

# Biology

By Audrey Roy

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**All I saw was a  
group of loud  
savages torturing  
another of God's  
creatures.**  
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I was stapling together the final parts of our lab report when Mel, being the first of our lab team to catch Mr. Taylor's searching gaze, was called over to choose a crayfish. Our instructions had been straightforward, simple: finish your written labs, then play with the arthropod for a period. Mel returned with a rather large specimen and, after placing it on the table, joined me as she perched herself on the lab stool. We watched it in silence for a few minutes.

"I just love watching it," I said affectionately. "It's so tiny, yet it all works so perfectly."

I knew I was being vague, but I could not express accurately the fascination I felt. I glanced at Mel, expecting her to have a puzzled expression, but she was nodding silently.

We sat watching the crayfish for about twenty minutes. We didn't touch it much, save for the occasional gentle push to return the creeping crayfish to the center of the lab table, or when we grasped its carapace to determine its sex and examine its ventral appendages.

We especially enjoyed watching her walk, and so, when she'd been sitting motionless in the center of the table for a few minutes, I began inching a pen toward her, with the intention of prodding her into movement. She saw the hazy outline of my pen through her thousands of eyes and began backing up. Though her gaze was expressionless, Mel and I both knew she was scared. One of us, I'm not sure who, said as much, but I didn't appreciate the significance of her fear until I accomplished my mission, and she scurried toward Mel.

Something in her movements made me look at what we were doing objectively: we, two 5'5", 125-pound bags of mostly water, were toying with a five-inch, maybe half-pound arthropod. I thought of the movie *Planet of the Apes*, and was horrified at myself. But the thought passed, as most do, and the next distinct, chronological memory I have is of Jamie and Aimee (lab partners across from us) saying how they remember Mr. Powell's class feeding something to their crayfish, and wasn't the food another crayfish, and wouldn't it be cool if a dead one could be found and then fed to a live crayfish, just so they could see how the mandibles worked?

Mel and I met each other's eyes, grimaced, and went back to observing our crayfish. Before we consciously realized time had passed, however, there was a growing knot of curious scientists behind us, and Jamie could be heard asking someone how he should do this and did anyone know where he could find a scalpel.

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