

Subject: A little spider story.

My ankle is killing me. I just banged the everloving crap out of it, dancing away from my resident bathroom cane spider. I'm a bit disappointed in myself, as I don't MEAN to get flinchy or jumpy, but it's a very FAST-moving large spider, and it likes to nap in the middle of the floor. I know it's there, and I know it moves fast when startled, but I forgot and strode into the bathroom a little too speedily this time. A blur shot under the laundry basket and I bounded in the opposite direction, right into the base of the toilet.

My bathroom is tiny, too tiny to have a shower in it even, and I manage to fit in there with the sink, toilet, laundry basket and set of shelves...barely. Places to put feet are minimal. Options for standing are minimal. Sharing the space is pretty tough, and the spider has the advantage of being able to utilize the walls and ceiling. But it does not. It spends long, thoughtful days and nights fanned out in the dead center of the "room". Why it's got to be there, and what it thinks about, or if it sleeps (my suspicion), is anyone's guess. I've got an alpha-spider, it's got to have the floor. Literally.

Recently, my landlord has installed a bright green security light. Thoughtfully, it blazes into my house through the bathroom window and across the bed, a swath of seasick-green light illuminating everything with heartless radiance. The last few nights, when I've had too much tea before bed and found myself called awake by the siren song of the turgid bladder, I've staggered into the greenly-lit bathroom. The first night of this, I awoke suddenly when an 8-legged pinwheel leaped out from under my foot in the nick of time, leaving me hopping and banging into the shelves. The second night I remembered, way in the back of the pea-sized reptile portion of my brain, to watch where I was stepping. Sure enough, one zenlike arachnid was occupying the dead center of the floor. I put one foot on either side before sitting down, and this seemed to be an acceptable arrangement to us both. Lord only knows how many nights I've barely missed going back to bed with mashed spider parts between my toes--those critters are fast and wary and fortunately I'm big and clunky, approaching like an earthquake in the night. Presumably we were both in deep slumbers until my bladder got us up.

Well, I haven't seen any roaches around here in a long time, something short of a miracle. I'm not about to look a gift spider in the eyes, as it were. So, when I brush my teeth at night before bed and the spider has the floor, I just stand over it, like the Eiffel tower over an 8-legged Paris. There are worse things. An adventurous roach on your throat, for instance, which happened to me a few weeks ago, before the bathroom spider came to live here. There's nothing quite like swimming up to consciousness from a deep, dream-intensive sleep because there's this odd, scratchy, LIVING THING on your throat, a couple of inches from your MOUTH, that turns out to be one of those huge red roaches the size of a dachshund. Hello. Roaches are the prime prey of cane spiders--hell yes, that spider can have the floor. All the floors. And the wall. And if, when I'm not home, it wants to do a security check of the bed, that's OK too. I just don't need to know about it.

Anybody got a bag of ice?