

Box Elder Bugs

By Valerie Hockert

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Science Fiction 105 pages

LOGLINE:

After being lured to an exclusive orbital restaurant by a mysterious billionaire, two friends discover the elite clientele are actually evolved insects in human skin—and they're next on the menu.

SUMMARY:

In this gripping sci-fi thriller synopsis, two friends, Jackie and Dot, are enticed by a wealthy man named Omar to visit the elite Space Point Restaurant. Drawn in by his apparent wealth, they quickly realize the high-priced establishment is actually a disguised spacecraft that takes off into orbit. Once airborne, they notice chilling sci-fi movie tropes coming to life: passengers sporting bizarre, insect-like features, an eerie background buzzing noise, and structural doors carved from unusual boxelder wood.

The situation escalates when Jackie accidentally triggers an uproar in the restroom by using hairspray, which an enigmatic Cowboy ally explains is feared by the crew as lethal bug spray. Jackie and Dot soon uncover a dark room where Omar—now sporting visible antennae—is leading a hidden collective. Paralyzed by Omar's touch, the girls wake up in a nearby orbiting hotel docked next to the ship. There, the Cowboy reveals a terrifying alien conspiracy: the restaurant's inhabitants are actually Boxelder bugs-turned-human. These shapeshifting alien insect creatures live among us, and their powerful leader plots to blend alien DNA with human DNA to overtake humanity. Armed with pressurized cans of soap spray—the creatures' ultimate weakness—Jackie, Dot, and the Cowboy must navigate a treacherous alien invasion plot to sabotage the ship and escape to safety.

AWARDS:

Bridge Fest
Selected Writer
2026

Inroads Screenwriting Fellowship
Honorable Mention
2026