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Jake's Adventures

(Sept. 9, 2005) Round Two in the battle with a family of raccoons seemed to end satisfactorily, but Jake was out \$432.50 and his house was in a shambles. Life was getting back to normal, until his cat got the rips. Bill Heard, Editor --
Bill Heard, Editor

CONCLUSION:

They Came From the Canyon A Homeowner's Horror Story

By JAKE SATIN-JACOBS

Polly the cat never seemed to mind the raccoons. I thought that she might be disturbed by the animal noises coming from the ceiling. She wasn't.

The raccoons had been evicted, the holes in the ceiling had been patched with duct tape, the entrances had been sealed and the ceiling repair job had been placed on my list of honey-dos. Everything seemed right with the world. And then Polly got weird.

Polly always liked to drink from the running water in the bathroom sink. I bought her a water fountain of her own from one of those catalogs that people in the third world never comprehend -- the ones that sell air conditioners you wear around your neck and bug zappers shaped like badminton rackets. It was extravagant, but she loved it and it kept her out of my bathroom sink.

Then one day, soon after the departure of the evil ones, Polly returned to the bathroom to drink. She wouldn't go near the fountain in the laundry room.

And she developed another strange habit. She has always been howling, ankle-biting and insistent at mealtime. But a few days after the departure of the upstairs neighbors, she became Polly the Patient. While I fixed her food, she sat quietly outside the kitchen door and waited.

Was it a brain tumor?

When she sensed I was beginning to move toward the laundry room where she gets fed, she would bound through the kitchen, barely touching down, suck her food down in three gulps, and dive through

her cat door like *La Femme Nikita* hitting the laundry chute. I was thinking brain tumor.

I was about to make a vet appointment when I noticed a flea on the kitchen counter. For some reason, I thought to look up. A flea landed on my glasses. I looked down at my white socks. They were covered with fleas. I began hopping around like the ingénue in a West Hollywood all-male production of *Giselle*, making the kind of sounds you hear at a pre-adolescent girls' slumber party.

It seems that, when the raccoons departed, they had failed to take everything with them. Polly was not sick, just smart. She knew fleas were falling from the ceiling and living in the carpet upon which sat her food and her fountain. She wanted no part of them.

I bombed the kitchen, the living room and the upstairs. It didn't help. I exploded a second series of flea bombs. Polly sat near the kitchen door shaking her kitty head in disgust. I removed the lights from the light fixtures and set bombs directly under the sockets, discharging them into the ceiling. The fleas kept coming. I considered going nuclear.

King of the flea killers

And then a fellow employee recommended a particular product that she said would "kill any \$%&* thing." She winked when she said it. She's been widowed twice under mysterious circumstances. It seemed like a good recommendation. It was to be pump-sprayed directly into the primary flea residence. I blasted some through the light fixtures and I thought it went pretty well.

So once again, the nightmare seemed to have ended, until one day Patti came home and found thousands of flies dead in front of each of the doors and windows. She cleaned them up and, within an hour there were thousands more. I arrived to find her crying on the porch. I called Ray the Exterminator.

Ray recommended Ernie, who charged \$55 to tell me that there was something dead somewhere and that the flies would keep coming till the dead whatever had completely decayed. He implicated the raccoons, but recommended against opening up the ceiling. He was willing to set off a bomb for another \$50. I told him I thought I could handle the job. Eventually, the flies were all gone.

The various insecticides cost about \$45, but I think our house is now toxic enough that we can apply for EPA superfund money. I will fill out the application.

Sweet little robbers?

I know there are those among you who believe that we can, in fact, "all just get along" and that raccoons are cute with their sweet little robber masks, their precious little hands and their nifty "food washing" behavior.

Well, pal, you're just wrong.

They have little robber masks because they're relentless, immoral, incorrigible thieves. Using their "cute little hands," they can rip the aluminum siding off your house to gain entry. And believe me, they don't wash anything. They're filthy, vile, nasty pigs.

I offer some simple advice: If your home is ever invaded by raccoons, remove your valuables, your precious photographs, and your pets. Then burn your house to the ground, walk away and never look back.

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