

Web of Harmony

Since 2102, we've lived in harmony – 'we' being people and spiders. It was meant to happen two years earlier, but it took that long just for people to get over the habit of wiping away the spider webs and raising a shoe in automatic response to seeing one.

My grandfather was present at the legislative task force assembled purely for the purpose of making it all formal. It was a major challenge to open peoples' eyes to the necessity of it, but with cockroaches and other pests growing immune to so many defences and spreading in exponential numbers, people finally came to their senses.

I mean, it's not like there was a Spider Secret Service established or anything. Although, come to think of it, there was a Spider Protection Agency formed (brings new meaning to the word SPA now doesn't it!), which I guess is not that far off the mark of outrageous. What I'm getting at is that the government didn't go so far as to issue little spider submachine guns or grenades. Can you imagine a spider with a miniature grenade anyway? I mean, please, I know there are eight legs with which it can choose to pull the pin and throw the damn thing, but it would only have to get stuck in the web upon launch, then 'POOF' – bye-bye Harry the Huntsman*. Okay, so the thought does provoke a chuckle, but, seriously, ouch!

The legislation was nothing that elaborate. It was mostly just a matter of the scientists and arachnologists finally convincing everyone that the two species should truly co-exist for the longevity of each. Kind of like a symbiotic relationship I suppose, except we don't, like, walk around permanently attached to each other or anything – although that might be useful from the spider's point of view. And, okay, maybe I'm being generous in saying "it was nothing elaborate." You know as well as I do how many people are petrified of spiders what with all those sticky webs and eight-legged creatures turning up where and when you least expect them. How many do they say you actually eat in your sleep in a lifetime? Is it eight? In fact, I think that some of the legislation passed had to include extra funding for psychiatric help so the majority of the population could get over their phobias. I'll bet the shrinks loved that one!

Anyway, the point is that people may still rule the overall domain, but spiders now also have their own safety zones within peoples' homes and gardens. The spiders' mission

is simple: capture and dispose of the enemy in as great of numbers as possible! Really this should be like a dream job for a spider considering it has to eat anyway, and with so much food to go around, why not have more kids to help devour the leftovers?

“So what about the poisonous spiders?” you ask. It was finally decided that they should be banned to outside areas, and the non-toxic spiders could set up residence inside the homes and what not. I’m not biased, but I think most people would agree that the poisonous spiders can be dreadful. I mean, really, you’d have to have a pretty bad attitude to go around biting people all the time. My mom had a run-in with a Redback once. Obviously Mom came away from it okay because of her size, but it wasn’t without a few vicious exchanges first. Yikes!

So coming back to the living arrangements, I wasn’t kidding when I said it took people two years to get over pulling down a web like they were used to doing. So many people are such clean freaks that the government had to actually pay for houses to have spider web detection technology installed. Basically, it senses when a spider web has been constructed and monitors the tension on the web. Once the filaments become loose enough, an alert sounds so that the web can be dusted away. For lack of a better way of calculating populations, people are meant to allow a certain square meter area of webs, depending on the size of the house, because that’s meant to translate to a certain number of spiders. For those people who are still too freaked out to have spiders roaming around the house any old place, they actually choose to have just one whole room for the spiders to live. That fulfils their legal requirements and allows their sanity to stay at least partially intact – well, as long as they don’t accidentally wander into that room and right into the midst of a spider web orgy! Heck – even a spider orgy for that matter!

Outside is a different kettle of fish. It’s basically a free for all. I haven’t decided yet if that’s a good thing or a bad thing considering the nature of the nasty aforementioned species, but it is what it is. It was a HUGE transformation as it was, so we can’t expect perfection just yet!

Well, any-who. I guess, as they say, that is a long story short. I could take the time to give a longer rendition of how it all started, but considering I haven’t eaten in three weeks waiting for my next 200 babies to hatch, it probably wouldn’t be much more coherent anyway. Besides, my lifespan is short enough as it is. Do you honestly think I want

to take the time out of indulging myself with cockroaches to give a history lesson? Let the humans take care of all that cockamamie! I have to go for now anyway. I think I feel some grappling in my egg sac. As you can imagine, it gets a little crowded in there when you have so many brothers and sisters all fighting for some space. I suppose I should say something clever to sign off with, so, "Peace, and Save the Spiders!"

* Names have been changed to protect the innocent. A similar incident really did happen to my uncle once, and I don't want to get in trouble for copyright or defamation or something!