

Bedbugs

SERIALIZED



CHAPTER FIFTEEN

IRENE FALLS ASLEEP

Over the past hour, the slender moonbeam had slid toward the top of the four-poster bed. Now it shone upon Irene's face.

"Mercy me," she said, blinking twice. "How drowsy I suddenly feel."

Irene's jaw dropped.

Bug One sprang to his feet. "Yawn alert!" he shouted. "Take cover, boys!"

The bedbugs scrambled under the checkered quilt just as Irene made a wide, windy yawn. She tapped her lips with a fist and said, "Excuse me."

Bug One peeked out from under the covers. "Too many bedbugs have been lost by straying too close to a yawn, madam."

"Yawns are almost as dangerous as sneezes, my dear," said Bug Two.

"Hiccups, however, are fun," Bug Three added. "The bouncy ride is a blast."

"Now I think I'll shut my eyes for a moment," Irene mumbled.

"Is there a last request before you drift off to sleep, madam?" Bug One asked.

“Yes, little bug, there is. My mom and dad told me to sleep tight after tucking me in. But my quilt has come undone. Could you bedbugs tuck me in again?”

The three bedbugs stood up straight. You could almost see them swell with pride.

“That would be an honor, madam,” said Bug One.

The three bedbugs marched down the right side of Irene’s quilt. Three in a row, they stood along the crease where Irene’s body met the mattress.

“One, two, three!” called Bug One. “Forward we go, boys.”

Like tiny bulldozers, the bugs pushed the quilt under Irene until it was tucked in good and tight. Next, they marched across her body to the other side and repeated the pushing.

“Tight enough, madam?” asked Bug One.

A smile spread across Irene’s face. “I’m as snug as a bug in a rug,” she said.

“Ahh!” went all three bedbugs, recalling the last time they had snuggled up in a rug.

“Now nightie night, bedbugs,” said Irene.

“Good night, Irene,” the bedbugs said together.

Down, down, down came Irene’s eyelids until her upper lashes mingled with the lower ones.

The bedbugs glanced out the window. They beckoned to the Man-In-The-Moon, who winked, and the narrow moonbeam disappeared.

(Listen [Bedbugs Redux song](#))



On the dewy grass outside the bedroom window, a man dressed in silver leaped to his feet. On a far-off cloud, a toothless fairy shook a leather sack full of baby teeth. High up in the starry sky, an ancient

man in a white uniform pedaled toward the bedroom on his rickety bicycle. Not far behind him galloped a wild, black mare.

Underneath Irene's bed, a nasty fellow snickered. Although Irene's long day was finally over, the bedbug's work had just begun.

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