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A Bad Egg

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A Bad Egg

A bad egg.

I never thought of those three words as anything more than an idiom. Like “the black sheep.” A miscreant. Trouble. I get it.

I had no idea.

Last summer, we bought some farm-fresh eggs from the Amish in Indiana. Those Amish, they’re always up to something fresh. “Watch out, though,” the Amish warned, “Every so often you get a fertilized egg mixed in.”

“How can you tell,” I ask the Amish, “Do baby chicks burst forth when you crack ‘em?”

“Well, not exactly,” the Amish replied, not unlike the ominous character in the first act of a horror film. “But you’ll know.”

I had no idea.

A week or so later, at the peak of the July heat wave, the temperature outside hit 100 degrees and, to me, some farm-fresh egg salad sounded delicious. So, I placed a few of the Amish eggs in a pan of water and set it to boil.

A few minutes later, I noticed that one of the eggs looked wrong. It had broken through its brown shell in a way not unlike the Hulk tears through his purple pants. The egg white was not white, but dark gray and something even darker—and wronger—seemed to lurk within.

“A bad egg,” I thought, shrugging it off as no biggie. It happens. I didn’t want to spoil the rest of the batch, so I carefully removed the abhorrent thing with a large spoon.

Warning: If you ever find yourself in this situation, carefully wrap the

nastiness in a paper towel, take it to the farthest reaches of your property and bury it in the ground. Do NOT put it in the garbage disposal.

I had no idea.

I placed it in the sink but it was too engorged to fit down the hole. I gave it a slight tap with said spoon to push it through. It was like setting off a bomb. The reaction was swift. The smell...

oh, the smell...scampered like an evil sprite up my nose, slithered down my throat, grabbed hold of the contents of my stomach and gave a painful tug north. Before I fell into a full on retch, I managed to push it the rest of the way down the disposal, blast the water and flick the switch. The sound was thick and crunchy. Was there a faint scream escaping the drain, or was it rising from within me? I dashed for the powder room off the kitchen holding my breath and desperately on to my breakfast. My wife entered the kitchen. “What is happening!?”

I could barely respond, afraid that a full explanation might be punctuated with vomit. “Lemons!” I gurgled. “Shove lemons down the disposal!” I’d noticed a couple of lemon wedges as I’d retracted the eggs from their farm-fresh carton in the fridge.

She did, gagging and opening the window. We opened all the windows; the smell was horrid. Thick. Suffocating. Remember, it was 100 degrees outside. And no breeze.

We did not have egg salad for lunch. I had no idea.

I do, however, now have a greater appreciation for the term, a bad egg.

Jeff Laird