

Bobbit Worm Duty

On any other day, Jasmin's presence in the aquarium would bring joy to guests and coworkers alike. This was made possible by her impeccable choice of clothing, such as her current azure, blue dress and high heels that perfectly complemented her braid of black hair. However, no amount of glitter on her dolphin earrings or layers of cerulean paint on her nails could distract from the disgruntled expression on her face. Wisely stepping out of the woman's way, the workers watched as she stomped her way into the director's office.

"Oh, hello Jasmin," Jacob said, trying to keep a smile on his bespectacled face even as his entire body braced for what was coming. "What can I do for you?"

"What the hell is this?" Jasmin asked, nearly pressing her work schedule onto Jacob's brown beard.

"Now Jasmin, you should have read all of the necessary documents for your position," Jacob explained as if reading off a well-rehearsed script. "When you signed up for the program, you agreed that you would become any creature needed to fill empty tanks in the aquarium."

"Yeah, but I thought it would be something a bit more elegant," Jasmin said, gesturing towards her dolphin earrings. "Or at the very least, something not so demeaning. I would take a penguin, a shark, or even a sea horse. But that 'thing' is completely out of the question."

"The contract gives you the ability to list your preferences of course," Jacob replied, holding up the thick stack of legal documentation. "However, you need to fill in the spot for Megan. Her daughter is due to give birth any day now and she needs to take a month off to help her out."

"Can't you find someone else?" Jasmin pleaded.

“There isn’t really another option,” Jacob explained. “Everyone else is booked. It would be a while before we could get someone else to take Megan’s place. We can’t afford it considering this is one of our most popular exhibits. It’s of the main attractions.”

Crossing her arms, Jasmin just shot Jacob a glare.

Jacob let out a sigh. “Tell you what, how about you go down to see Megan in person? Alyssa is currently there doing a demonstration for a group of kids. Maybe once you get more acquainted with what the task entails you’ll warm up to the idea.”

“I doubt it,” Jasmin said, turning on her heels and slamming the door behind her on the way out.

Begrudgingly making her way through the aquarium, Jasmin followed the sound of loud children to find the tank she was looking for. Looking over the head of the little boys and girls, she spotted Alyssa in her typical attire of khaki shorts and blue polo shirt. In direct contrast to her sour mood, the fellow aquarist waved around her ponytail of blonde hair as she drew in the group’s attention.

“Okay everyone,” Alyssa began, “the show is about to start. Make sure you get nice and close. Try and focus in on the feelers while I call Megan out.”

Following the instructions, Jasmin copied the children and sought out the set of antennae sticking out of the sand in the tank. In her peripheral vision, she saw Alyssa step up next to a control panel and hit a switch. The dimly lit tank lit up for a moment and then turned back off. The light flashed a second time, letting Jasmin and the kids see something shift in the sand. As the third flash went off, the buried creature finally sprung forth from its pit.

Slapping its feelers up to the glass, the bobbit worm bared its mandibles to terrify and astound the children. The lanky, hard carapace of the creature’s long body was still partially

buried, but did manage to show off the myriad of tiny legs it used to swim through the water. As it constantly tapped against the tank, Jasmin found it hard to believe that the fearsome creature was one of her coworkers.

“Yes, I know she can be a little frightening,” Alyssa said, the group letting out a secondary scream as the bobbit worm flexed its mandibles. “However, she doesn’t mean any harm to us. Megan is just here to put on a show.”

Working the controls again, Alyssa sent a vibration through the enclosure’s glass via a special communicator. Responding to the aquarist’s call, the worm pulled herself from out of the sand to reveal her full body. The more the lanky figure continued to wriggle through the water, the more the kids’ revulsion turned into fascination. Unfortunately, the knowledge that she would become a similarly creepy creature meant that Jasmin couldn’t partake in the same, morbid curiosity.

“An excellent job, Megan,” Alyssa said, her words coming alongside another series of tremors.

In turn, Megan made a grand gesture of bowing towards her audience.

“Now that the initial shock has worn off, who would like to get a better look at a bobbit worm’s big chompers?”

As expected, Alyssa’s question was responded with by dozens of tiny hands raising up in the air. Following the request of another series of vibrations, Megan brought her face up close to the glass once more. Rather than try to shock the group, she deliberately flexed her jaws open and shut to give them a better chance to observe the details. Still lacking in childhood wonder, each movement of the creature’s mouth filled Jasmin with further motivation to avoid her fate at all costs.

After properly showing off the mandibles, Alyssa moved on to taking questions from the children. For the majority of the simpler questions, the aquarist allowed Megan to answer. The bobbit worm could only respond by moving her head, but it was enough to both appease the group's curiosity and further demonstrate her body.

"Hmm, I think we have time for one more question before we have to move on," Alyssa announced. "Anyone else have something they want to ask?"

A shy, trembling arm rose out of the crowd.

"Yes, you there," Alyssa said, making the little girl shudder a bit. "You had something you wanted to ask?"

"N-no," she said, sheepishly walking up to the front. Clutched in her hands was a piece of paper. When she finally held up the drawing, it depicted a rough sketch of the bobbit worm. "It's my favorite animal so... I wanted to show it the picture I drew."

"Aww, that's very sweet, but she can't see it right now," Alyssa commented. "Bobbit worms are practically blind. They're only able to sense light thanks to special receptors on their head. Their main way of maneuvering through the environment is by sensing vibrations with their feelers. That's also how I've been communicating with her."

"Oh, I'm sorry," the child said, lowering her head.

"Don't worry, I'll be sure to show this drawing to Megan when she has eyes again," Alyssa commented. "Tell you what, how about I give you a chance to pet her?"

"Really?" the girl asked, the light in her eyes getting rid of any disappointment.

"Yup," Alyssa replied, pulling out a set of thick gloves. "Put these on."

Under the supervision of the aquarist, the girl climbed up the ladder to get towards the top of the tank. Showing courage that was far removed from Jasmin, the child didn't hesitate to

dunk her gloved hands into the water. After a few thumps from the communicator, Megan responded by swimming up towards the surface. Despite the worms' fearsome appearance, she managed to gingerly wrap around the girl's fingers. With each movement of Megan's body, the child let out a giggle.

"Well done," Alyssa commented. "Megan did a good job too. Let's give her a treat."

Handing over a set of tweezers clasped around a fish, Alyssa instructed the girl to put it into the water. Swimming back a bit, Megan remained still while her snack got into position. Just as it appeared that the worm had gone motionless, that was when she lashed out to snatch the fish and quickly swim back down into her sand pit.

"Great work," Alyssa said, helping the little girl out of the gloves and escorting her back to the children. "That will be the end of our presentation today, but there's still a lot of the aquarium left to see. Have fun!"

Waiting until the group had passed, Jasmin finally stepped towards her fellow aquarist. "Hello," she said without a hint of warmth.

"Hey there Jasmin," Alyssa replied. "Jacob gave me the heads up that you would come by."

"Did he also tell you that there's no way I'm becoming that thing?" she asked, gesturing towards the worm as it finished off its meal.

"He said you would be a bit... resistant to the idea," Alyssa replied. "We were hoping that you would open up to the idea once you saw the demonstration."

"If anything, now I'm less willing to go through with it," Jasmin stated. "I don't want to be stuck as a blind, creepy worm for any amount of time. Let alone an entire month."

“It’s really not that bad,” Alyssa said, making her way over to the control panel. “Isn’t that right, Megan?” she asked, the bobbit worm nodding in response after receiving the question through a series of tremors.

Jasmin continued to glare at Megan. Even if the bobbit worm couldn’t see, she seemed to instinctively feel the hostility of her coworker. In response, she began to tap out a series of knocks onto the glass.

“What is she saying?” Jasmin asked.

“That she knows that the first time can be scary,” Alyssa answered. “But it’s also a really fun and enriching experience once you get used to it. You’ll never feel more at one with nature. Isn’t that right?” she asked through the communicator, getting a nod from the worm a moment later.

“Doubtful,” Jasmin shot back.

Alyssa sighed. “Well, it’s not like you have to make up your mind now. Why don’t you sleep on it and come talk to Jacob in the morning?”

Seeing that there was no way that she could convince her coworkers otherwise, Jasmin gave a begrudging nod. “Alright,” she said, making her way back towards the office. “But you better be prepared to find a substitute WHEN I say no.”

As much as Jasmin wanted to look away from the screen, she had to keep telling herself it was necessary to prepare for the trials ahead. No matter how comforting the narrator’s gentle voice was, it did little to take away from the revolting nature of the bobbit worm. Not helping matters were the sounds of muffled disgust coming from the other side of the couch.

“Can’t you quiet it down?” Jasmin asked her boyfriend, Nate.

“Sorry,” he said, trying to keep himself occupied by fixing up his shaggy, brown hair.

“It’s just so... freaky.”

“You’re not helping right now,” Jasmin replied, gritting her teeth as she watched the creature on the screen devouring a recently caught fish. “I’m supposed to be watching these documentaries to try and warm up to the idea of becoming one of those things.”

“Oh, so you’re actually going through with it?”

“Not necessarily,” Jasmin commented while the bobbit worm on the TV burrowed itself back into the sand. “At the very least, I’ll be prepared to tell them all the reasons why this position isn’t for me. They may not like it, and I might lose my job over it, but it’s a better fate than being that disgusting creature.”

“What happens if you do decide to go through with it?” Nate asked, earning him a glare.

“Aside from keeping me stuck in a tank for weeks as a horrific monster,” Jasmin began, “there will be a bonus added to my paycheck proportionate to how long I spend as a worm.”

“How much exactly?”

Pulling out her phone, Jasmin opened up a document that she had been emailed by the aquarium director. “This much.”

“Oh my god!” Nate shouted out. “How can you say no to this?”

“Very easily,” she replied. “My dignity doesn’t have price tag.”

“It does when you’re being paid this much,” he pleaded. “It would be more than enough to cover our rent for the next few months. Might even have enough funds leftover for a decent vacation.”

Jasmin rolled her eyes. “Well, I didn’t now you were so eager to spend time on a beach with a writhing creature without eyes. Hope you like hugs that involved getting pricked by dozens of little legs.

“Er, no,” Nate admitted, “but still, think of what this could mean for us.”

Once more, Jasmin let her attention shift towards the bobbit worm on the screen. Her instincts tried to convince her to stay away from the transformation, but the added pressure of funds whittled down her resistance. Glancing over at Nate and the stack of bills on the counter, she let out a sigh. “Fine. I’ll do it. BUT only if we promise to make the most out of this situation.”

“Like what?” Nate asked, with Jasmin responding with a smug grin.

Jasmin’s begrudging acceptance of her fate could be seen in the somewhat lackluster dress she was wearing. The simple, white outfit reflected the blue coloring of the many tanks she passed as she marched towards the bobbit worm exhibit. When she finally arrived, there was a momentary sigh of relief as she saw that the creature was nowhere to be seen. That was until she noticed the second, much smaller tank sitting out on the floor with the familiar, creepy critter inside. Seeing the worm wriggle about, she couldn’t help wondering if it was too late to back out.

“I’ll be honest,” Jacob began, clutching a thickly bound book in his arms, “I didn’t expect for you to show up.”

“Neither did I,” Jasmin commented, trying to pay attention to the director while keeping a side eye on the bobbit worm.

“Well then, let’s get things started,” Jacob said as he opened up the tome. “Stand back unless you want to get your dress wet.”

Taking the cue of the director beginning to chant, Jasmin took a few steps away from the tank. The bobbit worm’s wriggling became more erratic at first as her entire body became surrounded with bubbles. Just before the creature was engulfed, she seemed to stop dead still as if a sense of calm had taken over her natural urge to struggle.

As the worm raised her body out of the surface, the slender visage began to expand. The outward carapace fell away to reveal pudgy flesh that seemed to burst through the hard exoskeleton. Limbs gradually pushed their way out of the forming torso. Using her re-acquired feet, the woman proceeded to step out of the tank. Wobbling about, Megan made good use of having hands once more to push back her locks of black and grey streaked hair to reveal her soft face.

“Give me a moment,” Megan said, rubbing her eyes as she adjusted to the lights. “I’m always a little blind after the reversal process. It’s hard to get used to having eyes after so long.” Taking a few steps forward, she stumbled a bit only to be caught by Jacob at the last moment. “Guess my legs still aren’t in a cooperative mood after I’ve neglected them for weeks. I’ll have to adjust to only having two big ones instead of a lot of little ones again. Really hope I get used to having hands again by the time I get to hold the baby.”

“Are you okay?” Jasmin asked as Megan was covered up by a robe.

“A bit disoriented, but nothing out of the ordinary,” the middle-aged woman replied, graciously accepting a protein bar to recover her energy. “I don’t think we’ve been properly introduced. At least not while I could see. You’re Jasmin right? The one who will be taking over bobbit worm duty?”

“Unfortunately.”

“I know how you feel,” Megan said, using Jacob for balance as she stepped forward. Holding up a shaky arm, she placed her hand on Jasmin’s shoulder. “It’s a little scary at first, but once you’re in the worm’s body it will make sense. There’s a certain... satisfaction to being reduced to such a simple creature. When I’m in that form, it’s easy to forget all about the worries of a human. I would try to describe it better, but you’ll see what I mean soon.”

“Sorry,” Jasmin said, gently moving Megan’s hand away. “But I still don’t see how being a deaf, blind worm will be anything other than torture for the next few weeks. Not to mention I’m worried what it will do to my brain.”

“Oh, you have nothing to worry about, dear,” Megan spoke. “It will still be your mind in the creature’s body. You’ll just have to turn it off and on depending on the situation.”

Jasmin raised an eyebrow. “What do you mean?”

“When I’m the worm, I mostly let it run on autopilot,” Megan explained. “However, whenever the time calls for a demonstration or I need to speak with my co-workers, I can easily slip back into a human’s mindset. The trick is being able to follow the wake up sequence. No need to worry, I’ll be sure to help you with the basics before I take off.”

“Well, better sooner than later,” Jacob said, pointing at his watch. “The doors are going to open up in a few hours. If you want time to get adjusted, you’d better get changed now.”

Jasmin took a deep breath. “Fine,” she said, taking off her clothes. “Stay close to me, Megan.”

“Of course,” Megan replied, helping Jasmin to step into the tank.

Jacob cleared his throat as he focused his vision on the page. Words far from the English language began to leave his lips. Though Jasmin had no chance of understanding exactly what

was being said, she was certain by his hand gestures and eye focus that they were being directed towards her. She was proven correct as her body felt the first ripple go across her skin.

Further tremors began to affect Jasmin as Jacob continued to recite the incantation. A pulsing sensation made it feel like something was trying to rewrite her genetic makeup. Unable to speak, she desperately wanted to call out for help. On the verge of a panic attack, she was given a semblance of calm by gripping Megan's hand.

Jasmin's nervous shuffling ceased as her legs were pressed together. Daring to look down, she managed to watch her lower body meld together. Watching her toes form the end of her tail, she paid extra attention to the layer of exoskeleton spreading up her body. Though she wanted to touch it, she was prevented from exploring on her own as her arms sunk into her body. With the loss of her hands, all sense of courage gave way to a terrified shriek of terror.

Wriggling about with her more cylindrical body, Jasmin witnessed her curves, and other human features get absorbed by her torso. The water that used to come up to her knees became ever closer as her form shrunk down to be a better fit for the creature. With her head hanging right above the surface, her attempt to let out another scream became distorted by her transforming mouth.

Lips stretching out into a set of mandibles, Jasmin focused her vision on the many barbs that grew on her new mouth. Clicking about her face in an attempt to regain a semblance of control, her vision began to fade as her eyes disappeared. Left blind, all she could do in response to her luxurious hair falling out was to let out a series of distressed clicking noises with her mandibles.

"It will be okay," Megan said, her voice barely audible as Jasmin's ears began to go away. "We'll be right here to help you every step of the way."

The last thing Jasmin's ears heard before they vanished was the splash she made as she was submerged. Unable to see her figure, she managed to get a feel for her as she squirmed around the confines of her tank. The clacking of her outer shell mixed with the thuds she made across the glass managed to communicate to her the extent of her condition. Whether she liked it or not, she had become the dreaded bobbit worm.

Jasmin's realization about her new form gradually lost impact the more she swam around her enclosure. Being deprived of most of her senses helped her to make full use of the tiny bristles numbering in the thousands that covered her body. Wriggling about her feelers didn't restore her sense of smell, but they did give a vague image of her surroundings. No longer troubled by constantly slamming herself up against the glass, she was given a semblance of peace as she expertly swam through the water.

The calmness of her Jasmin's peace was disrupted as she felt the tank begin to shift. Once more, she flailed wildly in an attempt to stop whatever was happening. For the brief moment where she touched the air, she managed to let out a click that she was certain would horrify anyone with ears. The strange pride she felt in the intimidation attempt was disrupted once she hit the surface of the water.

Getting her bearings, Jasmin wriggled her way through the new enclosure. Darting past underwater foliage and rocks, she realized that she had been moved over to the bobbit worm's main tank. It was during this initial exploration that she seemed to realize how easy it was to move without her human limbs. The water mixed with her new body gave her a sense of fluidity that was unrivaled by anything she felt before. No longer bothered by the need to reclaim her arms and legs, she spiraled downwards to the floor of her enclosure. Sliding her bristles along the

gravel bottom of the enclosure, she felt a series of instincts urge her to stop what she was doing and dig herself a nice burrow to wait for prey.

Jasmin was stopped from putting her digging skills to the test as she noticed a series of flashing lights off in the distance. Though she couldn't see the illuminance per say, her feelers were able to give her mind a vague image. After a while, she managed to recognize the pattern as the very same she had seen when she had come to first visit Megan. Recalling the instructions she had been given beforehand, she managed to swim her way over to where a series of vibrations were coming from and press her mandibles up against the glass. Much to her surprise, she managed to "hear" something in her mind.

"Jasmin? It's me, Megan. If you can understand me, please nod your head."

Waiting for the vibrations to dissipate, Jasmin did as she was told.

"Excellent. Sometimes the initial surge of instincts makes it hard to communicate," Megan said, bringing back a sliver of Jasmin's worries. She was eventually brought back to a sound mind when she heard the middle-aged woman let out a giggle. "I'm only kidding. That being said, I do want to try out a few exercises with you to make sure you're ready. To start, would you mind opening up your mandibles?"

With a nod of her head, Jasmin replied by opening up her fearsome maw.

"Alright, now show me your maxillae."

Jasmin paused for a moment as she tried to remember what that meant. Though her years of marine life studies failed her in bringing up the right image, her body knew what to do. This came in in the form of a second row of teeth. The other jaw trembled for a moment, until she finally managed to get them to obey and flex towards the glass.

"Very good," Megan commented. "Let's move on to the conditioning."

Jasmin tilted her head in confusion.

“This is Alyssa,” the aquarist spoke up through the device. “What Megan’s talking about is giving your brain a trigger to swap between your human brain and your bobbit worm instincts.”

Taking hold of the controls, Alyssa began to flash the lights in a specific pattern. “Okay, try to picture yourself. Well, not in your current form, but who you are normally. Think about feelings, memories, and sensations that are exclusive to being human. These will be your attachment to your normal thought patterns and personality.”

Following the aquarist’s instructions, Jasmin focused her light sensors on the repeated flashing. As she “stared” at the pattern, she kept in mind the various things that made her who she was. This included her relationship with her boyfriend, her impeccable eye for fashion, and her initial interest in things that lived beneath the ocean. The recollection of her time in college did bring up a memory of her first time seeing a bobbit worm being presented in a research report. At the time, she had had a similar reaction of disgust at the creature. She didn’t really know what she would say to that version of herself if she met her now and had to explain why she was currently inhabiting the body of the odd worm.

“Jasmin, do you have your anchor in place?” Alyssa asked, receiving a nod in reply. “Good. Now let’s get your worm self in the driver’s seat. You don’t have to do much, just let your body’s natural instincts take hold. Everything else should fall into place from there.”

As much as Jasmin wanted to ask out loud what the aquarist meant, she was limited to a series of bubbles that came from her mandibles. Working on the idea that she just needed to quiet her thoughts, she attempted to shut out any ideas unfitting of a bobbit worm. Once she realized that any higher brain activity at all would be at odds with the creature’s nature, she slowly felt

her mental faculties shut down. With all of her brain power safely stowed away, it allowed another force to take control of her form.

Fully giving in to the instincts that had been recently engraved into her body, she began to move on her own. As if following an invisible guide, she began to mindlessly traverse her tank. Rather than some specific purpose, she merely bobbed and weaved between the underwater foliage. Expertly diving beneath an alcove of rocks, the feeling of sand being dragged across her underside flicked a switch inside her head of what came next.

Finding a suitable spot in the gravel, Jasmin made good use of her mandibles to start digging. Burrowing deep enough to fit her entire length inside, she nestled in and got in position. Left with only her mandibles and feelers above the gravel, she let the comforting buzz of her lack of thought take over as she watched and waited for whatever prey might swim by her.

Jasmin was broken out of her trance-like state as her feelers picked up a familiar pattern of lights. The signal allowed her higher thinking to remind her of her human nature, while suppressing the worm's instincts to remain right where she was. Pulling herself out from the burrow, there was a sense of amazement of how quickly her brain was able to flip the switch between the two entities. Her human mind was still able to remember each moment she had spent with the creature in control. Recollecting every urge and nerve that was available to her at that time brought with it a strange excitement that she couldn't quite explain.

Responding to a collection of tremors going across the tank, Jasmin swam her way over to the glass and placed her mandibles against it.

"Glad to see the communicator works," vibrated a familiar voice. "Oh, I should probably tell you that this is Alyssa. Megan had to leave a little while ago to make her flight on time."

The closest approximation to a gasp left Jasmin's mandibles at the realization that she had completely lost track of the hours spent in her burrow.

"Yeah, the time displacement is something else you have to get used to. In any case, Megan wanted me to tell you that she wishes you luck. I'll be keeping her updated with your progress while she's away."

Jasmin shifted her head to the side, already looking forward to the discussion she would have with Megan once she returned from her trip and she was capable of human speech once more.

"Anyway, you'd better get back into position. The first group of kids should be coming by soon."

With the lights shut off, Jasmin managed to get a nod of agreement communicated before she slipped back into her worm mind. Entering the safety of the burrow, she managed to get back into her trance-like state. The simplified thoughts helped to pass the time and allow her to comfortably nestle into her makeshift home. That was until she felt a pang of hunger arise in her stomach. Just as her body was considering leaving the safety of the burrow in search of food, she was alerted by the lights once more.

As Jasmin exited the burrow, she could sense the vibrations of dozens of tiny feet rocking the room around her. Able to recognize that it was showtime, she got in position up to the glass. Upon opening up her mandibles, she could feel the tremors through her body to sense that she had grabbed the group's undivided attention.

"Please give it up for Jasmin, this will be her first performance," Alyssa communicated through the device. "Let's start with showing off the body of a bobbit worm. Jasmin, if you would please?"

Giving another nod, Jasmin began to swim laps through the tank. Though weaving through the terrain felt as natural as ever, she could tell from sense alone that the display was more than enough to entertain her onlookers. Purposefully sliding herself up against the glass served to both further demonstrate her exoskeleton and give her a chance to sense the vibrations of the kids' various gasps of interest. Placing her mouth up against the wall, she flexed about her mandibles to draw the group in. The sense of excitement she felt at getting them to witness her secondary teeth wiggle around was strengthened by the small screams that shuddered through her form.

"Would anyone like to pet Jasmin?" Alyssa asked aloud. "Ah, we have a volunteer. Come right this way and I'll get you ready."

Summoned to the top of her tank by the tremors, Jasmin swam up to meet with the brave child. Floating just below the surface, she tried to remain as still as possible as she felt a set of gloved fingers wrap around her form. Ensured that the multiple layers were more than enough to protect the child from her various barbs, she allowed them to gingerly caress her form. Treating it like a strange massage, she felt a little sorry when it eventually came to an end.

"That was very brave," Jasmin sensed through the glass. "For both you and Jasmin here. Come on kids, let's give her a little treat to celebrate."

Before Jasmin could attempt to inquire what the aquarist meant, her feelers sensed something enter the water. For just a moment, her innate instincts took hold to let her know that some much needed sustenance had entered her enclosure. Flexing her mandibles in response to the innate thought that she needed to catch her prey before it escaped, she dashed forward to clamp down on the fish.

Try as Jasmin might to carry off her food, a force was keeping it in place. Continuously clacking her teeth against the fish let her feel the metal tongs gripping it just as hard as she was. The clang of her mandibles against steel called forth her human mind to remind her that part of her performance was playing a little game of tug of war with the children. That didn't stop her from giving it her all in order to secure the fish for her hungry stomach.

Finally managing to claim the food for her own, Jasmin swiftly began to swim back towards her burrow. On the trip back, her sensors picked up the thunderous applause coming from her audience. Any pride she could take in her performance was undone by her body's powerful need to feed. Paying little mind to the stomps of children walking away, she buried herself back into her burrow.

Nestled within her sandy sanctuary once more, Jasmin attempted to enjoy her meal. This proved to be harder than she thought thanks to the hurdle of trying to get her teeth to function as needed. After several unsuccessful attempts to figure out the eating method via her higher thoughts, the worm's instincts kicked in to automate the process and let her enjoy the simple bliss of her meal.

Even if it was nothing more than a recently defrosted piece of fish, to Jasmin's altered form it might as well have been a five star meal. Each munch of her powerful jaws brought forth a flood of satisfaction that far outweighed anything she had experienced as a human. While the worm was currently in control, her human brain still managed to linger around to appreciate the way her modified taste buds enhanced the flavor.

Finishing off her meal, Jasmin was content to just lay in her burrow to digest. That was until she was brought back to her old self by the flashing lights again. Searching her memory, she didn't recall seeing any more demonstrations on her schedule. Eventually, she managed to

remember that she had asked for a special guest to come see her. Eagerly leaving her burrow, she swam up to the glass just as a voice began to speak to her through the device.

“Jasmin. It’s me, Nate. Is that really you?” asked the voice, receiving a nod from the bobbit worm in return. “I don’t believe it.”

“It’s true,” said another series of vibrations, this time the tone easily identifiable as Alyssa. “And she’s doing a great job. She even got to play tug of war with some kids.”

“That’s amazing. Um, Jasmin, did you still want to do... that thing you mentioned?”

Clicking her mandibles together, Jasmin tried to remember what he was talking about. What finally came to her was a suggestion she had brought up the previous evening as a way of making the most of her situation. Far removed from what she was feeling at the, there was a bit of hesitancy about whether she wanted to go through with it still. Considering how much she had already done; she saw little harm in properly documenting her abilities for social media. With a vigorous nod of her head, she urged Nate to push forward.

“Alright, as long as you’re okay with it,” Nate replied.

“Sounds good,” Alyssa chimed in. “You can focus on asking her the questions. I’ll take camera woman duty.”

“Okay, then let’s start with the basics. Jasmin, could you-“

Before Nate could finish, Jasmin was already winding her way through her environment once more. Though she copied the motions used during her performance, she made sure to do them as close as possible to the front wall of the tank. This ensured that Alyssa would be able to get the best footage possible to post on social media. Coming up to the glass to plant her mandibles against it, the worm flexed her teeth to act at the apex of her demonstration.

“That’s really creepy,” Nate commented, the remark being seen as more of a compliment to Jasmin than an insult. “Let’s go over the questions. To confirm, you are Jasmin, right?”

Jasmin nodded her head.

“Okay, are you enjoying your time as a bobbit worm?”

Jasmin nodded again.

“Do you regret signing up for the program?”

Vigorously shaking her head back and forth, Jasmin managed to communicate that she had fully embraced her job’s unique perks.

“I doubt that the people online will believe you, but I’m at least glad that you’re okay. Alyssa, did you get enough footage?”

“And then some,” the aquarist spoke, walking up to the console. “But if you need some more, Jasmin is going to be like this for a few weeks. Oh, I think I can hear some more people approaching. Better get back into character, Jasmin.”

“I should get going too,” Nate added. “I’ll see you later.”

Jasmin managed to wave towards her boyfriend with her mandibles before the lights were shut off. Sinking back into her worm mindset, she re-entered her burrow and got settled in. Embraced by the sand and comforted by her plethora of natural urges, she got ready to fulfill her duty as the aquarium’s resident bobbit worm.