

# All Humans Bleed the Same Blood; Why Don't You?

## *Nebula*

(Trigger Warnings: Death of an animal, gore, blood and anxiety attack)

According to a website aptly named [Lobsteranywhere.com](http://Lobsteranywhere.com): “When exposed to oxygen, either through injury or during cooking, lobster blood undergoes a dramatic transformation. The hemocyanin reacts with the oxygen, turning the blood a light blue color.” The most important part of this reference is that lobster blood. . . is *blue*.

He'd had a fear of blood for a long time now. Hematophobia. He first realized it when his brother Cooper scraped his knee while they were playing. They had gotten too rough, a game taken too far maybe. Playing on asphalt instead of carpet wasn't a wise decision, but they were children. Cooper tripped and fell after a particularly hard parry with the sticks they were using as swords. Cooper didn't even cry as he fell to the floor and scraped up his little knee. And what did he do? He froze. Like a coward. Not because he was afraid he would get in trouble, but because the reddened knee stood in contrast to the honey brown of his complexion. One pearl of blood was enough to make him feel like he would faint. His vision blurred, his senses dulled and suddenly it was his younger brother crying out for his parents to treat *him*—the kid who was fine, instead of the child with the scraped knee. Cooper didn't understand. He didn't either, but fear was something to be controlled. You can't be a chef without it. Control.

It's what he was doing as he stared at the lobster in front of him. Gaining control. He'd been doing this for years now, cutting up different pieces of meat to prepare them in various ways. It was commonplace. His hematophobia only bothered him when he was dealing with an extremely juicy piece of meat, the juices oozed out so similarly to blood as he would

cut. Reminding him at one point that the meat he was cutting into—pork, chicken, beef, lamb, fish—was at one point alive. Breathing. Full of blood.

He would hold his knife in those moments, count his breathing until his heart rate finally stopped plummeting to the floor. He got exceptionally good at not thinking about the meat he was cutting. Ironic, given how he was praised for his knife cutting skills.

He shouldn't have been thinking about that though. He should have been focusing on the lobster in front of him—the live lobster with its pincers bound shut by a rubber band—the antenna on its face still wriggling. He needed to kill it. Should have killed it ages ago.

This was his last order for this shift. All he had to do was kill the lobster. Something he had done a million times, but his blade was dull and he was exhausted, so he broke his rule of not looking at the piece of meat in front of him.

He made the mistake of looking the crustacean in the eyes.

He needed to kill it.

So he did.

It was sloppy. The cut was bad and his hand was shaking, even as he switched out the dull knife for a proper one. Something was wrong with him today. It was the only thing that made sense. By some miracle, he was looking at blood and he didn't feel like fainting. He was looking at blood and wasn't intimately aware of his own heart beat in his chest. The lobster head, cut off but not yet pushed to the side, was leaking blue blood everywhere. **Blue.** Someone was yelling at him to hurry up. Everyone wanted to go home and he should have finished this ages ago, but there was more blood than there maybe should have been, except he was a grown man who didn't know how much blood should spill out of a lobster and ooze onto the cutting board when he killed it because he'd never looked before. So, there was that.

His finger stung too, which was bothersome and annoying, but that was a thought that could be put aside. Like the way he was marveling at the blue blood. Because blood was red. Wasn't it? Normal blood? He dragged a finger through the blue blood, morbidly curious. He turned the severed head of the lobster back towards him—even knowing the creature was dead—he needed something else to see. The blood was blue and he wasn't close to fainting. He shook himself out of his stupor as the yelling got louder in volume, going about the rest of the mindless process and preparing the lobster to be served. It truly was such a bloody mess. He would need a mop with how much this lobster was bleeding. Did lobsters even have that much blood in their bodies?

When the dish was served, the waitress gave pause. He could tell

she was also looking at the mess of the kitchen. So much blood. So much blood, but the kitchen was closed now, so he could deal with it. As well as his hand—the hand that was hurting. The hand that was hurting like he maybe did something foolish that also went against his code. Like **cut** it. Whole body shaking. Breath stilted. He moved quickly through the kitchen space towards the pantry. He squeezed his left wrist in a vain attempt to stop the flow. If he didn't look at it, there was no way it was real. No way it was bleeding onto the floor. No way for a few drips to make him faint like a loser with a condition. Like when he nearly fainted in front of Cooper, when his parents should have been paying attention to his brother instead of him. His breathing wasn't calming. He was hyperventilating. He was dizzy, he was shaking. Was he breathing? Was his wretched blood-filled heart beating? There was so much blood. Why did he have to bleed?

He fell into the pantry wall, rattling the contents on the shelves. Hitting the wall with his left hand only made the wound hurt more. They were about to have a safety hazard on their hands. Him and his issues. Him and the blood. The fucking blood. So red.

He swallowed down everything, clutched his hand and left the pantry to run it under the water like a grown man. **Blue**. His erratic heart beat calmed. Blue? The lobster had blue blood. The lobster was bleeding everywhere. The lobster.

He poked at the wound. Squeezed it and watched it drip blue. **Blue**. He pulled at the loose skin, only wincing slightly as it pulsed and hurt. He watched the pad of his finger go past the knuckle of his thumb, becoming even more loose skin. He should've been disgusted—if not because of his hematophobia then because of his own sense of self-preservation—but as he pulled back the skin and as his heart began to race out of curiosity instead of fear, the pain numbed. Blue. Blue. **Blue**. The clear water kept turning the blue lighter and lighter, but with an endless stream to keep it blue it never ran truly clear. He grabbed a knife from the skink, ignoring the hygiene issues and used it to hack away at the flesh. The dull knife from before. Blue, blue, blue, blue, **blue!** Human blood was red. He had hematophobia. He should be fainting right now. There was so much blood. He hacked away with the knife on his arm. Curious. So curious. More blood. More blue. It would be a horror movie were it not for the coloring being wrong.

Something was clogging the sink. It was overflowing, the bluish water was spilling onto the ground. He was getting yelled at again—alarm and fear in the tone. What a ghastly scene he had probably made. Or was it? Humans had red blood, but lobsters had blue. Blue. Blue. Blue Blue Blue blue blue blue blue blue blue. He wasn't fainting.

The cuts were stinging, his heart was slowing, people were scream-

ing.

Red. Something was red. He fainted, his head hitting the floor as he saw blue.