

## Collin-Covid

This is a story about me. My name is Collin-Covid, but you may know me as Covid-19 or coronavirus. Now, I know what you are thinking, I am usually known as the dreadful virus who killed many people. This is a story that has never been told by anyone until now. This is a story about how I changed for the better.

It was October 2019, there was a light breeze in the air and the sun was barely peeking out at us from behind the clouds. School had almost finished for half term in my home city of Viropolis. You may never have heard of this city before, that is because, although our worlds are virtually the same, they are different in small ways. The beings that reside on my alternate version of your earth which we call Velanorus, represent a virus or disease that infects people in your world. I, as you may already know, represent the coronavirus. On the grassy playground of my new school, I was all alone as I was yet to make any new friends.

Sat on my favorite bench, I looked up at the sky and spotted a shape in the clouds that mildly resembled one of the only animals from Earth that I like. I love this animal so much because the spikes on its back remind me of my own hair as I do of course represent a virus. My hair looks like what you would see if you zoomed in on some cocci (spherical) bacteria under a microscope. I think the name of this animal is a hedgehog but I'm not entirely sure. I pointed out the cloud to the boy that was next to me and explained why I was so fond of it. The boy responded in a way that was quite frankly the opposite to what I expected. "like you would have any idea of what animals reside on earth" those cruel words pierced my eardrums "with your non-existent infection rates, I'm surprised you even know what the planet is called!" he shouted over to the other children who soon joined in. They began calling me all sorts of cruel names such as "cowardly Collin".

That night, I got home and walked through the grand oak door and looked up at the crystal chandelier that hung on the ceiling above like a star in the navy midnight sky. I trudged up the stairs as they creaked under my battered trainers and dawdled into my bedroom. Casting my backpack upon the floor slumped over onto my bed and immediately began to sob. My pillow was soaked with salty tears. I have no idea what caused me to change my ways, but suddenly, with hatred on my mind, I found myself infecting bats and other small mammals on Earth. I learned later on, that in China, people ate all sorts of animals including

bats which I had infected. I never wanted to cause that much disruption. I thought that, by infecting small mammals, it wouldn't spread other species. I knew that my infection rates were too high! I was blind to see how selfish I was.

One day I was happily telling all my school companions about my new infection rates when, one of them showed me a news article from Earth, about my virus. At first, I was ecstatic. I finally had high infection rates! I read on and my mood quickly changed. I had infected lots of humans, some of which became very ill. I instantly regretted not only the small mammals that I infected but the symptoms that I chose for my virus as that is how it works on Velanorus. I just wanted to be the same as all my classmates.

Back on Earth, I decided to keep an eye on the people I was infecting. I began to realize that there were children on Earth that also felt that they were different. One girl in particular, helped me realize that being different was okay. she wasn't popular and only had a small number of friends, but she was happy. She knew that she wasn't the same as all the popular kids and she probably never would be, but she was kind. She didn't want to be popular. She was happy. She knew that life wasn't all about being popular and having lots of friends and that if everyone was the same the world would be very boring. People picked on her occasionally, but she knew that those people were likely to be very unhappy deep down which was why they were taking it out on other people. She, along with many other children, helped me realize that I was not alone, and a lot of people were going through the same thing as I am.

When I got back to Viropolis, I noticed that due to my infection rates, I could mutate my virus. I decided to mutate it in such a way that when people catch it, they have very mild symptoms. I also transformed my virus in such a way, that when people recover from their extremely mild symptoms, it grants them immunity to other dreadful viruses similar to my old virus.

When I returned to school after the summer holidays the following year, I was greeted by all my classmates. They all wanted to be like me because I am now a helpful virus. Of course, I made friends with all of them. believe it or not, my new best friend is the boy who was originally mean to me. He turned out to be very lonely. He apologized profusely and explained that he was only being unkind because he had no friends and was very unhappy. They all began calling me

“caring Collin” and wanted to be like me. I was immediately much happier and content with who I was, the whole thing taught me a very valuable lesson. I am who I am for a reason and I don’t want to change a thing ever again.