

House of Seduction and Doom

By Enid Flaherty

Tiny, beige, winged creatures, no bigger than my pinky fingernail, flutter out of my kitchen cabinets, like eager tourists disembarking from a bus at an intriguing ruin.

They are Indianmeal moths, whose entire life cycle from egg to adulthood is generally six to eight weeks. In a year's time five generations might colonize my pantry. Upon reaching adulthood, the life expectancy is only five days, but in those five days males and females can build a nation. The female moth is capable of laying *hundreds* of eggs.

It is *disgusting* to know that foodstuffs that I buy in *sealed boxes* may already be infested. On their journey through my food, the larvae spin silken threads which collect miniscule grains of spices, or cornmeal in delicate chains. They snuggle in my rice until disturbed by the rightful owner. The smooched face adults swoop upwards when I open a cereal box. Then, they fly around my kitchen.

The immediate remedy calls for throwing away all suspicious sources in my pantry. (I have wasted tons of expensive food this way.) The next step, is to remove every remaining item of food and thoroughly clean the cabinets and shelves, even the remotest corners and cracks. Before returning food to the shelves I carefully inspect for signs of infestation.

Recently, I had a sighting of a single moth. After completing the "clean up", I drove to Tony's Hardware for help. Tony, who knows how to fix *everything* had the unfailing best solution. He sold me a product called "Revenge". Even the name satisfied me.

Its fold over triangular packet is made of heavy weight paper. I opened the top flap, and set the Lilliputian cave on the kitchen counter. The bottom flap which forms the "floor" of the structure has a pad on it which is infused with female pheromones and coated with a sticky poison. The pheromones give off a sexual aroma, so enticing, that male moths *cannot resist*. Into the paper cave they go where their wings and feet are stuck in deadly goo.

Wouldn't you think a moth would see all his dead comrades in there and think before he leaps? But no; all he knows is, "There's a beautiful blond in here somewhere!"

It's a little like falling in love. There are red flags all over the place, but who wants to see them? The allure and excitement of sex can elbow rational thinking right out of the way. And think of the

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female moths. Where are they? Huddling in a corner with mounting anxious anticipation wondering, "Where is charming Billy? "

At last count, sixty five (that's right, sixty five!) potential fathers of hundreds of new babies have met their demise in this House of Seduction and Doom. There's a lesson here for us humans. Proverbs 22:3 says, "A prudent man (and woman) sees danger and takes refuge, but the simple keep going and suffer for it." And we hear Rogers and Hammerstein sing out, "Hello young lovers...be careful out there."