

Bones to b

My creepy-crawly creations are not for the faint-hearted

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Crouching down with muddy hands in the garden, I gently lifted a worm from the soil.

'Tea's ready!' my mum called out from the back door.

'Coming!' I shouted, quickly grabbing a cup and scooping in some soil.

'You'll be warmer in here,' I whispered, placing the worm inside.

Indoors, Mum peered in my cup and scrunched up her nose.

'It's a worm,' I replied. 'It'll freeze outside.'

It was March 1994 and at 4 years old, I already knew I wasn't like other kids.

While most girls in my class played with dolls and make-up, I liked to be outside turning over rocks and fallen twigs.

Peering into cracks in the ground, looking at the little creatures underneath.

Dead or alive...

At secondary school,

nothing changed.

While the other kids screamed and squealed looking at bugs during biology lessons, I leant in closer.

Even volunteered to help during the dissection lesson.

The sheep's lung had me captivated.

By 13, I'd fully embraced being the odd one out.

I dyed my mousy brown hair black and dressed all in black, too.

And started to paint and draw portraits of dead insects and rodents I found on nature walks.

I was just fascinated with the circle of life.

Over time, I became more experimental.

In 2008, when I was 18, I stood in the kitchen with a pot on the hob.

'Something smells good,' my stepdad said, walking in and heading straight for the pan.

'Wait!' I shouted.

Too late.

He lifted the lid.

While other kids screamed, I leant in closer

Silence... then horror.

See, I wasn't cooking a hearty stew.

Inside the pot was the head of a dead rat.

I was boiling it to remove the flesh, so I could use the skull for a taxidermy experiment.

Sounds crazy, I know.

But I was so dedicated to my art, I hadn't really thought about what my parents would think.

Needless to say, they weren't very happy.

And of course, I threw the pot away once I was done.

Not long after, I decided it was time to leave home.

Probably for the best.

I needed my own space to be creative.

I studied fine art, then spent some time travelling in India.

Then, back in the UK, in 2012 I bought my first resin kit.

I started by setting dead creepy-crawlies, like spiders and woodlice, into pendants and earrings.

And I took them to a local rock festival, showing them off to the crowds.

So many of the festivalgoers stopped and looked closer.



Dead Good was the perfect brand name

'These are dead good,' one of them said.

And just like that, I had the name of my new venture.

Dead Good Jewellery.

Dead good by name – dead good by nature.

At first, it was hard to make ends meet as an artist.

Renting a studio, I slept on a makeshift bed on a sofa in the corner.

Worked on my creations round the clock.

Then in 2015 I got a job in an antiques shop and learnt about sales and customer service.

The owner even gave me a shelf to display my jewellery.

Slowly, I got more and more customers.

Maybe I wasn't the odd one out, after all!

I sold my stuff online too and became a regular stallholder at artisan markets



A ram's skull found on a foraging trip

Best stay out of my studio



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and music festivals.

My collection grew.

Fox and rabbit paws became pendants.

Ladybirds and spiders were set into necklaces

Tiny bones from birds and rodents became earrings.

Everything I used had died naturally.

And I kept my eyes peeled wherever I went.

On walks and bike rides.

Driving through the countryside, I'd pull over if I spotted any roadkill.

I always kept rubber gloves, plastic bags and hand sanitiser in the boot.

'You never know what you're going to find,' I told friends.

In 2021, I moved into a shared house and set

one clear rule.

'If my studio door is closed, don't come in,' I told my housemates.

'Why?' they asked.

'You don't want to know,' I replied.

I knew most people would find my passion pretty strange.

The last thing I wanted was to frighten them with some of

my work in progress.

But over the years, locals got to know me and my art.

Some even helped me source materials.

'One of my lambs has died,' a local farmer told me, phoning me one day.

I collected it straight away in my Ford Mondeo estate and popped it in the boot.

I turned the lamb into a taxidermy piece with a mini

speaker on its back.

Another time, a zoo sent me dead insects.

Opening the parcel, a pile of tarantula skins fell out.

I nearly jumped out of my own skin!

Then I burst out laughing.

'Waste not, want not,' I giggled, popping them in a jar.

'Maybe they'll come in handy one day.'

The zoo also sent me some beautiful beetles,

shiny and iridescent green.

Drying them out first, I then set them in resin to make bracelets.

To me, this is more than just jewellery.

Each piece is a reminder that all life is fragile and temporary.

No, they might not be everyone's cup of tea.

But you'd be amazed at how many people love my creations.

In particular, there's a huge demand for my spider pieces.

I'm so proud of the career I've carved.

But the warning about my studio still stands.

No peeping, unless you want a shock!

Opening the parcel, a pile of tarantula skins fell out

I get a buzz from my work



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