

Outline for Book Discussion Guide

<i>Publication Information</i>	
Title	Invertebrata Enigmatica: Giant Spiders, Dangerous Insects, and Other Strange Invertebrates in Classic Science Fiction and Fantasy
Editor	Chad Arment
Publisher	Coachwhip Publications Landisville, Pennsylvania
Category	Compilation of Short Stories

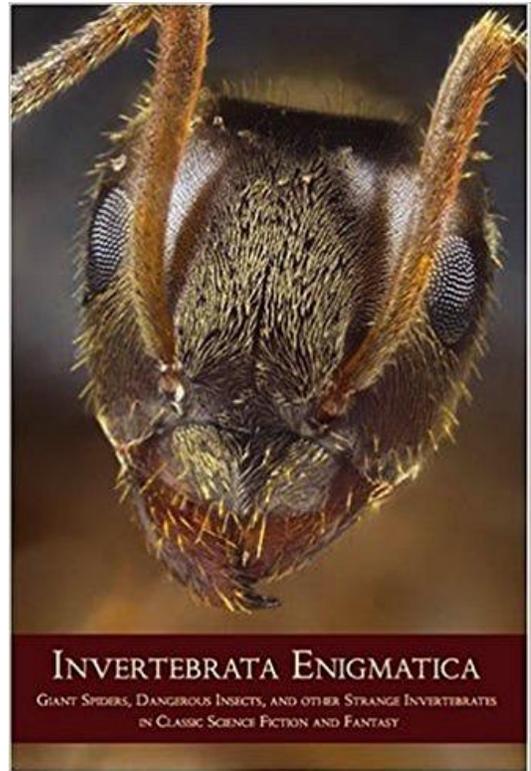
Summary

Invertebrata Enigmatica is a compendium of thirty short stories from science fiction and fantasy genres.

The mysterious and wondrous world of entomology

links each of these stories together into a robust compilation that fictionally portrays man's perceptions of, and insights related to, the world of insects and other invertebrate arthropods. The stories in *Invertebrata Enigmatica* encompass a number of insect-inspired emotive themes, running the gamut from fear and loathing to wonder and inspiration.

A review of the Table of Contents reveals a collection of stories from some very well known authors, along with a number of rarely printed vignettes. *Invertebrata Enigmatica* comprises the following tales: The Sphinx (Edgar Allen Poe); The Blue Beetle: A Confession (A. G. Gray, Jr.); The Strong Spider (Henry Abbey); The Queen of the Bees (Erickmann Chatrian); The Crab Spider (Erickmann Chatrian); A Moth-Genus Novo (H. G. Wells); The Purple Emperor (Robert W. Chambers); The Messenger (Robert W. Chambers); The Captivity of the Professor (A. Lincoln Green); The Valley of the Spiders (H. G. Wells); The Ash-Tree (M. R. James); The Great White



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Moth (Fred M. White); The Green Spider (Sax Rohmer); The Empire of the Ants (H. G. Wells); The Lace Designers (Don Mark Lemon); The Feather Pillow (Horatio Quiroga); Caterpillars (E. F. Benson); The Golden Fly (Algernon Blackwood); The Red Spider (H. B. Holt); An Egyptian Hornet (Algernon Blackwood); The Spider (Hans Heinz Ewers); The Eggs of the Silver Moon (Robert W. Chambers); The Blue Cockroach (Edward Heron Allen); The Gold-Seekers (Al Khanzir); The Spectre Spiders (William J. Wintle); The Eggs from Lake Tanganyika (Curt Siodmak); Mive (Carl Jacobi); The Worm (David H. Keller, M. D.); Vampires of the Desert (A. Hyatt Verril); and The Bees from Borneo (Will H. Gray).

Discussion Guide

1. The first story in *Invertebrata Enigmatica* is Edgar Allen Poe's The Sphinx. Poe is renowned for his dark tales, and The Sphinx is certainly no different in that regard. Discuss the vehicles Poe uses in this story to convey man's propensity for paranoia and inherent fear of death. How are these themes incorporated into the characterization of the Death's-Head Hawkmoth? Does this particular insect add to or detract from the dark nature of the story?
2. Discuss the entomological aspects found in Robert W. Chambers' story, The Purple Emperor. How are entomologists characterized in this particular story? Do you think this is an accurate representation? Why or why not?
3. In general, *Invertebrata Enigmatica* explores a number of entomological themes. Consider how insects and entomologists are portrayed in each story. Are insects the principal characters in each story, or are they treated more as tangential reference points or side notes? Compare and contrast the overarching themes found throughout the compendium.
4. Select three to five stories or portions of stories in *Invertebrata Enigmatica* in which insects

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are portrayed in an especially negative light. Expound on man’s fear of or distaste for insects as illustrated in these particular stories, and discuss how these feelings are leveraged throughout the story to advance each storyline.

5. Select three to five stories or portions of stories in *Invertebrata Enigmatica* in which insects are portrayed in an especially positive light. Describe the elements the authors use to convey these themes. How might characterization of this type affect the reader’s perception of insects in general, and/or specific species in particular?
6. The last story in *Invertebrata Enigmatica* is Will H. Gray’s *The Bees from Borneo*. Discuss the environmental implications of selective breeding within the context of this story. Explore this subject from both the beekeeper’s and other characters’ perspectives.
7. The stories selected for *Invertebrata Enigmatica* span nearly a century, from 1846 to 1931. Are there any shifts in how insects or entomologists are portrayed over time? Does modernization affect the authors’ uses of insects as key story elements? If so, how?
8. Did any one story or entomological theme in *Invertebrata Enigmatica* particularly resonate with you as a reader? Why did you find this story or theme especially insightful? Did this topic alter the way you think about or perceive insects?