



Never had Kevin James doubted it would be the bugs...there was simply no match for their hunger.

“The bugs,” he’d said. “The bugs.”

It started with a jackass who’d just completed a whopping two hours of online edugaming with a hazardous materials theme (he’d scored almost a hundred and he’d only died three times) and now he was way up in the sky flying a super sonic jet loaded with enough ordnance to turn a small nation into glass. His name was Yuri and he was Mexican with a German accent. He’d also just completed a mind-blowing two weeks of flight training and button pushing so he was more than ready to shoot missiles at things. However, they’d neglected to teach him about things you should never shoot missiles at... like nuclear power stations because when you blew them up you never knew what you were going to get.

But Yuri was a big fan of surprises, so he sent a Storm Shadow air-to-surface missile directly into the center of the nuclear power station in his home town.

Bye Mom. Bye Dad, he’d thought as he watched the power station transform into scintillating sparks and flashes and BOOM noises. It was pretty to watch, but it had been seen as a friendly fire attack by the local authorities who immediately declared war on themselves for attaching themselves so everyone just started killing everyone in true gun culture style.

Plus, some would say (if there were some left) that they’d gone way too long without another war to end all wars. And now it was coming right out of the middle of everyone’s worst B-grade horror flick.

You see, unfortunately, there was a covert TOP SECRET biological weapons facility butt-tight beside the nuclear power station (just like in the B-grade horror flicks)

which, thanks to Yuri, was suddenly bathed in radiation that slipped through existential cracks and crannies in the facility and saturated all manner of deadly vials and dishes held in check by people who'd just been radiated to death by the nuclear meltdown next door.

One of those vials contained something so deadly that it showed images of a terrible form of very small creature swarming around naked humans and devouring them. The images were rendered with crayons in a very colorful manner.

And now, those tiny microscopic buggy things inside the tubes and dishes bathed and frolicked in the nuclear heat, laughing and joking with sudden nuclear intelligence and humor, glowing red and yellow and orange and setting the air on fire around them. And then for some unthinkable reason, they started killing each other and when they were all dead...they came back to life and started killing each other again. And this went on and on...throughout the dishes and vials containing...

FRUIT FLIES.

Weaponized fruit flies.

Genuine fruit flies with their core value (annoyance) weaponized to irritate and frustrate the enemies of our ways. They'd been bred, cross-bred, genetically manipulated and fully-funded to produce venom grade vexation. They were the ultimate weapon...something you could give to those you hate as a gift and blame the damage on Mother Nature.

And they were dead so you couldn't kill the little bastards.

Their dishes and vials were labeled **FDFD (FLYING DEAD FRUIT FLIES...**hereafter referred to as the flying dead fruit flies, fruit flies, flies, annoying little fuckers and them/it/they/he and she.).

Within weeks, millions of irate fruit fly haters punched and slapped themselves to death trying to kill the dead little bastards flying in circles around their heads, landing on their noses and burrowing into their ears. Hundreds of millions more poked their eyes out trying to drive their fingers through dead flies.

Swatting them was pointless: they'd just die and re-animate before their lifeless carcasses hit the floor. And they'd be pissed, especially the ones who'd been killed over and over and just wanted payback.

Kevin stared, eyes deadly calm, at the nightmare surrounding him. He would have lost it and gone crazy if he hadn't already lost it and gone crazy. He knew it for certain: this was it...this was the final stand of a species that had outsmarted itself into its own extermination and pretty much doomed all life on Earth to be dragged unhappily with it into the void.

Death licked its spurs on every front; there was no nook or crevice, no scratch or dent free of the dark patina of flying dead fruit flies. He'd watched them buzz out of nowhere to enshroud unwary travelers...like they'd stepped into a puddle of dark stuff and pissed it off and now it slid up their legs and over their thighs and formed a dark cloud around their upper bodies, which eventually toppled when the traveler lost consciousness or the lower part of his or her body disappeared.

But today, Kevin was fighting back. The little bastards had eaten everything, but Kevin was still alive and pissed. There was no one left to gloat in front of, no one to hear him say, "I was right. Ha ha ha! I was right! Ha ha ha! The bugs!" There was only Kevin James and his little friend The Flame Thrower.

"Come and get me!" he screamed. "I have pain for you."

And they came.

The black stuff covering the ground shifted slightly, and then burped and bumped up violently. Unfortunately for Kevin, the fruit flies had heard him and they didn't like his attitude. It was over in seconds. He did manage to put a spurt or two of flame into the bugs' lives but then his body disintegrated in a black cloud of intense chewing sounds and soon only the flame thrower and Kevin's running shoes were left.

The bugs. Ha ha ha!

They'd eaten everything...the humans, the animals, the plants, all the fabrics of clothing and fashionable camping equipment, all the hopes and fears of generations of viruses waiting to ravage the human race...the flying dead fruit flies ate it all.

So, what now?

Well...

It was a dark and unnatural day on the fruit fly planet called Earth. Its surface seethed and squirmed with deep stratum of dead but not really dead but still dead fruit flies,

and they were hungry. They'd eaten everything. There was nothing left to fill the bottomless pits of their dead bug stomachs. Being dead, the need for food was gone but the need to eat had grown into an all-engulfing condition of the dead, like a cross-species need for the non-existent curative powers of fast food. Nowhere, absolutely nowhere, was there a morsel to eat.

Until finally...

"Hey everybody!" said Nadine, one of trillions of flying dead fruit flies enshrouding the Earth. "Rick just ate Charley!"

"You bastard!" said fruit fly Whelan. "We're fruit flies...not cannibals."

Rick looked around at the other fruit flies. His eyes were multi-faceted red balls of fury and bug-righteousness. "He laughed at me and kept saying that I was dead."

"You *are* dead," said Nadine.

Rick thought about this for a moment.

"But he didn't have to rub it in," he said.

"Ya big crybaby," said Derek, who'd never liked Rick when he was alive and sure as hell didn't like him when he was dead. "Always whining about this and whining about that and now you've gone and eaten Charley, you bastard."

"I liked Charley," said Lite Wing Luke (who was rumored to be mating frequently with Nadine and 432 other fruit flies). "Shared a banana with him once."

"I can't believe you ate Charley," said Nadine, her fury growing the more she thought about her dead friend Charley and all his funny little fruit fly ways. "We should nail you to a toothpick and burn you alive!"

The trillions of other flying dead fruit flies stopped whatever they were doing and considered burning Rick on a toothpick. They were out of food and things to talk about. Boredom was drawing in like a steadily rising tide, drowning their joy in being dead but not dead. But there was nobody to aggravate, not even a dormouse. The horde of the dead grabbed desperately onto Nadine's wonderful idea. Burn Rick. Burn him on a toothpick for all other flying dead fruit flies to see what happens when fly eats fly.

"Let's eat Rick!" said Lite Wing Luke.

Around the globe, fruit flies drooled at the thought of eating Rick while others dreamed of burning him on a toothpick, but their thinking was skewed by lack of sleep for the dead don't sleep...they stay awake and think about fly stuff...like eating and shitting and fly fucking.

"Maybe we could drown Rick in sugar water and then toss him against some fly paper," said a fruit fly who wished to remain anonymous. "And then we could eat him."

“We are NOT cannibals!” re-iterated fruit fly Whelan. “We will not dine on our own like the cane toads do.”

The very moment he finished re-iterating, fruit fly Whelan was overpowered by a group of Goth flying dead fruit flies who claimed that, though his culinary theories were out-of-date in a world without food, he did taste very much like fried chicken.

“That was just plain gross,” said Derek. “See what you started, Rick, you bastard.”

Rick had just about had it with Derek. Charley was an OK fruit fly but Rick didn’t like being reminded of being dead over and over until he was actually beginning to think he was dead, which he *was* of course, but he didn’t have to think about it.

“Hey!” yelled Billy Wing Boy, a young dead fruit fly with impractical dreams of someday owning a sheep farm. “We’re dead! We don’t need food! We don’t need to eat each other.”

Every fruit fly on the planet stopped and felt it. Long moments of realization, epiphany and horror followed their silence...

SHIT. WE’RE DEAD.

No matter what they ate or how much they ate, they’d still be dead.

Dead was the one opinion they couldn’t argue with.

They didn’t need to eat.

Rick didn’t need to eat Charley.

But he did.

Which made the rest wonder: Why did Rick eat Charley?

Opinions about Rick were beginning to sour. Everyone had loved Charley. If there had ever been a dead fruit fly with a heart even close as big as his then they must have just mistaken some other fruit fly for Charley. He’d helped so many recently dead fruit flies to accept their new lifestyle and not waste their time on things that no longer mattered...like eating and shitting. (Yes, dead fruit flies didn’t shit.) They were free to just annoy and pester and...well...all the good stuff.

And then Rick ate Charley. Who knows...maybe Rick would be the first dead fruit fly to shit.

Which of course would be highly unnatural and probably smell like hell. A general consensus spread throughout the world of dead fruit flies...which, at the moment, was the entire world...and it grew and spread until it was a single wave of resolve: *Rick must die!* Screamed the dark chorus.

But Rick was dead.

He must die again. Screamed many in the chorus.

But how must we kill the dead? Screamed still others in the chorus.

We must chop him into little dead pieces and feed him to the void! Screamed a small group of crazies that nobody ever listened to but today they seemed to be picking up an audience.

“But maybe Rick had a good reason to eat Charley,” said a dead fruit fly named Chuckles. However, no one was in a mood to listen to anything that would stifle everyone’s need to pick on Rick.

And then the doubt was raised. By Nadine of course: Since Rick had an appetite but the dead don’t eat...was Rick really dead or just playing dead? Was Rick using the plight of the fruit flies as a ploy to eat his own kind? Theories quickly became rampant. Disinformation spread like a broken jar of marbles. Rumors spun into micro cosmos that grew into storms of bad intel.

The dead may savor and salivate, but *they must not eat*.

If Rick wasn’t dead, he was going to be.

Chewing on a bit of Charley’s left rear leg, Rick was beginning to feel that his life was in for a big change, which was OK with him considering that he had the rest of time to try out new things but he was feeling a lot of negative vibes from his fellow fruit flies.

Kill Rick forever and kill him again forever! yelled a group of dead fruit flies who secretly wished that were eating Charley (or Rick) because for them, eating, though it wasn’t necessary, was a pleasant diversion from having absolutely nothing to do; plus, they hated Rick for being the bug that none of them could be.

Rick slurped up the remains of Charley’s left antenna and burped. He wiped his fruit fly lips with a fruit fly fore claw and burped again. He looked around at a landscape made into a pantomime from hell with everything solid black with the dead, but not dead, bodies of trillions of fruit flies. He had a sense that those dark masses didn’t like him, that they wanted to kill him forever or something equally mean. He shat out Charley’s remains. The other fruit flies were astounded. They’d never seen a dead fruit fly shitting before. There was a bliss on all the facets of Rick’s eyes, a general aura of satisfaction that encased Rick’s bug body.

Just as the universal need to kill Rick forever was beginning to fire up the fruit fly horde like heat bringing water to a boil...Nadine couldn’t take it anymore. She looked to her side at Lite Wing Luke and began to salivate. Her abdomen and thorax filled with craving. She dropped all fruit fly pride and jumped on Lite Wing Luke’s back and started munching on him and crunching on him and sucking the juices out of his dead body. She gorged herself on his left wing, gobbling it within seconds and

chewing across his back to his other wing and eagerly submitting to her flesh-of-fly lust.

Few things go unnoticed in the world of fruit flies and the world had just become one giant fruit fly glued together by a planet. Like quantum entanglement, every dead fly on the planet knew that Nadine was eating Lite Wing Luke and they could hear his screams: “No, no...I’m dead! Stop eating me!”

But not a single fruit fly heart was broken that day. Not one. Instead, every fruit fly in every square inch of planet Earth was inspired by Nadine’s devouring of Lite Wing Luke. This was something new...fly eating fly. It was against all the rules, against Nature.

So, giving up on nature, the fruit flies sniffed each others’ bodies and gently ran their proboscis’s across the legs and wing tips of their neighbors. Feelings stirred deep in their abdomens and thoraxes. Their multi-faceted eyes glowed red and hungry. If Nadine and Rick could feast, then so could they...*and so they would.*

And they did.

This was the species that had eaten all the spiders and snakes of the world, slurped them up, venom and all, and snacked them out of being.

Now...just how scary is that?

“There’s a fruit fly in my shower...a *dead* fruit fly!”

“OH MY GOD! BURN YOUR HOUSE DOWN!”

THAT scary.

And now they were the only conscious beings left on the planet. There was nobody and nothing left to scare the shit out of. There was nothing left to eat...not even a tree or a dormouse. And no bananas.

The flying dead fruit flies looked around and all they saw were more flying dead fruit flies. Bit-by-bit, they began to think alike: Maybe we shouldn’t burn Rick on a toothpick. Maybe we should follow Rick’s example and eat our brothers and sisters, our cousins and parents...whoever these fruit flies might be. But what the hell, they were sure they’d all taste the same.

The idea spread faster than bad information. It jumped from one fruit fly head to another fruit fly head and turned into a giant splash of thought that crashed out of reality everywhere on the planet at the same time and the flying dead fruit flies turned on each other in a global devouring of mandibles and red eyes: Chomp the eyes and they can’t see you chomp the mandibles and they can’t eat back. The early chompers thought they had it made. It was a chomp fest and full bellies all the way. They gorged fly flesh and sucked fly juice. They devised gourmet ways to eat wings and

legs that involved instructions understood only by fruit flies...the dead ones. It was an orgy of fruit fly essence and no dead fruit fly would ever be the same afterwards.

After eating Lite Wing Luke, Nadine scurried over the tops of fruit fly shells that Rick had left behind and jumped on his back as he was eating Derek because he'd never liked Derek when he was alive and he sure didn't like him when he was dead and right now Nadine didn't like either of them, except as appetizers.

"What the hell!" screamed Derek at Rick.

"What the hell!" screamed Rick at the Nadine.

"What the hell!" screamed Nadine as Chuckles, who'd been ignored by all the other fruit flies, ripped off her left wing and slurped it down, just as Nadine rolled over and chomped into one of Chuckles legs.

"Ow!" said Chuckles as Rick rolled around and bit into Nadine's thorax.

"Ow!" said Nadine as Derek rolled over and chewed off one of Rick's legs.

"Ow!" said Rick as Charlie's mandibles re-animated somewhere inside him and started eating Rick from the inside.

All the cannibal flying dead fruit flies were amazed when Rick's thorax exploded and released a storm of angry dead Charlies, all of them screaming: "You ATE me, you bastard! You ATE me!"

And they swarmed over Rick, chomping and chewing everything left of Rick and then swarmed over Derek because he had Rick's other leg in his stomach and Charley's storm wanted it all.

And the fly lust spread. All the remaining parts of Nadine, Chuckles, Left Lane Luke, Billy Wing Bog, Whelan and every other dead fruit fly in the world, whether inside or outside a fruit fly, suddenly needed to eat fruit flies, which made sense since they were all that was left on the planet even though it didn't really make sense because they were dead.

But isn't that just like life?

Time passed and the fruit flies feasted on themselves until there was just one fruit fly left...a tiny ball of fruit fly containing the surface of an entire planet...and still the size of a fruit fly.

It shook. That plump little fruit fly shook.

It shimmered. It shimmered like a dead fruit fly shimmers.

It quaked. It quaked like a black jelly blob of fruit fly madness.

It farted and burped and exploded. Exploded.

OOPS.

“God, that’s an ugly fucked-up mess,” said Yeddie as he wiped away a fleck of blue snot dangling from his fourth eye on the left of his seventh nose.

Bor Bort Billmon stared with disgust at the wall-sized monitor. He shook his head. “A whole fucking planet. There used to be water, trees...life.”

The two stared at a giant black ball floating in space, its surface shifting and shimmering like black living tar.

“I don’t think I’m gonna eat anything for a long time,” said Yeddie.

“I hate those things,” said Bor Bort. “You get just one on a clennanna (alien talk for banana) and everything in sight is a breeding ground.” He raised his single eye (located on his upper lip) and said, “But a whole fucking planet?”

“Even that green shit on ARB23H wasn’t this gross,” said Yeddie. “I’ll take worms over fruit flies any day. At least the worms don’t fly in your face when you’re eating.”

“They say these ones are really nasty,” said Bor Bort.

“I can see that,” said Yeddie, staring at the monitor image of a planet shrouded in black death. “This is where the humanoids were growing, isn’t it?”

“Yep,” said Bor Bort. “Not surprised at the odds the machines gave them for the last few thousand years...machines had it right. Fuckers were doomed even though they showed so much promise...opposable thumbs, bi-cameral brains...all that, and the idiots couldn’t survive a fruit fly infestation.”

“Looks like a really aggressive infestation to me,” said Yeddie. “So, we take a sample, neutralize the threat and head home?”

“You got it, bud,” said Bor Bort as he guided the sampling craft in close enough to teleport a small sample from the surface of the planet. “Don’t like the thought of bringing any of that shit aboard though.”

Yeddie nodded his 107 eyes and 70 noses in agreement as the two watched the sampling craft head back to their ship and enter the cargo bay.

“And now for the planet,” said Bor Bort. “Care to do the honors?”

“Sure,” said Yeddie as he pushed a blue button, a red button, a green button and the blue button again.

A thin beam of light shot out from their ship directly into the center of the planet.

“We’d better get out of here,” said Yeddie excitedly.

And they rushed off into the cosmos as the former planet Earth, third planet from Sol, started all over again as a red mass of lava.

Deep down deep in the dark moon-sized hull of the intergalactic star ship Anthos II, something stirred. A tiny red glow winked on, and another...and another. And was that a fruit fly smile? A smile of satisfaction as Nadine savored the taste of Rick's leg and now wrapped herself around the thought that she and her fruit fly horde were on their way to somewhere new to devour.

THE END

(I've been using the same bio for years and people have been reminding me how stupid it is and that I should do something a little more humorous and less stupid...so here goes.)

MY NEW BIO



Biff Mitchell is an obscure artist and writer banished to Atlantic Canada's merciless winters. Biff worked hard to achieve this status by doing pretty much everything a starving artist could do to remain starving. Someday he'll write a book about it and he'll demand to be paid in vast amounts of exposure and possibly even give his visual work away to people who will promise to mention him in the About page on their websites.

He used to teach creative writing workshops (called Writing Hurts Like Hell) and held classes in hot tubs and dark alleys at night until several of his students drowned and others went into the alleys and never came out. He turned the workshop into a book and has recently learned that many of those who bought it have either drowned or disappeared.

Biff dreams about someday living in a tropical paradise and writing his masterpiece, which he actually wrote many years ago but didn't like it, so he burned it. Every page. Not a bad thing these days, but not so cool when the whole thing was type-written and there was no carbon copy. Remember carbon copies? Biff wishes he'd used them back then.

The idea is still there, simmering after half a century, ready to pounce out into the world as soon as he's living in that tropical paradise.

Still morbidly curious?

Visit <https://biffmitchell.com/> for stuff in general (including free creativity workshops)

Blowing Up: Just in time for Christmas gift giving

(Give them laughter this year.)

"I chose to review this book because I know it's difficult to find readers for short fiction. I didn't have any expectations, which is fortunate, because this volume would have violated them – whatever they were. Blowing Up doesn't fit well into any category. A mixture of satire and science fiction, spiritual pondering and scatological polemics, the book is utterly original."

Lisabet Sarai, Goodreads Reviewer

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