a dinosaur in the past few weeks. But this instance was the most bizarre by far. No one had reported the rex entering campus, no damage was present to explain how he had gotten into the classroom. Surely there was no possible way he'd entered through the tiny doors without destroying half the building! Yet there he was, fast asleep, stretch palpable in the air as the students who discovered him quietly alerted the authorities.

Several students and faculty were missing, likely the unfortunate victims of the rex's presence. No one could confirm their disappearance but given their last seen location there was scarce a doubt in anyone's mind what had happened. An inevitable consequence of life among such dominant beasts. It would hardly be the last time.

The doctor sighed as he watched his new acquisition being loaded for transport. Those idiot sheep had no idea. If genetic engineering was as advanced as to create a whole park of extinct species the technology to alter species beyond the embryonic stage wasn't out of the question. He smiled. No one else had the insight to realize it, much less capitalize on it!

Other animals couldn't survive the change; something about the human psyche helped maintain bodily functions during the transition. It made procuring his specimens much more troublesome but not impossibly so. Still preferable to the time required to raise the animals from genetic scratch by far.

Stupid kid. He would have changed eventually, as with the rest of his patients. But this idiot overdosed. His only saving grace was that he'd been one of the first, body long since prepared to survive the inevitable changes.

He would have to keep a much closer surveillance on the others, especially the would-be predators. Disappearing students was one thing but an influx of voracious dinos on campus was much harder to explain away.

He watched as the rex was transported away. The doctor had responded quickly, fully equipped to remove the dangerous animal. It had only taken his crew a few short hours to free their new rex from his prison. Those idiots on the university board of directors scarcely asked questions. They were simply glad to be rid of the problem in a timely manner. What did it matter where the rex was being taken, so long as they wouldn't have to deal with more lawsuits than they did already!

The newly-minted rex would be worth millions on the black market. Be it for sport hunting, for breeding, for military applications. He didn't give a shit. It was one quick way to make a profit, after all! And in the end, to the doctor, like the engineers at Ingen before him, that was all that mattered.