

## From The Bugs by Don Zolidis

BLACKWING, a cockroach – any gender

*All the bugs in the yard are threatened by a human putting in a swimming pool. Blackwing, a swashbuckling cockroach, tells a story of survival and daring.*

BLACKWING

If you listen. Gather round, insects! Time to hear a tale of swashbuckling adventure!

*The bugs settle in to listen.*

The human –

*Blackwing points at the human appears elsewhere on stage, scratching themselves.*

Is massive, it's true. A giant. Almost unstoppable. And that might scare some of you.

*The bugs nod and mutter amongst themselves.*

But at night, under the cover of darkness, I emerge. It can't see at night. I taunt it.

*Blackwing runs up to the human and waves her antennae in the human's face.*

For fun, I run over its face while it's sleeping.

*Human mimes being asleep. Blackwing runs her fingers over the human's face. The human brushes them away, still sleeping.*

Maybe it's having a pleasant dream. Cuddling a loved one. But it's me. It's always me.

Sometimes I wait by its eyes, just watching it, waiting for it to wake up.

*The other bugs are impressed.*

*Blackwing puts her face right in front of the human's face. Then she darts away.*

But mostly I visit the kitchen!

<BRIANT

*I've been there. It's glorious.>*

BLACKWING

Oh yes! An open soda can here. A dirty dish in the sink. A magnificent feast!

<GRANT

*That's what I was saying! >*

BLACKWING

In the night, I am like one of the gods. You ants lay a trail for your friends and run. Not me. I *linger*. I *savor* the bounty before me. I make sure to touch it all – slip into the pantry, find an open box of cereal – go for a swim. You live like beggars, my friends. I live like a king.

<DIANA

*This is insulting.>*

BLACKWING

Have you ever eaten an entire muffin, butterfly? I think not.

Then one night, the human awoke for a midnight snack.

*Blackwing eats something as the human wakes up and walks towards the kitchen.*

*The human scratches themselves and flips on the light.*

<MINDY

*Look out!*

MAY

*I'm scared!>*

BLACKWING

Fast as lightning, I scuttled to the refrigerator! I scaled the sheer face of it. Almost unclimbable, except for a hundred magnets – word art poetry and Christmas cards providing me with footholds.

*Blackwing mimes scuttling up the refrigerator.*

I held still. Very still. Until –

*The Human spots the cockroach. Freaks out in slow motion.*

It was huge and slow – monstrous eyes as wide as beetles. And then...

*The human takes off their shoe.*

*The bugs react in fear and horror.*

<CICADA

*The shoe!*

MINDY

*I can't watch!*

BRIANT

*Not the shoe! >*

BLACKWING

I said to myself, *I will not die this day*. The human raised its shoe of rubbery death. It aimed. It reared back. And I sprang. And while I sprang my wings spread wide –

*Blackwing spreads out her trenchcoat like wings.*

And I aimed straight for the monster.

*The human, reacting in slow motion, recoils, eyes wide in horror.*

Right for its face.

Humans always react badly when you fly at them. They think we can't fly. But we can fly. Oh how we fly.

I aimed for its giant, dumb nose. But the human was moving. And I missed.

*The human continues to rear in slow motion, mouth open.*

Its mouth was open, it sucked in its breath like a great whirlpool – and I landed –

*Blackwing points inside the human's mouth –*

Three of my feet touched the glistening swamp of the beast's tongue – I thought I was a goner!

*The human sputters in horror and tries to get the cockroach out of their mouth.*

But I realized something. The human was afraid! It couldn't bear to eat me! It cried out in fear – great tears of water sprang from its eyes! It fell backwards into a cabinet like a toppled colossus – WHAM! Its melon-head struck the cabinet behind it with the force of a nuclear explosion – which I would still survive.

*The human does all this, hits their head, knocks themselves out.*

*The bugs all applaud and cheer.*

Victory. Freedom. I crawled inside a chocolate bar's wrapper and ate until I could eat no more.

*Blackwing takes a bow.*