



Along Came a Spider



If only Miss Muffet had been braver and wiser.

She had the perfect opportunity to teach generations of children not to panic when sharing space with a spider. Had she merely looked that notorious arachnid in the eye(s) (all six or eight of them) and re-

fused to be frightened away, perhaps arachnophobia would not exist.

But instead of dismissing the critter, she leapt off her tuffet and fled. And we're left wondering if her actions have anything to do with the 50 percent of women and 10 percent of men (according to Wikipedia) who now suffer from a fear of spiders.

We'll never know why the "curds and whey" gal chose to run from such a tiny member of the animal kingdom. Perhaps she felt threatened by the spider's appearance. An eight-legged, multi-eyed, hairy carnivore equipped with fangs is a bit frightening, but not necessarily dangerous. (All spiders can bite if frightened or hurt, but only a few have venom strong enough to be harmful to man).



Maybe she became unnerved because she remembered these facts about a spider's lifestyle:

- Some spiders are hunters. They have large eyes enabling them to see their prey from a distance as they lie in wait, ready to pounce on their unsuspecting victims.

WEB ART

To appreciate the beauty and complexity of a spider's artwork, collect a web, after you shoo away the spider. You will need:

Can of white spray paint
Baby powder or flour
Black construction paper

Can of spray glue or aerosol hair spray
Can of spray varnish

DIRECTIONS: Spider webs are suddenly visible everywhere on a misty morning. While still dewy, either spray the web lightly with the paint OR gently blow the powder or flour onto it. Quickly spray the black paper with either the glue or hair spray and, while the paper is still tacky, lift the web from behind, snipping the anchoring threads that were holding it in place. Apply a light coat of spray varnish to protect it and help it adhere to the paper. Your masterpiece is ready for framing! Don't be discouraged if the first attempt is a mess ... it takes practice and patience.



A TANGLED WEB

1. pumijng
2. nuffen bwe
3. owfl
4. bcar
5. rhfsie
6. aatnrlurt
7. rbo ewevra
8. ndegra
9. lkbac iwwo
10. rwnbo slrceue
11. awret

WORD BANK

- garden
- brown recluse
- wolf
- water
- crab
- fisher
- funnel web
- tarantula
- orb weaver
- jumping
- black widow



Unscramble the letters to find 11 spiders caught in the web. For a tougher challenge, cover the word bank with a piece of paper. Too tough? Try learning the names of the spiders in the word bank before covering it up!

(answer key below)

- Some spiders are trappers. These web spinners have poor vision and cannot chase their prey, so they build webs and wait for insects to become entangled. Many even wrap their victims, mummy style, in sticky bands of silk.
- All spiders cannot chew or swallow, so they rely on a liquid diet. The paralyzing venom injected during a bite turns an insect's insides into watery goo. This liquid is sucked out through a tiny straw-like structure formed in the spider's mouth area, leaving behind a hollow shell of the victim's body.

Just because spiders appear to be sneaky, creepy and gruesome, did Miss Muffet actually think that she would be stalked, snared or turned into spider soup?

Silly girl ... spiders go for bugs, not humans! (One spider will eat thousands of annoying insects each year.)



It's too bad that Miss Muffet didn't know about The Itsy, Bitsy Spider, Charlotte's Web and The Very Busy Spider.

She might have overlooked the scary stuff and stayed on that tuffet!

Unfortunately, lighthearted spider stories and songs have never improved this lowly arachnid's status. Most adults, and kids alike, still view all spiders as "armed and dangerous," (even though that's not true) and readily smash and squish them into nothingness.

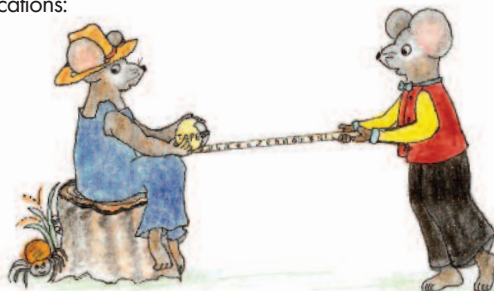
Will mankind ever get over the "scariness" of spiders and give this shy, patient predator the respect it deserves? Probably not. But maybe during your next spider encounter, you might consider showing it the door, and not the bottom of your shoe. That's overcoming arachnophobia, one spider at a time.

A SPIDER CLOSE BY

It's been said that a person is never more than 10 feet away from a spider.

Hay Seed and **City Slicker** encourage you to test this possibility by sitting quietly and observing in these locations:

- a porch or patio, especially in late evening
- in tall grass
- under a tree
- near a stream
- in a flower bed
- in your room



CALLING ALL SUPER SLEUTHS:

Ticks, mites and scorpions are all relatives of spiders. This group of undesirables has one more member, the harvestman. Well known to children and adults, it is mistakenly referred to as a spider but lacks the two body sections common to all spiders. When picked up, this venomless creature often sheds a leg or two. For a chance to win \$25:

1. Find the page where the harvestman is hiding.
2. Give the common name of this familiar creature.

Send your answers, along with your name, address and phone number to:

Cooperative Living Super Sleuth
P.O. Box 2340
Glen Allen, VA 23058-2340

JUNE ISSUE SUPER SLEUTH

The ancient Greeks gave a nickname to the stretch of miserably hot weather from early July to late August. They believed that the brightest star in the sky, other than the sun, was creating extra heat when it rose and set during this time of the year.



Our June issue's Super Sleuth challenge was to give the nickname of this period (the dog days), the name of the star that was believed to have caused it (Sirius), the constellation to which the star belongs (Canis Major), and the page number on which it was hidden (page 36). Our winner was reader Kellie Harrup of Bristow (above). *Congratulations, Kellie!* ■



11. water
10. brown recluse
9. black widow
8. garden
7. orb weaver
6. tarantula
5. fisher
4. crab
3. wolf
2. funnel web
1. jumping

ANSWER KEY