

DEADGEHOGS

An animated TV series

Created By Niel Bushnell

What's the big idea?

It's fluffing dead hedgehogs, innit! Dead Hedgehogs = DEADGEHOGS. They're spiky undead creatures trying to discover what it really means to be alive. What a fluffy lark!

Tone

DEADGEHOGS explores life, death, and the squidgy, smelly, fluffy, spikey bits in between. Its humour is dark and mature.

The Layby of Life and Death

The DEADGEHOGS find themselves somewhere between life and death, a limbo existence, a sort of purgatory that they know as the Layby of Life and Death. The DEADGEHOGS are very dead, but still exist in our world and can interact with it. They're all trying to work out what the fluff is going on, but they don't have a clue.

Characters

Rori – the unofficial leader of the DEADGEHOGS, she was the first to find herself in the Layby of Life and Death when she was killed by a car. Her appearance is that of a typical British hedgehog, but with a tyre track across her flattened middle. Her eyes bulge unhealthily. She's a puffed-up diplomat, a self-important negotiator (Tony Blair, Captain Mainwaring, Leslie Knope) and has a very clear view on right and wrong. Often deluded by her own sense of authority, Rori can be oblivious to the opinions and needs of those around her.

Character traits: Singular belief. Self-assured, hides self-doubt behind pomp.

Trivia: Named after Rory Stewart who made an impassioned speech in the House of Commons on the humble hedgehog. Want to see it? Ok, [here it is](#).

Larkin – a dreamer, philosopher and romantic. Larkin was killed by a lawn mower and he's now missing the top of his head. Sliced clean off just above his eyes, Larkin's decapitated skull leaves his mangled brain exposed to the elements. Cold weather can affect his thoughts, leaving him confused and, well, a little trippy. Larkin is trying to find meaning in this limbo existence and is certain there is purpose and reason behind his punishment.

Character traits: Optimistic and idealist. Often naive, but Larkin never forgets if he's been crossed.

Trivia: Named after Philip Larkin.

Mr Nesbit – an African Pygmy hedgehog and former internet sensation – she was mauled by a cat on one side of her face and body. She's actually called M.R. Nesbit, but everyone gets it wrong and presumes she's male. Nesbit is a modern, socially aware domestic hamster who was used to the best of everything before being mauled to death. The cat that did this, Cheesy Puff, is still out there, and Mr Nesbit will have her revenge! Since her social demise (death) she feels badly done to. Like Batman's Two Face, Mr Nesbit's physical scars are mirrored in extremes of personality. Mr Nesbit has a desire to be the centre of attention and will hold a grudge rather than lose face.

Character traits: Egotistical, self-centred, impatient, suffers mood swings. Prone to paranoia, and revenge.

Calaso – a Somali hedgehog. Much travelled, she has found herself in the UK where she was killed in a bonfire. She is blackened and burnt all over – smoke and embers follow her everywhere. She has suffered the most, but never complains.

Character traits: stoic, down to earth and matter of fact.

Trivia: The name Calaso means 'someone who is fair-skinned'. It is a common name for girls in Somalia.

Other characters

Cheesy Puff - the cat who killed Mr Nesbit. Cheesy Puff often patrols the square looking for Mr Nesbit. His life has been ruined since her death and he wants nothing more than Mr Nesbit's forgiveness.

Box Fox - a street informant who sees and hears everything – he's an urban fox who hides his identity by wearing a box on his head.

Victor Quirrel – an old intellectual squirrel who likes to study the DEADGEHOGS and come up with theories on their existence.

Big Brown Thing – the lost soul of a brown bear that has wandered the square for thousands of years. Monosyllabic, Big Brown Thing (or BBT for short) is the source of ancient knowledge and wisdom, but he's forgotten most of it, including his name, so he speaks in riddles to hide his lack of insight.

Language and Profanity

Did you know that hedgehogs (dead or alive) have their own swear words? Well, they fluffing well do! They also have other words and sayings that will be unique to the show. Some examples:

- Spikey = amazing, very good.
- Fluff/Fluffing/Fluffer = Fuck/Fucking/Fucker
- Furry = evil, untrustworthy

Structure

Episodes are set around Scone Square, a city centre green space surrounded by town houses, mews and tightly packed buildings. Stories will be motivated by events or objects in the square at night.

Story Ideas

- THE SWORD OF POO-MAH-PARNTS – a discarded roll-up cigarette is mistaken for the fabled Sword of Poo-Mah-Parnts, which is said to grant access to other realms of existence. While Rori tries to use the cigarette, Calaso is annoyed that everyone has forgotten her birthday, and Larkin just wants to see the moon.
- THE FOX KNOWS MANY THINGS – Box Fox comes to tell the DEADGEHOGS about a plan to destroy the square and build houses on it. The DEADGEHOGS decide to try to haunt the square in the hope of stopping the demolition. But Box Fox – as usual – has got it wrong; instead of demolition they discover a tree planting ceremony happening – which obscures their favourite sitting spot.
- THE HILL THAT WASN'T THERE – The DEADGEHOGS come across a new hill in Scone Square and debate what it might be. Climbing to the top, they realise it's not a hill at all but a dead human. While Rori goes full Sherlock Homes and wants to figure out

what has happened, Calaso persuades the others to set the body on fire to release his soul. But when the man suddenly wakes up she's not sure what to believe any more.

- THE RECTANGLE OF DREAMS – Mr Nesbit comes across a lost mobile phone and plans to make one last video for her followers. Larkin thinks it's a bad idea and secretly sabotages her plans – until Mr Nesbit discovers his deceit and goes nuclear on him.
- THE CONTRITE CAT AND THE HELLBOUND HOG - Cheesy Puff, the cat who killed Mr Nesbit comes to the square seeking redemption, but all he finds is fury and revenge. Larkin suggests that Mr Nesbit's only way out of the Layby of Life and Death might be to forgive Cheesy Puff, but can she bring herself to do it – and mean it – without tearing Cheesy Puff's eyes out?

About Niel Bushnell

Niel Bushnell is an award-winning writer who has had nine books published and is developing a number of ideas for animation. He has worked as part of a writing team for clients including CBBC, DISNEY, and co-created THE FUNNY FARM animated TV series which was developed by NELVANA. Niel is also an animation director/producer and has experience working on licenced properties including DOCTOR WHO and THE DUMPING GROUND.

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