

The Wasp Dilemma

There's an angry wasp in my bathroom. It is angry because I accidentally let it inside and, upon realising I wasn't alone, panicked and sprayed it with some lavender air freshener. I know - that's bad, isn't it? It's morally wrong. It's abhorrent and cruel. Just plain evil. Or, is it? What's the consensus on gassing wasps? Especially when they have crossed the border of the outside world and encroached upon your sacred domestic space? They have ignored the unspoken rule that owts that flies stays outside. Is it fine to commit a preemptive strike - as so many world leaders have done before me - to avoid falling prey to one of nature's deadliest predators (not factually checked or correct)? It's a tricky subject, my recent actions. Let's discuss.

It's an animal, sure, but it's one of the enemy ones. You have your hero animals (your lions, dogs, baby deer), your anti-heroes (cats and foxes, maybe parrots) and then you have the enemies. Hyenas. Piranhas. Big ol' snakes. I'd even venture as far to say Flies. These are - and I do apologise for being so crude - the *wanker animals*. The creatures with vengeful spirits, untrustworthy hearts. I'm sure some of them are nice; not every single one of these featured 'enemy' animals would wish me harm, I know. I apologise for generalising, but on the whole I don't think I'm being too controversial by saying almost all wasps are wankers. It might be unintentional; just like humans are hard-wired to stress about train timetables and birds are born to fly, it is not the wasp's fault that it is genetically predisposed to be a bit of a bastard. But, nature versus nurture aside, we cannot ignore that it is. And, thus, the question still stands: is it so bad that I sprayed the wasp in my bathroom with lavender air freshener?

I went vegetarian five years ago, in the year of 2021, partly because I lived with two vegans and, therefore, had been exposed to the glory that is Linda McCartney sausages, but also due to some very direct and very intense eye contact I had once with a cow. I was in the passenger seat of my mum's car, on a winding countryside road (on the way to the Big Morrisons, if you must know), when I looked out of my window and saw a cow. It was standing in a field, doing typical cow stuff (chewing grass, shitting), not doing anything extraordinary or special, but when our eyes met, I just knew what I had to do. Looking into those big doe-eyes, I saw a message: 'Stop eating Wetherspoons buttermilk chicken burgers and get on that Quorn grind'. It was the briefest of encounters, over in a flash; only a quick moment of inter-species connection. We drove off (me and my mum, not me and the cow) and I likely never saw that same cow ever again. It might have been turned into a burger or a broth later that same day, it hurts me to say. But it had left its mark. It put an end to my toing and froing over becoming a veggie, pushing me over the edge and into a new world.

I won't be evangelical about vegetarianism, as I want to seem relatable and have my writing appeal to a mass audience. I am targeting everyone, even the meat-eaters (you evil, soulless

bastards, you). I just want to say: me and that cow bonded. That fluffy, uddered beast led me to discover the wonders of crispy, paprika-coated tofu, and severely limited my choice of meal deal sandwiches (sidenote: why does Big Supermarket *insist* every vegetarian wants a vegan duck wrap? Why is that the designated, universal choice for the compulsory 'veggie' supermarket meal deal? Does anyone know? Anyone? Mr. Asda - why, I ask? Why?!). I have committed to this lifestyle and all its little challenges, embracing paneer and pretending I don't miss crispy bacon sarnies on Sunday mornings. And so, taking all of this tree-hugging, animal-saving antics into account, I ask again: is it okay that I sprayed that wasp that is *still* in my bathroom with lavender air freshener? That I attacked first and without immediate threat?

What is the reason for my hostility to these (unofficial) Nazi bees? How come this inherent hatred and fear of a natural being didn't extend to that cow in the field? If I went into my bathroom and saw that there was a cow in there - drinking my shampoo and taking a dump in the sink - I would not spray it with lavender air freshener. I know that in my heart. Sure, I'd be a little shocked. I'd have questions. Who wouldn't? But I wouldn't react to it in the same way I did the wasp (I can hear it buzzing now, even from my bedroom - that's a bad sign isn't it?). I'd probably, after the initial shock had worn off, been pretty chill about it. I'd have to think about how to get it out - the same way you would a wasp - but I'd give said Bathroom Cow's head a pat first, maybe bring it something to eat, some lettuce or a vegan sausage roll or something. Point is: I'd treat it with respect. I'd see it as somewhat of an equal; after all, we are both just animals at the end of the day, aren't we? Humans aren't all that special really. We are, in my opinion, on pretty equal footing to cows (not pigs though, I think we're head and shoulders above those dirty bastards). So, what's the reason for my differing levels of prejudice/respect for cows Vs. wasps? I apologise for all the questions - I don't mean to overwhelm you, my dear reader. I'm just trying to understand my sadistic ways.

Is it the size? Would I use Aldi-branded air freshener to suffocate a wasp-sized cow, I wonder? Would I emotionally bond - and proceed to change my whole lifestyle - with a cow-sized wasp? Or maybe it's more superficial than that. Maybe, I just hate the colour scheme of a wasp. Though I respect their contribution to nature and keeping the environment afloat, I am also somewhat scared of bees too, so this could be it. Perhaps I dislike the fact that they have little stabby knives protruding from their arses. That's not exactly a welcoming feature to have, in my opinion. It suggests an immediate hostility. Sure, cows have horns - or do they? I think they do, maybe not all of them. I could research it but I think, as a writer, it is my duty to show that even *my* knowledge isn't without fault or blank spots - but they don't seem that arsed about using them against us humans. There's stark differences between these two animals, but there are physical similarities as well: both have big-ass eyes. Both breathe (I think) and eat and dream (again, not too sure about that, but just go with me for now). They aren't completely different; there's common ground here. And yet...

Soon, I will need a piss. I already do a bit, right now, if I'm being completely honest. And the wasp will be there, I know. It will be waiting for me, and I'm still no closer to understanding why I did what I did. I have no explanation or excuse to offer it. Whatever shock and blind rage it initially felt (from the gassing) will have morphed into a burning, unstoppable determination to get revenge. It might have called its other stinging buddies and, given that I have just realised I left the window open, they might be gathering right now and plotting my downfall, in the room next to where I currently sit. I have - through my cruelty and prejudice - created a monster. Possibly *monsters*. My actions, done without thinking and acting on pure, unsympathetic instinct, have led me to this. I might have to piss outside, or in a bin, just to avoid the mass stinging surely awaiting me. Pissing in a bin - is that what I deserve? Is that a justified punishment for my slight against Mother Nature? The wasp - whom I thought was the villain in this story, but am not so sure anymore - is the judge, jury and executioner. Smelling like a field of flowers, simmering with injustice, if he/she/they decides to use its arse-prick-stabber on me as I attempt to wipe my arse, I might just deserve it. Perhaps I am the true Wasp in this tale. But, that's not for me to decide. It's on you, my dear reader. And the wasp, of course.