

Martin & James vs. The Evil Mosquito Scientist  
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Welcome once again to another rip roaring Martin & James adventure!

Sounds a bit like Stan Lee introducing one of the Marvel comic books. That's not a bad thing, just acknowledging the inspiration for that. In many ways you can thank (or blame) Stan Lee and Marvel for the story you are reading. I grew up with stacks (and stacks) of comics. Covers falling off, pages bent, some tears - well worn, well loved. Those adventures - Spider-Man, Superman, and all the rest - sparked my imagination, as they've done for countless others. The heroics were sometimes over the top and the powers can make you laugh now, but the imagination to get those onto paper is what intrigued me. Who could think of a story of a spider biting some kid - some smart, nerd kid! - and that kid gets "spider-powers". Utterly ridiculous. And utterly intriguing.

There was a simple, almost naive, feel to the stories. It seems the stories have grown up with their audience. Everything needs to be complicated stories and complicated characters. While this is much more mature writing, I can also see that the pure, kid-like imagination is getting lost. Just losing yourself in a story isn't enough now. There has to be multiple sub-plots and story lines that run for issue after issue and cross over with other stories. Sometimes, you just want a hero that punches a bad guy. Of course, with Spider-man, you also want a couple corny jokes in there.

That's what I hope you get out of this story. Is it a bit silly? Absolutely. Is it a bit ridiculous? Again, absolutely. Is it fun to sip your coffee, or chocolate milk, and just enjoy the adventure and see how James does his R2-D2 act this time?

Absolutely.

Enjoy!

Cha-chick.

The sound of the shotgun chambering another round was loud, but couldn't cover the incessant buzzing. The sound droned relentlessly and seemed to come from everywhere, causing the red-headed boy to cover his ears. Looking at the man with the shotgun, his eyes grew as large as dinner plates.

"Look out, sir!" James yelled, frantically waving his hands to point behind Martin.

Behind the ruined shell of a tank, Martin turned awkwardly without leaving the crouch position. Aiming, he fired and immediately chambered another round. The giant flying creature erupted as the shotgun shell drove through it. The membranous wings floated to the ground, but Martin had already spun the other way to take out yet another of the dive bombing mosquitoes.

Inside the tank, James popped his head up to look around before disappearing again behind the scant cover provided by the swiss cheese armor. His voice rose from inside.

"Did you get them all, sir? It really doesn't sound like you got them all."

Martin grunted in response, scanning the air around them, while listening for the unmistakable sound of the swarm coming in for another attack. Not hearing anything, he quickly stuck his head around the tank, peering toward the entrance in the mountainside.

"James, I must get inside and stop these nefarious experiments. Stay here and above all else, do not allow your head to be seen." Martin continued scanning the sky as he spoke his orders.

Popping his head up again, James adjusted his skewed hat as he surveyed the area between them and the door. Quickly sinking out of site, his voice floated out from inside the tank. "You mean, keep my head down? Sir."

"Yes, James, keep your head down."

"Do we have to get to the door?"

A smile flickered across Martin's hard-set features and he was glad James hadn't seen it. "Yes, James, the door is our objective."

"But sir, that's an awful long way." A small hand appeared through one of the holes. "These bugs are really huge! Like this big." The hand moved, but the other didn't make an appearance to give an estimation of the size of said bugs. "Why, sir, I could be carried off!" The little voice rose in pitch.

Sighing, Martin glanced at the waving hand. "Yes James. That is why you will 'keep your head down.'" This last was said as if it almost hurt. "I need you to direct any reinforcements to where I am. There is no time left and we can't hope the others made it and will arrive in time. If that formula gets into the mountain lake, all the towns along the river will be attacked. We simply do not have enough cartridges left to kill that many of these monstrous mosquitoes." Martin looked sternly at the boy, whose eye could be seen peeking through the tank.

"If you insist, sir. I'll just stay here and ... and ...," he hesitated before rushing on, "and protect the rear and take charge to direct the others!"

Grunting, Martin hurried toward the massive door in the side of the mountain, his trench coat dragging unnoticed through the mud. Behind him, he heard James call out,

“Good luck, sir.”

Several moments of rushing forward while crouched brought Martin to the door. Looking completely out of place, it gleamed in the setting sun. Woven through the fibers was a fine tracing of gold, glinting and sparkling. Taking a breath and looking back at the tank, he smiled seeing James stick his head up and wave before disappearing again behind the tank walls. Grimacing, he checked his gun before turning to open the door. Reaching up, he pushed with one hand before setting the shotgun down and straining with both hands. With a

CRACK!

the door opened a sliver, allowing a puff of air to blow the hair that had escaped from under his hat. Pausing, he listened intently to ensure no one had been alerted. Without turning around, he knew James had checked out the noise of the opening door. He could only hope the kid wouldn't continue to do that and would stay down, keeping himself safe. Not hearing a commotion, Martin tugged again at the door, opening the sliver to a small crack. Peering inside, he could faintly see some flickering torches and a hall that stretched beyond his sight.

Hearing a buzz, Martin twisted his head as far as he could. In the distance, but quickly getting closer, was what looked like a whole fleet of the mosquitoes. Disregarding any noise, he grunted as he applied every bit of strength to force the door wider. Slipping through, he called back to James.

“James! Don't come out, keep your head down. They can't get you in there. I'll be back.”

He didn't see or hear if James acknowledged him as a large mosquito body slammed into the crack, legs waving in his face as the creature tried to get to him. Thuds, as other insects slammed their massive bodies against the door, pounded his ears. Struggling against the growing mass of insects pushing against him, Martin slowly drove the door shut.

“I hope that boy is going to be OK,” he muttered.

Fixing his hat and turning, he surveyed the area beyond, holding his shotgun ready. In the feeble light from a few flickering torches, he squinted, straining to see if an alert had been sounded. Not hearing any type of alarm, Martin hoped his luck held and he could complete the mission. Suppressing a cough, he realized the cavern he was in was smoky, not just dark. Surveying the area a moment longer, then, thinking of the others that had already been lost, his face set in a grimace and he started down the hall.

Staying within shadows, he crept along the wall, his left trench-coat sleeve glistening from moisture. Ahead, a curve kept him from seeing further, but a flickering light suggested more torches, or even a bigger fire of some sort. The smoke was thicker as he neared the bend in the tunnel. The smell of wetness had diminished, overpowered by the burning wood smell. Stopping, he peeked around the corner.

A larger chamber branched off the tunnel that Martin was in. The opposite wall was completely covered in banks of machines with blinking lights. Martin noted this as a main objective and continued his survey. Running through the center of the cavern was a

stream that disappeared through a crack in the far wall. A fire pit lit the chamber, flickering along the walls and shifting the shadows as Martin tried to view any dangers.

“Welcome my dear, dear Martin.”

Stepping out of these shadows was a small man. His eyes glimmered behind spectacles as he walked towards the river, white lab coat fluttering from a breeze blowing through the chamber. He kept his hands clasped behind him. Stopping close to the river and next to the fire, he regarded the man in the tunnel.

“My dear Martin, it is so good to see you. Well, maybe not good to see you at this moment, but it has been way too long. Don’t you agree?” His whispery voice carried over the sound of the water and an incessant beeping that Martin had not identified yet.

“Dr. Vosser. I can’t say it is at all pleasant to see you again. How are you? Arm healed?” Martin called as he stepped into the light, walking slowly toward the edge of the river. The tension in his voice was quite discernible.

“Oh, yes, quite healed, quite.” Dr. Vosser stretched his arm out as his grin turned to a grimace, then his face was once more serene. “And you? Are you quite well? How is little master James?” Peering around, he continued, “I don’t seem to see him. May I inquire as to where he is?” The look he gave Martin seemed concerned, though Martin knew that under that visage lurked a calculating killer.

Stepping closer to the river, but to the side and further from the man on the opposite bank, Martin looked over the edge, judging the distance.

“Ah, my dear sir, are you thinking you can jump? Yes, yes you are, don’t tell me you aren’t,” Vosser said, wagging a finger at Martin like someone enjoying being caught in a practical joke. “Yes, yes, you probably can jump it. Truly, it is not too far, nor the river too deep. At least here. If, perhaps, you should lose your footing, ... tsk tsk tsk ... why, then, you would be swept down river. And do you know, my dear Martin, what is down river?”

“Yes, of course I do. A nice little town that doesn’t deserve whatever you have planned.”

A look of shock bloomed on the doctor’s face. “I feel maligned. Are you impugning my integrity, dear sir?”

Martin barely looked at the doctor as he backed up in preparation for a jump.

“Ah, ah, ah. Martin, please, do you truly believe that you can just jump over here and stop what I have masterfully perpetrated? Please, since when have you been able to outwit me?” Seeing Martin’s face tighten, Dr. Vosser threw back his head, laughing long and loud, the sound echoing around the open cavern.

When he finished, he looked back at Martin, who had paused, waiting. “By all means, dear sir, jump and save the day. The world will once again be in your debt.” Turning, hands once again behind his back, Vosser strolled toward the banks of blinking lights. The beeping Martin had been hearing continued, perhaps louder. Once more facing the agent, Vosser said, “Before you do, though, I would advise you to look ..... up.” As he said this, he pointed towards the ceiling.

Tilting his head back, Martin saw what looked like a giant wasp hive. Thinking of the

giant mosquitoes he had battled to get in, Martin raised his shotgun, aiming at the base of the hanging mound.

“Ah, ah, ah. That would be a bad idea, a stupendously bad idea, my dear, dear Martin.” Vosser’s voice seemed to float around the cave, bouncing off the walls to assail Martin’s ears from all directions.

Without lowering the gun, Martin looked across the cavern to Vosser, standing by the banks of machines and grasping a handle. He grinned back, a grin that had to be the most evil grin Martin had ever seen.

“You see, if you shoot my hive, I’ll be forced to pull this lever.” Vosser stared at Martin, the grin never leaving his face.

After waiting for the man to continue, Martin finally said, “And what, may I ask, does that lever do?” He hadn’t moved the shotgun from pointing at the hive.

“This lever?” Vosser asked, seeming surprised that it was there.

Gritting his teeth, Martin answered, “Yes, that lever.”

“Oh, this lever. Well, you see, it’s quite wonderful actually. This lever will release the giant hive hanging there above you so that it falls into the river. That, well that, is just superb, because, you see, I engineered this hive specifically. Once it hits the water, it will dissolve. Poof, completely.” Dr. Vosser broke into laughter once again after this proclamation.

Martin thought over what he had just been told. Why would Vosser create a giant hive, but then want to destroy it? He pondered for several moments before his face lit up as he realized the implications.

“Ah, yes, my dear boy. I can tell by the expression on your face that you have reasoned through the whole scenario. Quite ingenious. This river runs right to the town you and I, earlier, were discussing. In fact, it’s so close, the villagers use this as their main water source. Normally, it is wonderful to live next to a small river such as this. Plenty of water for everyone. Of course, you do realize that once my hive is gone, it will unleash thousands of mosquito larvae.”

The doctor paused as Martin opened his mouth to speak. “Yes, yes, my dear boy. Normally it would be no problem. The river would just wash the larvae out to sea. Poof, gone. EXCEPT!” voicing this last part louder, Dr. Vosser brightened, straightening up with a smile that had grown. “Except that these larvae, these wonderful larvae that I have carefully crafted, these larvae are special. My own blend, you could say. Within moments of hitting the water, the larvae will grow and swell to full size mosquitoes. As they leave the water, the air will continue changing them to achieve a magnificent size! Once my army of flying insects descends upon the town, the helpless villagers will be doomed! They will be sucked dry by my flying armada. It will be glorious!” Still holding the lever, he did a jig, unable to contain his joy.

Once the man settled down, Martin said, just loud enough to carry. “It would seem that we are at an impasse. I will just wait until my reinforcements arrive.” Lowering his gun, he pushed his fedora back on his head and gave his own crooked smile to the man opposite him.

“Oh, yes, yes, quite right. Wait me out. That is a wonderful plan.”

Martin thought, “Is he snickering?” Feeling a bit uneasy about the standoff, Martin looked around the room.

“Martin, oh Martin, right here my dear boy. I think this is what you are looking for?” Pointing, Vossler cackled once again.

Looking to where the other man pointed, Martin gasped. He was looking at what appeared to be a clock, except the second hand was running backwards and the minute hand was only a minute away from reaching 12. Looking back and forth between the timer and the hive, he finished by focusing his gaze upon the crazy doctor.

“That’s right, that’s right.” The doctor’s voice had risen almost another octave and sounded more grating with each passing moment. “You can’t win, can’t win. I have you. If you shoot me, I will pull this lever as I collapse. In turn, the mosquitoes will be launched and the city will be doomed. If you do nothing, the timer will reach 12 and the hive will fall anyway while I escape through the tunnels which have been dug for just the purpose of escape. You, dear Martin, do not have time to get out the way you came.” This time the laughter was loud enough to hurt Martin’s ears.

Martin looked everywhere, calm but agitated, to find a way to stop this evil plan.

KA-BOOM

Martin staggered as the ground shook. Across the river, the wall exploded inward, rocks and debris tumbling everywhere. Through the dust, a tank rolled into view, slowly, almost majestically. It ground its way over rocks, veering. Rolling over the fire, cinders and burning logs scattered. The sound of crackling wood increased as the tank continued. Staring in puzzled awe through the growing smoke, Martin watched as the tank ground its way toward the river. Just as it went hurtling over the edge, its uplifted cannon hit the hanging cocoon, spinning it and causing it to sway back and forth. Ignoring the tank as it finished its journey with a splash into the river, Martin lifted his rifle, aiming at the top of the swinging cocoon. Tracking the movements with his rifle, he fired. The engorged object, which contained more giant mosquito larvae than Martin wanted to contemplate, continued its swing and fell to the floor, a few feet in front of him.

Coughing from the smoke, Martin withdrew a tube from his trench coat. Pulling and twisting, the tube elongated and a handle popped out of the bottom. Fishing another object out of his coat, Martin twisted it onto the cylinder. He gripped the handle and squeezed. Sparks flew out of the end of the tube. Martin squeezed several more times, sending a shower of sparks to the floor before there was a ‘chuf’ sound and a flame flared from the end of the tube. Running this along the cocoon, he watched in satisfaction as flames licked up and engulfed the dried husk. Hearing a buzzing, Martin looked up to the newly created hole in the wall.

Pouring into the cave, in a seemingly never ending wave, was the mosquito horde. The haze made it difficult to determine the number of insects, but he saw that they flew in a straight formation. Hearing another sound, a keening wail, and seeing a figure speeding along in front of the flying horde, Martin stared, unbelieving.

Running full tilt through the smoke that now streamed from the damaged machine in

the wall, giant mosquitoes buzzing right behind him, hands held awkwardly in front, was James. His yell of terror continued non-stop, wavering with each step he took in his frantic run. Seeing a mosquito edging closer, Martin raised his rifle. A loud bang echoed around the cavern as the mosquito exploded, spewing gut matter across the front of the blinking machines along the wall.

Martin watched as Dr. Vosser turned, still staggering from the wall exploding around him. As he saw his mosquitoes, led by young James, heading directly towards him, he screamed and staggered away. Falling over rubble, he brought his arms into a defensive position as James reached him. Bending down, James rubbed his hands all over the scientist before glancing over his shoulder then continuing to run the way he had been heading.

Confused, but seeing his charge heading the wrong way, Martin called out to him. “James, over here,” then glanced to the wall, seeing the countdown clock showing a few precious seconds until detonation.

Snapping his head toward the shout, James spied Martin and changed directions. As he approached the river’s edge, Martin yelled, “Jump,” pointing toward the flowing water. Without missing a step, and trusting his mentor, James hurled himself over the edge.

As Martin took several steps and leaped, he caught a glimpse of Dr. Vosser. More precisely, where Dr. Vosser had been. The doctor wasn’t visible as he was surrounded and engulfed by the massive swarm of his creation, all pushing and forming a tight cluster that completely obliterated the scientist from view. The sight was momentary as smoke obscured the view. Before he could determine what the mosquitoes were doing, Martin hit the water.

Sputtering as they surfaced, Martin quickly drew James in close as they fought the current that rushed them towards where the river flowed out of the cave.

“Hold on,” he yelled, as they approached the waterfall’s edge.

The two tumbled into open air, James’ scream of terror echoing across the valley, as a thunderous explosion rocked the mountain. Rocks hurtled down, striking them as they fell, before splashing into the small cove at the bottom of the waterfall.

As Martin surfaced, he immediately looked toward the mountain. What he saw astounded him. The cave they had just been in was gone, replaced by a falling, sliding mass of rocks. Realizing they needed to get out of the water, Martin desperately looked for James. Surprised to see the boy already struggling to get out of the water, he swam over, grabbing the boy once again, dragging both of them out of the water. Once he felt safe, Martin collapsed, catching his breath.

When the noise of the rock-slide had stopped, he propped himself up, looking at the boy next to him. For his part, James was studying his hands. They sat in silence for a few moments before Martin cleared his throat, catching James’ attention.

“James, what pray tell, did you do?”

James’ eyes grew wide. “I’m sorry, I really didn’t mean to go and blow up the mountain.”

“It’s OK, James. But please, enlighten me with the story.”

“Well, you see, I was waiting like you said, but I got bored. There really is nothing to do inside a blown up tank. It’s not big enough to really explore and there wasn’t anything sitting around. I think someone must have taken everything out of it,” he paused as he heard Martin clear his throat in a very impatient sound. “Yes, anyway. I got a little hungry.” Eying the older man, James added, “We really should start bringing something to eat on these missions, you know?”

“James, the tank, the mosquitoes, please.”

“Oh, right, OK, well see, I was hungry like I said. When I looked around, I saw this bush, with these berries. But I didn’t see any mosquitoes, none. I didn’t hear them either, so I figured you were taking care of it and I went over to the bush to have some berries. They were really good, I couldn’t get enough, I just kept eating more.” He paused here.

“Continue, please James. I assume something more had to happen.”

“Oh, yeah, but ... well, it was kinda scary. You see, I wasn’t the only one that liked these berries.” Again, he paused and gulped.

“Let me guess. The mosquitoes also found them desirable.”

“Yeah! That’s it! They did, really. There were tons of mosquitoes all over those bushes. They were, like, down in the branches,” he motioned like he was stuffing something into a bag, “which is why I didn’t see them at first. Once I noticed them and they noticed me, I took off running. I, well, went the wrong way. It turns out that there were other tanks on the field. Since I couldn’t get to the first tank, I headed to another one. Those bugs, they were right behind me the whole way. Luckily, I was able to get to the tank and climb up in the drivers seat and pull the canopy down. That was real good thinking of me, wasn’t it.” His face beamed with pride.

Sighing, Martin narrowed his eyes at the boy.

“Um, yeah, OK. So I’m trapped in this tank, but the mosquitoes can’t get to me. Then, the funniest thing happened, they started to go away. They just left me and went back to the bushes. I figured I could get back out and come to find you.” Seeing Martin wiping his hand down his face, in what James thought of as the “I know where this is going” expression, he hurried to finish the story. “Well, as I climbed out of the cockpit, I, uh, must have kicked something with my foot. All of a sudden, that big old tank roared to life and took off. I lost my balance and tumbled all the way to the ground.” Rubbing his hip, he added, “It sure didn’t feel good. I could have broken my...,” he broke off, seeing Martin glaring at him.

“Yes, um, OK. So as I watched the tank roll away, I heard buzzing. That’s when I saw some of the mosquitoes heading towards me. It’s like they knew they could get me and wanted to finish the job.” He scratched his head as his eyes crinkled, giving his face a scrunched expression.

“James, I will assume that the remainder of the story is that you, wisely I must say, took off running,” James nodded vigorously to this, “and followed the tank as it burst into the cave. At some point, you seem to have realized that the insects were after the berry juice that was still smeared on your hands, so that’s when you decided to wipe

them off to get them from following you, correct?” Martin eyed James, who looked back, awestruck, and nodded his head up and down, mouth hanging open.

“How did you know that?” he asked, mystified.

“I saw you wipe your hands on Dr. Vosser.”

“I did? I just thought it was some rags on the ground. I was just trying to get away and it seemed like as good a place as any to get my hands clean.”

“Yes, well, it was fortuitous that you did, because the mosquitoes stopped long enough to try and get all that berry juice. The rest of the juice washed off in our river trip and Dr. Vosser was trapped when his bomb, and I believe his whole mechanical contraption, detonated.”

At this, James looked at the mountain, eyes growing wider as he realized the top of it was gone.

Standing and surveying his dripping clothes, Martin offered his hand to help the boy up. “James, shall we go get something to eat before we go find those tunnels Dr. Vosser spoke of?”

“Yeah, just as long as it’s not peanut butter with jelly.”

I hope you liked this adventure story. It's just one of the continuing adventures of Martin & James. The next story - Martin & James vs The Crazy Weatherman - can be requested below:

<http://sa-schneider.com/martin-james-vs-the-crazed-weatherman/>

Here's a preview of that story:

James started to imitate his mentor, but was distracted when his chocolate milk arrived. Smiling widely, he started enjoying the drink when he was startled by Martin jumping to his feet.

"James, we must go. Now." Martin hurried toward the staff door at rear of the cabin.

Racing to follow the older man, James skidded to a halt and glanced between Martin disappearing through the door and his chocolate milk. Decision made, he ran to his glass, gulped the milk in three large chugs, and ran to where he had seen Martin disappear, wiping milk from his lips as he went.

James stopped as he went through the door. While the main cabin area was well lit, he was now in what seemed to be tunnel that felt like it was leaning towards him. The floor under him seemed to be trying to get away from his feet. Sticking his hand out to steady himself, he squinted, trying to see further in the gloom. Taking a cautious step forward, he once again caught himself as he was thrown against a wall, everything around him seeming to shift. Stumbling forward, James adjusted his hat which was now askew, but stopped when he heard a hoarse shout and knew it was Martin.

Rushing toward the sound, James again stopped as he burst into sunlight.

"Ah, the party is complete now that young James has joined us." The voice wasn't familiar to James. Blinking from the sudden sunlight, he tried to see who had spoken. Feeling a hand on his shoulder, he spun, executing a painful twist as Martin had showed him.

"James, it's me," Martin said. James blinked, saw the older man, coat fluttering in the wind, then turned to the other figure that was ... floating?

The area they stood was at the rear of the dirigibles cabin and consisted of a series of catwalks leading to the spinning propellers. Thick, rough rope wound up to the sky and connected to the metal skinned balloon above them. James gulped, realizing that one wrong step would lead to a very long fall. Peering down he corrected himself - a very, very long fall.

Soon you will find more stories to download with Martin & James, along with upcoming stories of Billie, Jordan, and Wentworth - the unlikely superheroes. Keep an eye out for Liza Jane and her friends coming. And maybe you can catch a glimpse of Melvin, the Redneck Trucker and his Paranormal Adventures. Want me to let you know

when they are out, sign up for my newsletter to find out when more stories are available.

Thanks!