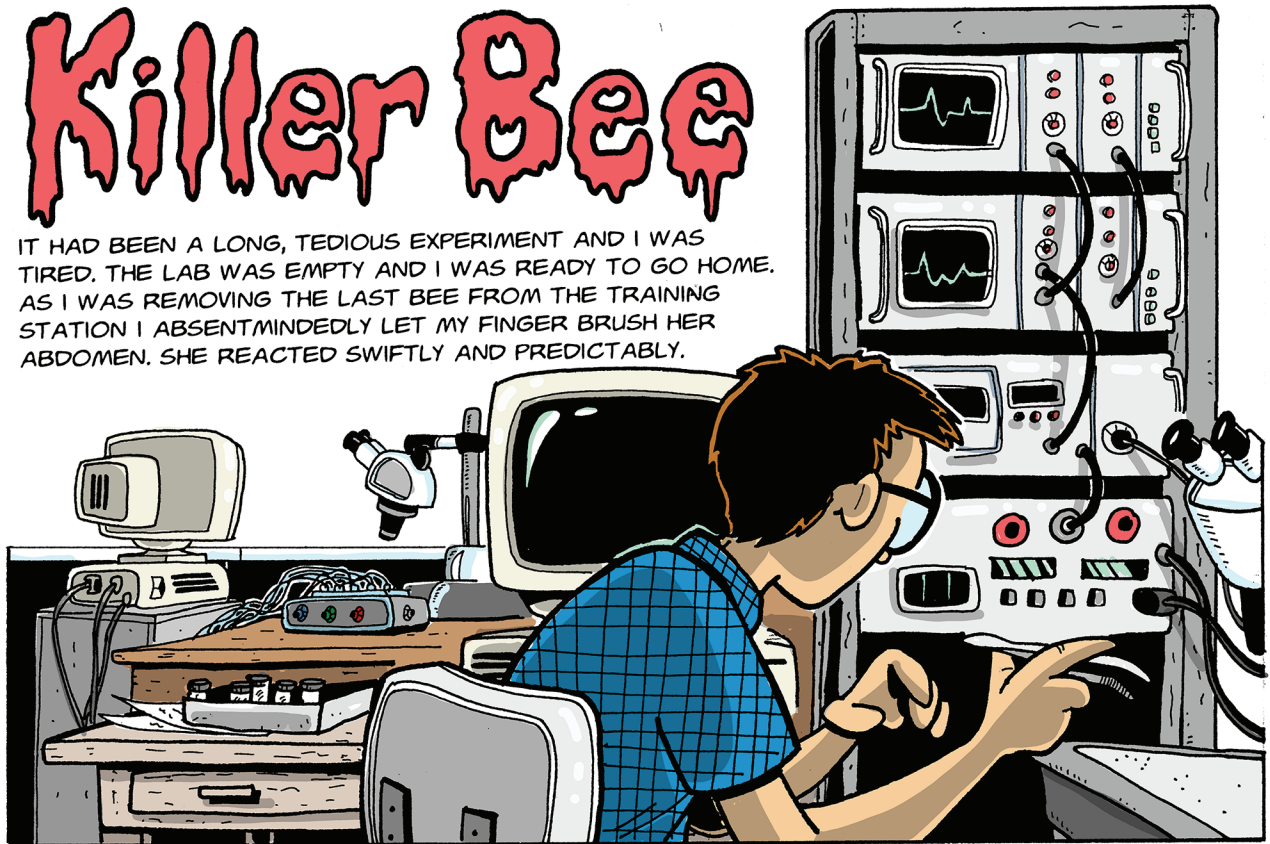


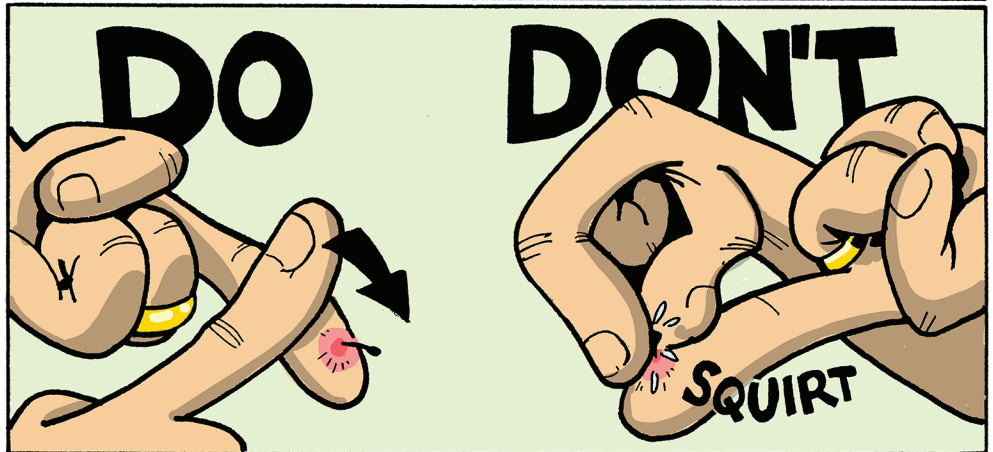
Killer Bee

IT HAD BEEN A LONG, TEDIOUS EXPERIMENT AND I WAS TIRED. THE LAB WAS EMPTY AND I WAS READY TO GO HOME. AS I WAS REMOVING THE LAST BEE FROM THE TRAINING STATION I ABSENTMINDEDLY LET MY FINGER BRUSH HER ABDOMEN. SHE REACTED SWIFTLY AND PREDICTABLY.

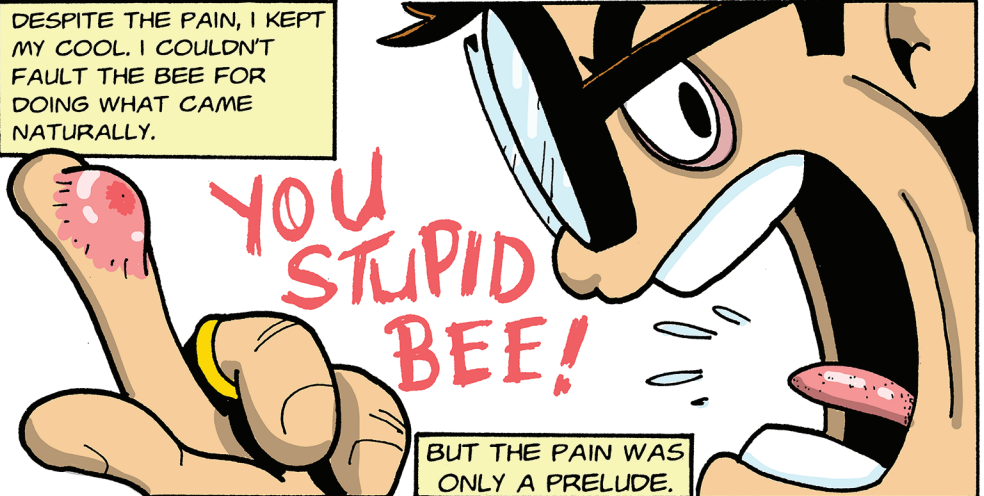


I HAD BEEN STUNG MANY TIMES BEFORE. IT WAS NO BIG DEAL.

WHEN REMOVING A STINGER, IT IS BEST TO BRUSH IT OUT WITH A SIDWAYS MOVEMENT OF YOUR FINGER. GRABBING IT WILL ONLY INJECT MORE VENOM.

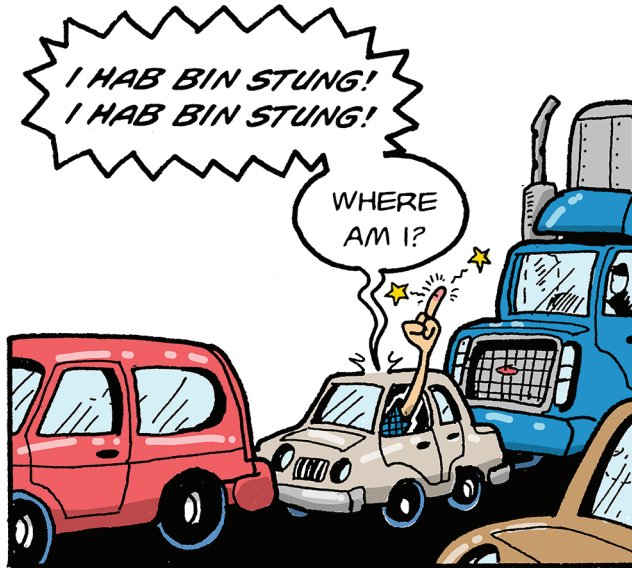


DESPITE THE PAIN, I KEPT MY COOL. I COULDN'T FAULT THE BEE FOR DOING WHAT CAME NATURALLY.



SOON MY EYES BEGAN TO ITCH, I STARTED TO SNEEZE UNCONTROLLABLY AND MY NASAL PASSAGES SLAMMED SHUT. WHEN I BECAME DISORIENTED, CONFUSED AND WOBBLY I DID THE ONLY SENSIBLE THING TO DO IN SUCH A DEBILITATED STATE.

I GOT INTO MY CAR AND DROVE HOME THROUGH HEAVY TRAFFIC.



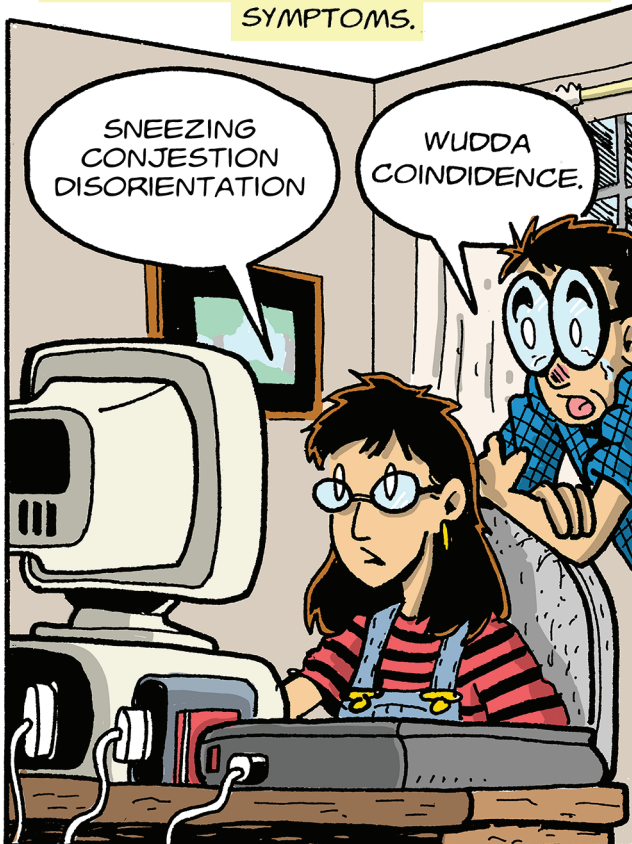
MY WIFE LISA WAS AFRAID THAT I WAS ALLERGIC AND GOING INTO ANAPHYLACTIC SHOCK. I TRIED TO REASSURE HER.

I DINK SWOLLEN TONGUES ARE COMMON DIS DIME OF YEAR, HON.



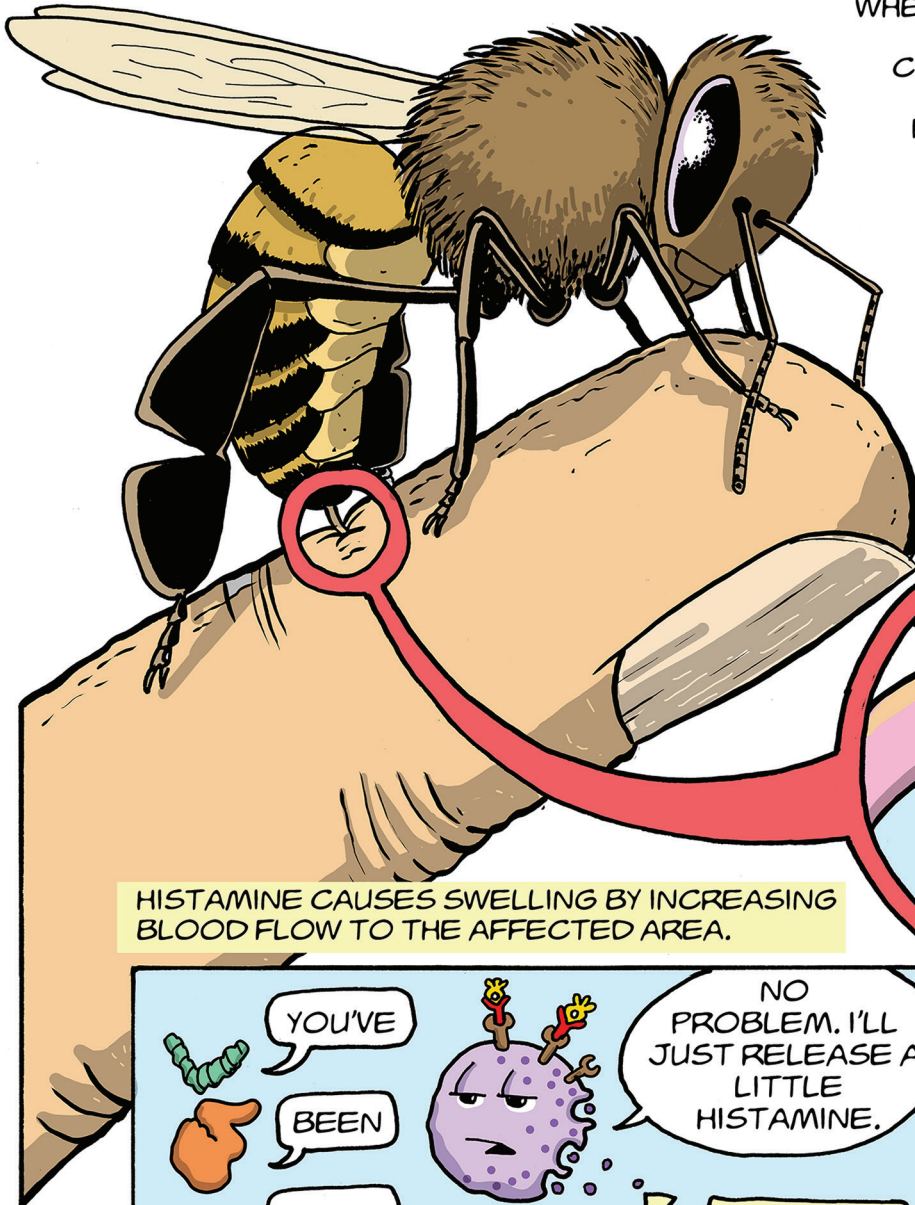
HOW COULD I BE ALLERGIC TO BEES? I'VE WORKED WITH THEM FOR YEARS.

NEVERTHELESS, WE GOT ONLINE TO GET MORE INFORMATION ON THE SYMPTOMS.

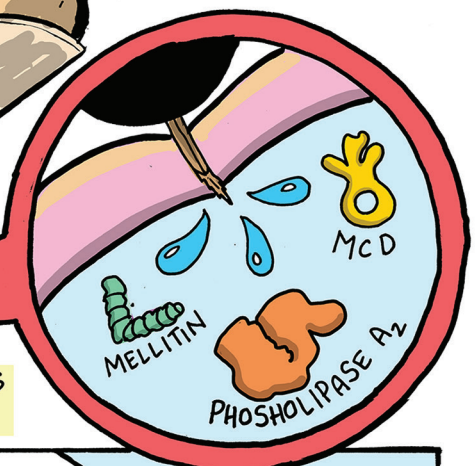


ANAPHYLAXIS IS A WHOLE-BODY FREAK OUT OF THE IMMUNE SYSTEM THAN CAN BE FATAL.





WHEN I WAS STUNG, THE BEE INJECTED ME WITH A COCKTAIL OF CHEMICALS, INCLUDING MELLITIN, PHOSPHOLIPASE2 (PLA2) AND MASS CELL DEGRANULATION PEPTIDE (MCD). THESE CHEMICALS PLAY A MAJOR ROLE IN CAUSING PAIN AND SWELLING IN THE AREA OF THE STING BY STIMULATING THE IMMUNE SYSTEM TO RELEASE HISTAMINE.



HISTAMINE CAUSES SWELLING BY INCREASING BLOOD FLOW TO THE AFFECTED AREA.

YOU'VE BEEN STUNG

Mast Cell of the immune system

HISTAMINE

NO PROBLEM. I'LL JUST RELEASE A LITTLE HISTAMINE.

THIS MAKES IT EASIER FOR THE BLOOD TO DELIVER THE CELLS AND CHEMICALS NEEDED TO REPAIR THE DAMAGE DONE BY THE STING.

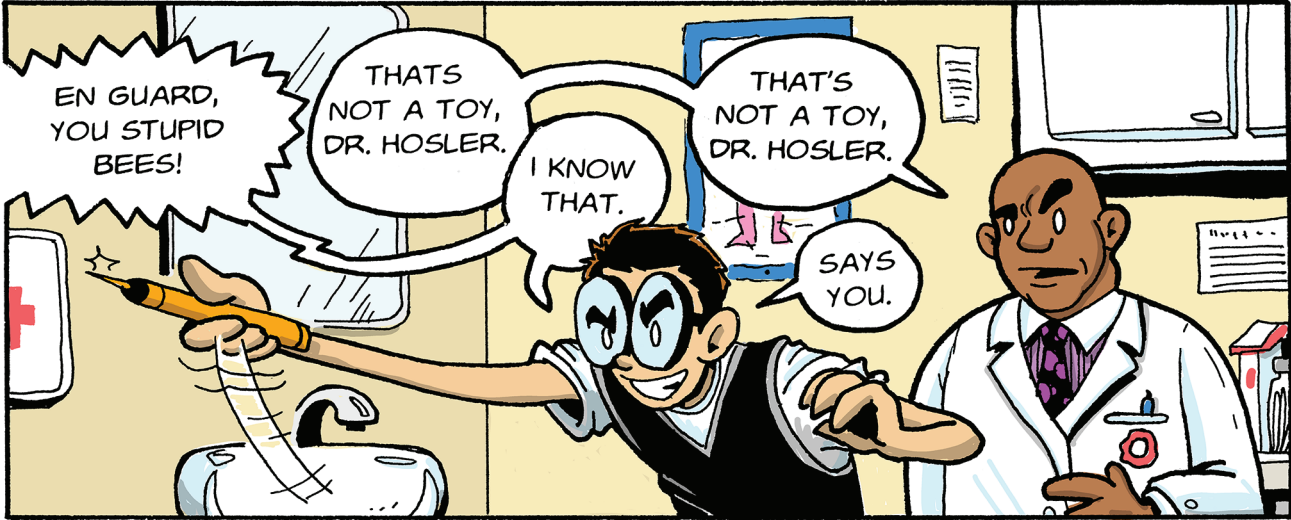
YOU'VE BEEN STUNG

IT'S THE END OF THE WORLD! RELEASE IT ALL!

IN ANAPHYLAXIS, THE IMMUNE SYSTEM OVERREACTS TO A STING AND RELEASES TONS OF HISTAMINE WHICH CAUSES EVERYTHING TO SWELL UP. THIS CAN LEAD TO CIRCULATORY COLLAPSE AND SUFFOCATION IF YOUR THROAT SWELLS SHUT.

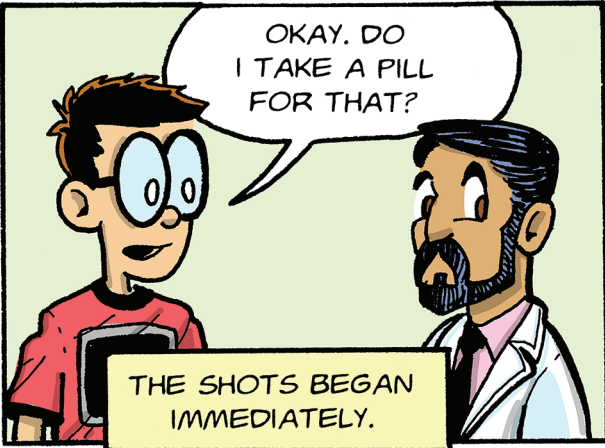
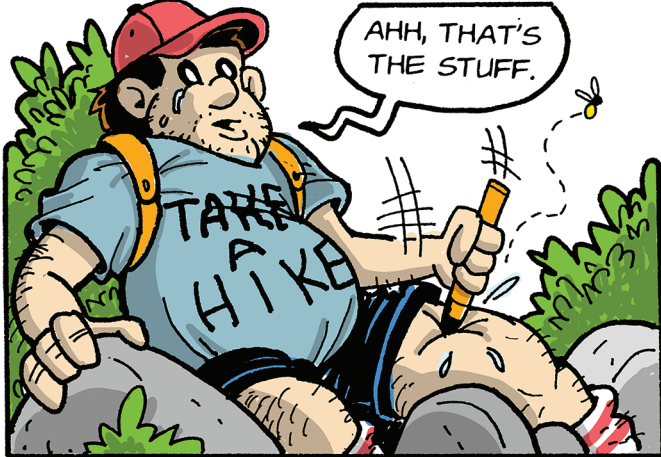
FORTUNATELY FOR ME, IT DIDN'T COME TO THAT.

THE NEXT DAY I MADE AN APPOINTMENT TO SEE MY DOCTOR. HE PRESCRIBED AN EPIPEN AND INSTRUCTED ME ON ITS PROPER USE.



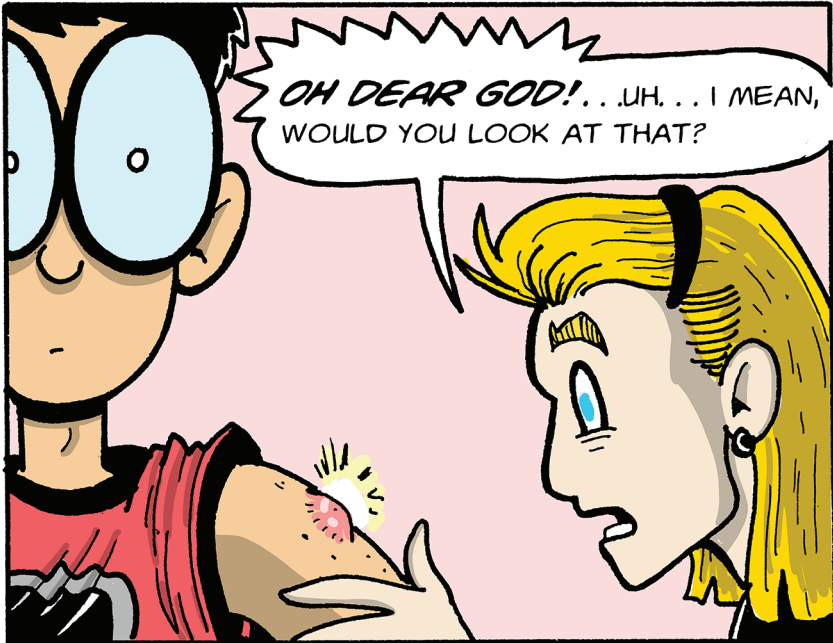
THE EPINEPHERINE AN EPIPEN INJECTS HELPS KEEP YOUR AIRWAYS OPEN AND YOUR HEART BEATING IF YOU'RE STUNG.

THE ALLERGIST I VISITED SAID THERE WAS A 95% CHANCE THAT MY *NEXT* STING WOULD BE MY *LAST*. HE SUGGESTED I GO THROUGH RAPID DESENSITIZATION THERAPY.

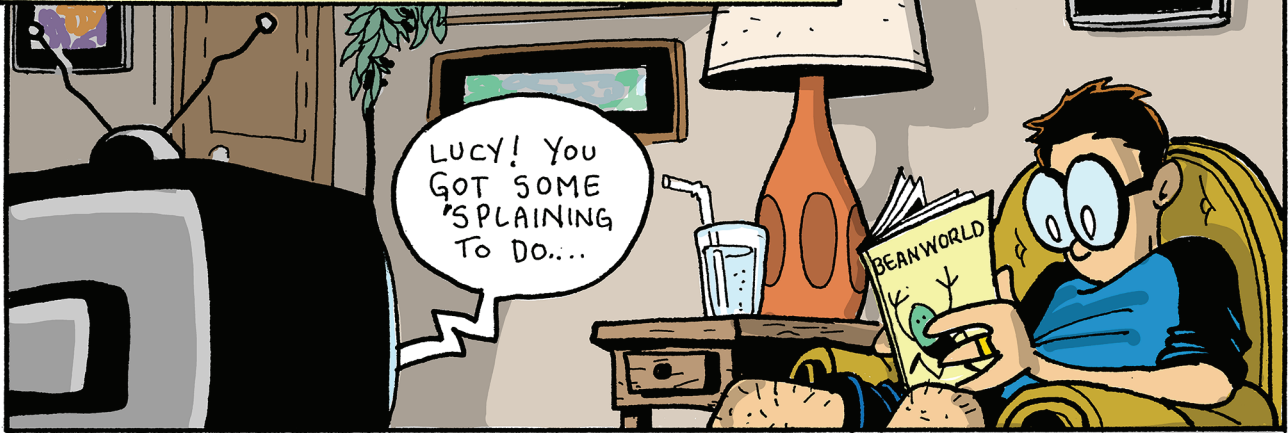


TO TEST *HOW* ALLERGIC I WAS, THEY INJECTED ME WITH INCREASINGLY CONCENTRATED DOSES OF VARIOUS INSECT VENOMS AND THEN CHECKED MY RESPONSE TO EACH AFTER ABOUT 5-10 MINUTES.

APPARENTLY THERE WAS A SLIGHT REACTION TO THE LOWEST CONCENTRATION OF BEE VENOM.

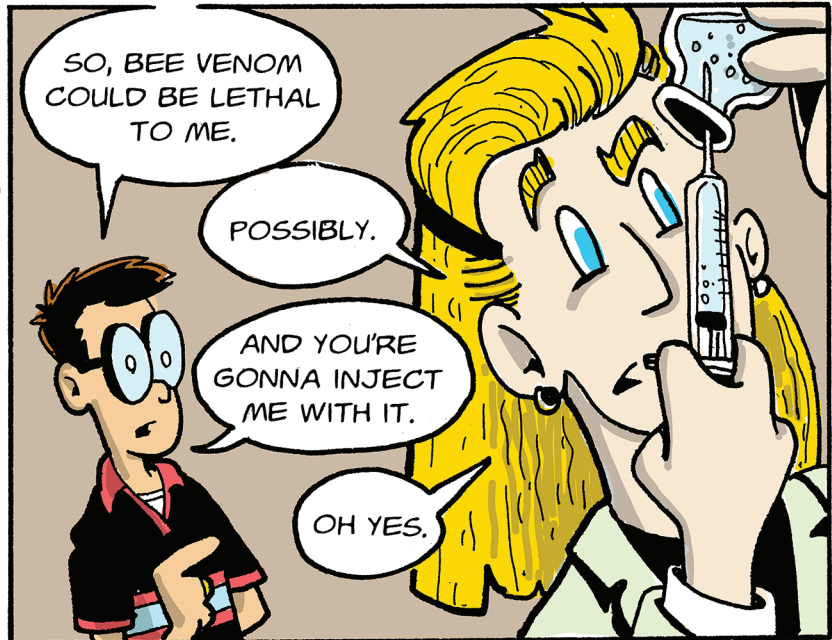


MY BOSS TOLD ME NOT TO DO ANY EXPERIMENTS UNTIL I WAS THROUGH WITH THE DESENSITIZATION THERAPY. SO, I STAYED AT HOME AND WORKED ON A PAPER I PLANNED TO SUBMIT TO THE JOURNAL OF NEUROSCIENCE METHODS.



ACCORDING TO MY ALLERGIST, A LOW FREQUENCY OF STINGS CAN MYSTERIOUSLY LEAD TO A BEE STING ALLERGY. THIS IS WHAT HAPPENED TO ME. I'M ALLERGIC BECAUSE I HAVEN'T BEEN STUNG ENOUGH!

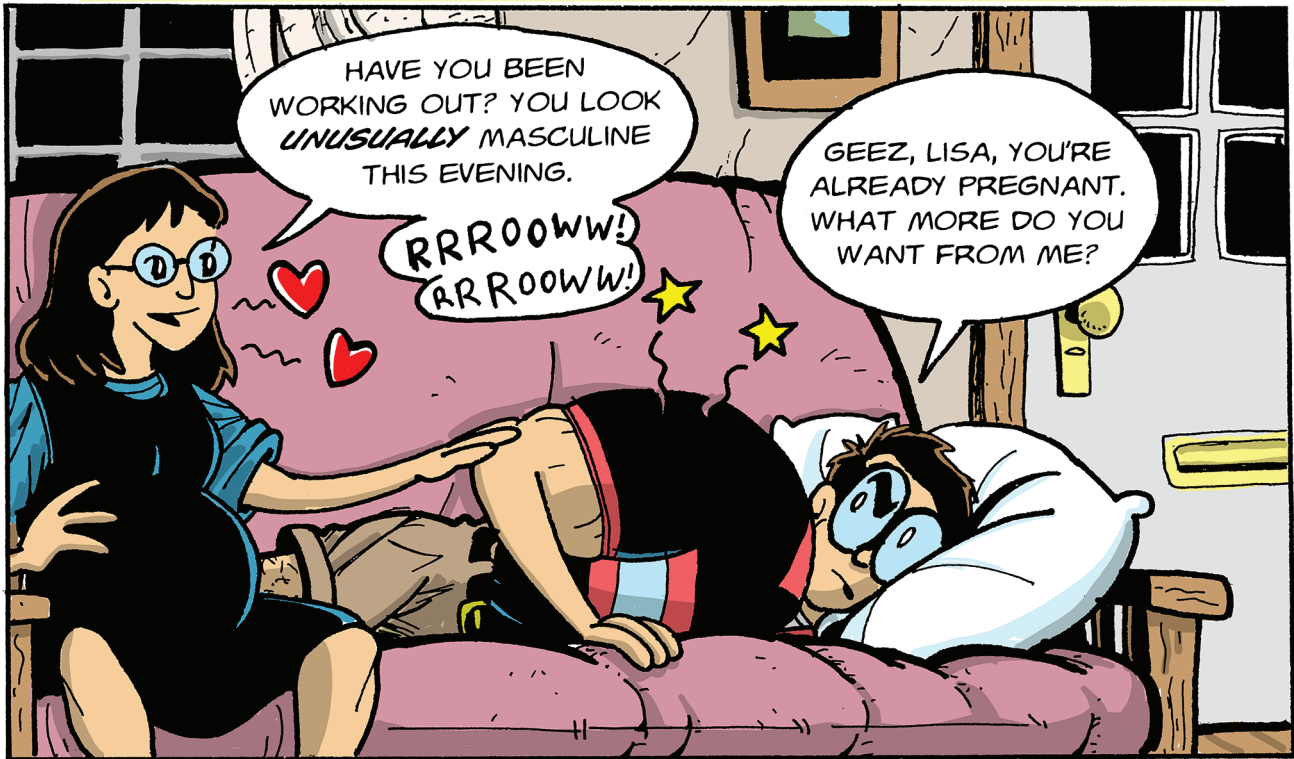
DESENSITIZATION REMEDIES THAT WITH A SERIES OF VENOM SHOTS THAT INCREASE IN CONCENTRATION AND VOLUME, GIVING YOUR BODY A CHANCE TO SLOWLY GET USED TO THE VENOM



AFTER EACH SHOT IN THE ARM, I SAT IN A ROOM AND WAITED FOR A REACTION.



THEY STOPPED WHEN I REACTED TO THE FOURTEENTH VENOM SHOT AND TOLD ME TO COME BACK ON TUESDAY FOR THE REST OF THE SERIES. NOT SURPRISINGLY, THE SWELLING IN MY ARMS WAS PRETTY INTENSE THAT NIGHT. THEY HURT LIKE HECK BUT HAD ONE UNEXPECTED SIDE EFFECT.



I FINISHED THE SECOND SERIES OF INJECTIONS AND REACHED MY MAINTENANCE LEVEL WITHOUT INCIDENT. NOW I GET A SYRINGE FULL OF UNDILUTED BEE VENOM (THE EQUIVALENT OF 100 BEE STINGS) ONCE A MONTH. I'M NO LONGER REACTING TO THE VENOM.

TIME TO FACE THE BEES AGAIN.



WHAT AM I DOING HERE? DESPITE THE 22 SHOTS, MY DOCTOR SAYS THERE'S STILL A 5% CHANCE THAT ANOTHER STING COULD KILL ME. I SHOULD GO STUDY MOTHS OR GRASSHOPPERS OR ANYTHING ELSE, BUT HERE I AM.

GUESS I'M JUST
A SUCKER FOR A
PRETTY FACE.

STUPID
BEE.

