

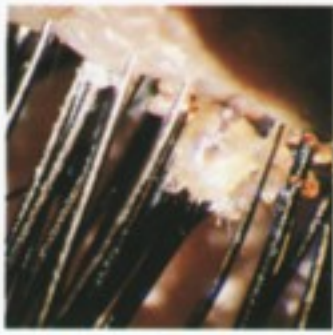
DK READERS

PROFICIENT
4
READERS

Micro Monsters



CHRISTOPHER MAYNARD



Mite fright

Some scientists think that about 90% of adult humans have tiny mites living at the base of their eyelashes.

It's a bug's world

Meet Christopher Maynard – our host. We depend on him to stay alive. He provides us with warmth, food, and shelter.

Who are we? Most of us are so tiny you would need a microscope to see us properly. We are the army of tiny creatures that live on, around, and even inside Christopher's body.



I am a head louse, sucking blood from Christopher's head. Read about me on pages 6–13.



Christopher is feeling awful. That's because thousands of us streptococci bacteria are growing in his throat. You can read about us on pages 44–45.



Lice record

The most lice found on one human head was 1,434 on a woman in Burma.



Usually no more than ten lice live on one human head. If the head I am living on becomes too crowded, I will have to move on to another head. I can't fly or jump, so I will have to wait until another human head touches the head I am living on.



A louse scurries along a hair shaft at top speed.



Ancient cures

Body lice, a relative of head lice, often live in the seams of clothing. In World War I, Russian soldiers were said to put their clothes on ants' nests, so the ants would eat the lice.

Then I will run quickly along the hair shaft and climb onto the other head.

If too many of us stay on this head, our human host will start feeling very itchy. Then he might try to get rid of us. But he won't find it easy to do this. Dunking us under water makes no difference at all. Neither does shampoo or conditioner. We just hang on tightly and hold our breath.

Before feeding



After feeding



Little vampire

A bed bug can take in six times its weight in blood at a single meal. That's like you eating about 400 pounds (180 kg) of food in one go.

Stink bug

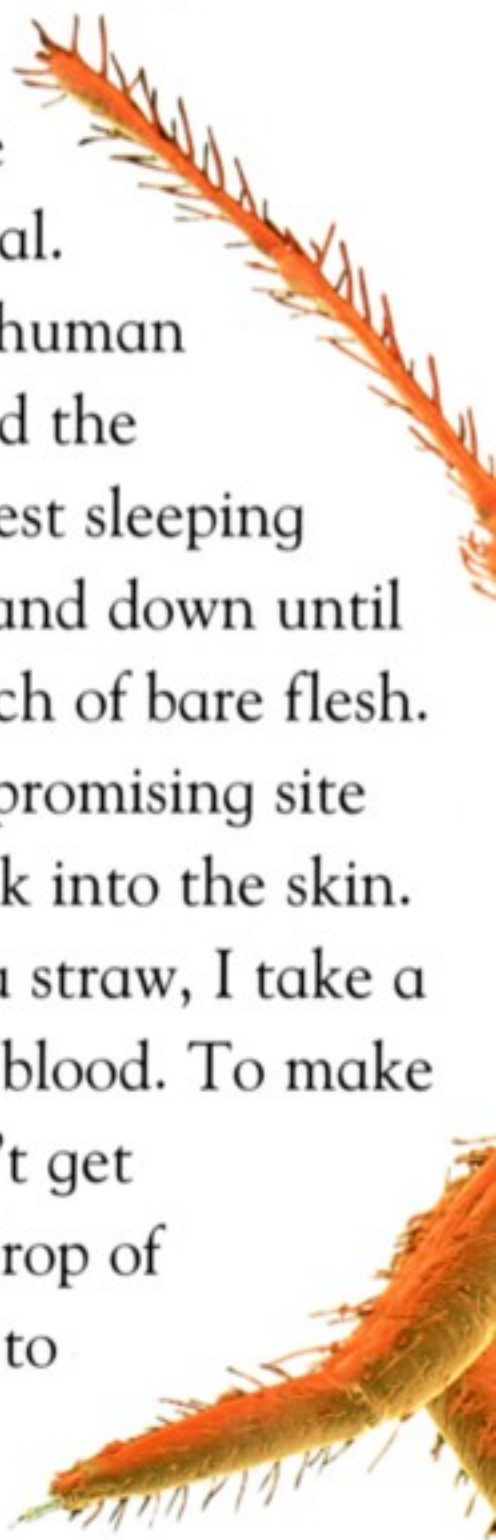
Bed bugs have strong scent glands. When a bed bug is frightened, it leaks an oily liquid with a disgusting, sweetish stink – some say like rotting raspberries.

Night raiders

I am a bed bug. I got my name because I like to live either near or in a human's bed. During the day I hide out in any dark crevice I can find – in floorboards, bed frames, alarm clocks, even the seams of a mattress.

At night, I wake up to hunt for a meal. My favorite food is human blood. I head toward the warmth of the nearest sleeping body and crawl up and down until I come across a patch of bare flesh.

Once I find a promising site I ease my sharp beak into the skin. Then, using it like a straw, I take a long drink of warm blood. To make sure my beak doesn't get blocked, I inject a drop of saliva into the hole to keep the blood flowing steadily.



Look through the
microscope at all the
amazing creatures living
in, on, and around you!



DK READERS

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