

The Twirly

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It didn't take much for us to become some of the biggest, fattest, blue flies anyone had ever seen. We weren't really fat - just big as blue flies go. It was a good gig. We'd travel the upper Midwest through most the summer, then ride south with the carnies through the winter months. Always moving – we liked that about it. We'd hang around the Tasty Queen snack trailer, the garbage cans, Port-O-Lets, ticket counters – anywhere the people went was cake - strewn with candy wrappers, soda cans, cotton candy stems, tossed away gum. It was a veritable cornucopia of partially hydrogenated monosodium-glutamate, with all the artificial flavoring you could ask for.

In the late afternoons, we'd swoop over to the rafters above the Twirly. It's where we hung out the most. It was centrally located to the rest of the “Banzini -Traveling Fun Fair & HOLIDAZE Show.” This particular afternoon we were at the County Fair Grounds in Belvedere, Illinois.

It had been another long, hot summer. On this particularly day, a farm just north of the Fair Grounds was running a honey wagon. It pulled most of us away. It was just Rudy, Wizzle, and me - up in the rafters. We were digesting a cotton candy lunch and waiting for Mike to reload the Twirly. During the peak crowds, he could squeeze fifteen, maybe sixteen in. The Twirly was one of the oldest rides of the show. It was made mostly of wood. It had a 1947 Bridgeport diesel engine that turned the gears through the crankcase. The old diesel choked blue smoke when it started up.

The Twirly had a faded painting of a pretty girl with long blonde hair flying through the air on a rope swing. There was painted above her of a wild looking lightning bolt

striking down from above her. It was all pretty faded by now, and some delinquent had drawn big boobs on the girl with a can of spray paint, and written "*The Whirly Twirly Screwed My Girly*" underneath.

Mike had tried sanding it off and painting over it - but you could still make it out. The Twirly was a barrel room with a wooden floor, twelve foot across. Mike would take tickets, and then line them all up around the wall. He'd tell them to stand up straight, and hold on tight. Sometimes he'd separate the big ones to help balance things out. He liked pulling dates apart and sticking them across from each other. When he went back out, he'd turn and look them all in the eye and say, "okay, here we go." Then he'd slowly drop the lock on the door, which was a big iron latch you could see closing from the inside. Once the door closed, it was completely dark inside, except for the few tiny cracks that light could get through. He'd throw down the big lever with a clunk, to start the Twirly spinning. The room would creak and crank into a slow spin at first, but it didn't take it long to get going - faster and faster, until the centrifugal force would stick them all to the walls. Then once the room was spinning fast enough, Mike would throw a second lever that made another loud creaking noise, and then the floor would slowly drop out from under them - and there they were, stuck like glue, to the walls, spinning faster and faster. It was like being suspended in mid-air - with gravity and the speed of the Twirly keeping you stuck to the spinning wall.

Anyways, we'd keep a sharp eye out at this point. It was here where things would drop. Things just came loose - fell out of pockets - released from otherwise tight grips. This particular time it would be the best we'd ever seen it. We climbed out to the edge to watch as the Twirly was spinning at her peak. Then, this one kid in a green striped tee

shirt threw up his lunch. He gaged a few times, and then flopped up his whole gut full of puke. In one big hurl, he tossed up an iridescent ball of vomit that floated out to the center of the Twirly and just hung there – a living ball of puke. We smelled it right off. Vomit - smelled good to us.

Right away the screaming went to maximum load. The girls were really letting it go. You could see it on their faces. They were freak'n horrified. They were hollering blood curdling, petrifying screams, and raking their heads back and forth like banshees. It got us up on our haunches - quivering to see how this would turn out. Usually, the Twirly was over before they really wanted it to be. But this time, it dragged on and on. Ol' Mike must have gotten side-tracked. The Ol' Twirly just kept spinning and spinning with that pink and green puke-ball hanging out there – trapped in the vortex. We could see big chunks of hot dog, cotton candy, caramel nugget, n' spit. The bigger pieces all bunched in around the center, and the thinner, slimier stuff was coming apart and going back together around the edges. Our keen sense of smell had us dizzy with expectations. Drool was running down our chests. Then, just when we thought it couldn't get any better, a red headed chubby girl wearing a pink angora sweater, gagged twice, and tossed up what looked like a green Snow Cone, wrapped in what looked like Fritos. It wasn't as much as the boy, but it was enough to float out there and join up. This was becoming a magical moment. We'd never seen anything like it. The puke was coming apart and going back together like a living, morphing, vomity, gooey asteroid - just floating out there waiting to land.

When Ol' Mike finally did get back and pulled up on the lever, the Bridgeport choked a cloud of blue smoke, and the wooden floor slowly creaked back up under their feet.

Mike dropped another one of his Marlboros to the ground and squished it out with the heel of his boot. The slower the Twirly went the flatter that slime ball got. Until at last, at just the right speed, it broke up all together and splattered each and every one of them. It came apart, and hit them like an asteroid comet square in the upper chest, and across the face. It was bedlam - stinking, slippery, gooey bedlam. The kid in the striped tee shirt hit the floor, scrambling through the gooey mess to get out of there before anyone could catch him. He was moving like he was afraid for his life.

Everyone was slipping and sliding around in the vomit and falling all over each other. Some of the kids who had held it together up til this point, were now tossing their guts, and letting it fly all in every direction. It was mayhem! Beautiful, vomity mayhem! We hit the air like fat kids diving into a tub of butter before the Twirly had come to a full stop. We had to be careful though. People were scary enough under normal circumstances, much less slipping and sliding all over each other in a big ol' pile of regurgitation. Wizzle almost cashed in his chips that day. He swooped down and landed on a girl's shirt collar – just as she drew the back of her hand across her face to remove a fresh slime ball. She gagged a couple of times, and then up-chucked a Baby Ruth bar, and knocked Wizzle so deep into a pile of ooze that he disappeared completely. He had to thank her for it though, in the end, as he licked his wings dry. By the end of that day, we couldn't move. We had to crash that night by rolling down between some floor joists on a warm pile of squishy vomit. It wasn't until the next day that we could muster up enough strength to fly back up to the safety of the rafters.

We spent the rest of that summer in the Twirly. Mike hosed her out and tried bleaching her some to get rid of the smell, but we could always find it, tucked down and squished

between the cracks. No, it didn't take much for flies like us to get to be some of the biggest, fattest, and happiest blue flies anyone had ever seen.

Note: This is a true story. Some literary license had to be taken on behalf of the flies.