



Clarissa the Cockroach Dies Set 11 (331 words)

Text written by Terry Hadert and illustrated by Dick Weigall

Special words

death, among, what, gone, during, ready, already, only, why, during, when, their, enemies, nearly, language, watched, warm, towards, water, brothers, idea, whose, flooded, some, said, do, direction, worries, idea

Words where the vowel says its name:

before, find, spiders, baby, cosy, remains

The death of Canny Clarissa the Cockroach is well known among cockroaches but what followed has gone down in cockroach history.

Before leaving her home under the fridge on her final forage to find food in the dark kitchen, Clarissa had checked that her brood of baby cockroaches - known as nymphs - were safe.

Forty nymphs hatched from her last batch of eggs, but already ten of them had been eaten by house spiders, leaving only thirty alive! This is why cockroaches sleep secretly during the day when their spider enemies are out and about.

The nymphs had grown to be nearly 2 centimetres long, compared to Clarissa's 3 centimetres. They were almost ready to leave their cosy nest to fend for themselves.

They waited, peering out from under the warm fridge, for Mum to return with food to share with her children. Suddenly, the kitchen was flooded with bright light as the man of the house turned on the switch.

The nymphs watched as Clarissa dropped the scrap of cat food she was carrying and raced across the kitchen floor towards the safety of home. They had no worries. They knew their Mum was canny and quick. Thanks to six legs, each with a number of knees, she was able to change direction more than 20 times every second.

"Come on Mum!" they hissed in almost silent cockroach language. "You can make it!"

Wrong! A big brown Ugg boot stamped on their mother, squashing her flat! Splat! Only inches from safety!

They stared at Mum's splattered remains in shocked horror, while the man of the house filled some glasses with water at the sink. Then darkness descended as he switched off the light and left the room.

"Right!" said Charlie Cockroach to his brothers and sisters. Charlie was the eldest, and the canniest, of Clarissa's nymphs. "We must take revenge for the murder of our mother! I have an idea of what we can do!"

Questions/Activities

After reading the text ask students one or more of the following questions. If students are working in pairs, alternate Partner 1, then Partner 2.

- Which word in the second sentence warns you that something is going to happen to Clarissa?
- What is a nymph?
- How long is an adult cockroach?
- What makes a cockroach canny and quick?
- What do these words mean? Choose 3 : forage, brood, peering, flooded, hissed, descended, fend for themselves.
- Why do you think a cockroach might nest under a fridge?
- Have you seen a cockroach? Where was it? What did you do about it?