



## The Hand of the Devil

A novel by Dean Vincent Carter  
Published by The Bodley Head

### Summary

A young and eager journalist Ashley Reeves finds himself on the receiving end of a cryptic note promising the story of a lifetime. Ashley winds up on an island, in the Lake District of England, which is home to Dr. Mathers. Due to inclement weather, Ashley becomes stuck on the island, allowing him time to research the identities of both the Ganges Red and Dr. Mathers. Mathers is portrayed originally as a collector but slowly reveals he is an entomologist and retired surgeon. As though they have all the time in the world, Mathers begins to provide insight on who he used to be and how a colleague, Dr. Soames, shaped the outcome of his career and ultimately his life. It takes time for Dr. Mathers before he is ready to unveil his prized possession to Ashley. This one of a kind species is a creature born from myths and legends that traces back to Vietnam. Ashley begins to unveil the sinister side of things after finding an abandoned location on the island and unearthing that Dr.

Mathers may not be who he says he is. In a twist of fate Ashley must find a way to leave unscathed before learning the full extent of Dr. Mathers and his Lady's past.

## Book Discussion Questions

1. According to Mathers, the Ganges Red is based on the Vietnam legend of Nhan Diep. How do cultures or religions play a role in entomology and the perception of insects? Are there any legends in your culture that have ties to insects?
2. Dr. Mathers is a proclaimed entomologist and so passionate that he retired as a surgeon to pursue insects. How does this portray entomologists? How does his character live up to your idea of an entomologist?
3. Do you think this book negatively or positively affects the way people might see insects? What causes you to believe this?
4. How did you first feel about Dr. Mathers? Dr. Soames? How did your feelings change as the story progressed?
5. Is the Ganges Red mosquito believable? What could the author do to make it more believable in your eyes?
6. Dr. Mathers referred to Mr. Hopkins, the cat, as "such an unpleasant animal" and a "scruffy ratbag," but refers to Ganges Red using words like "her," and "lady." How does this describe his character?
7. What do you think the cat, Mr. Hopkins, represents in this novel? Why did the author choose a cat?
8. Many animals feed on mosquitoes so why do you think the author chose a dragonfly over all the others? Why do you think the dragon fly waited so long to do anything to the Ganges Red?
9. The Ganges Red is considered an instrument used by the devil, leading to the names it has received such as the "hand of the devil" and "Satan's claw." Do you think Dr. Mathers sees himself as the devil since he is using her for himself?