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# The Last Days of the Blue-Blood Harvest

Every year, more than 400,000 crabs are bled for the miraculous medical substance that flows through their bodies—now pharmaceutical companies are finally committing to an alternative that doesn't harm animals.

**The Atlantic** | Sarah Zhang



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**Horseshoe crabs are sometimes** called “living fossils” because they have been around in some form for more than 450 million years. In this time, the Earth has gone through multiple major ice ages, a Great Dying, the formation and subsequent breaking up of Pangaea, and an asteroid impact that killed the dinosaurs and most of life on Earth yet again. In other words, horseshoe crabs have truly seen some shit.

Yet, I would conjecture, some of their strangest experiences must have come in just the past few decades, as one of the soft-bodied mammals that came after dinosaurs began using their hands to scoop horseshoe crabs out of the ocean en masse. Contemporary humans do not deliberately kill the horseshoe crabs—as did previous centuries of farmers

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## *The Atlantic*

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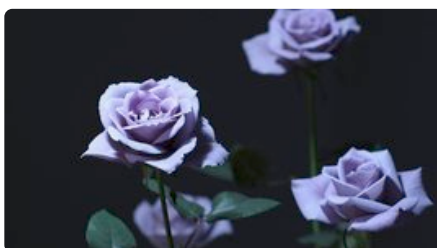
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