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# Butt-Faced Maggot: A Shocking Discovery

## Description

The renowned *Mission Impossible* series is widely recognized for its intricate mask reveals, a feature that adds an element of mystery and intrigue to the plot. Through a somewhat questionable technological explanation, a seemingly unassuming silver briefcase has the remarkable ability to produce a flexible mask that, when applied to the face, miraculously transforms Tom Cruise into an astonishing likeness of Philip Seymour Hoffman or other characters. This ingenious disguise allows him to infiltrate various strongholds and fortresses with ease, leaving audiences guessing whether the antagonist they are witnessing is truly malevolent or Ethan Hunt in disguise.

In a hypothetical scenario where *Mission Impossible* unfolds within a colony of harvester termites nestled in the Moroccan mountains, Ethan Hunt would find himself facing an entirely new challenge. A recent publication in *Current Biology* sheds light on the fascinating adaptation of blow fly larvae that have evolved to reside within the nests of harvester termites, employing a clever strategy known as the "termite mask" located on their posterior. This mask features antennae, sensory palps, and striking red "eyes" that serve as respiratory openings, showcasing the marvels of nature's evolution.

While this profound discovery was serendipitous, researchers from the Institute of Evolutionary Biology at the Spanish Research Council stumbled upon these larvae during a quest for butterflies, inadvertently unearthing a captivating phenomenon within the termites' domain. Despite typically inhabiting unsavory environments such as carcasses or excrement, these ingenious maggots thrive within the comforts of a termite colony, skillfully avoiding detection by their formidable hosts and capitalizing on the colony's resources.

Through mimicry and olfactory deception, the fly larvae seamlessly integrate into the termite community, benefiting from their shelter and sustenance. The researchers speculate on the potential symbiosis between the larvae and termites, pondering the enigmatic adult form these larvae will eventually assume. This intricate dance of adaptation and survival poses a captivating mystery, reminiscent of the unpredictability and sophistication of a true master of disguise.

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## Vocabulary List:

1. **Intrigue** /ɪn'tri:g/ (noun): The quality of being mysterious or fascinating.
  2. **Ingenious** /ɪn'dʒi:ni.əs/ (adjective): Clever and inventive.
  3. **Phenomenon** /fɪ'nɒm.i.nən/ (noun): An observable event or occurrence.
  4. **Serendipitous** /,sɛr.ən'dɪp.i.təs/ (adjective): Occurring by chance in a happy or beneficial way.
  5. **Symbiosis** /,sɪm.bi'ɒʊ.sɪs/ (noun): A close prolonged association between two or more different organisms.
  6. **Mimicry** /'mɪm.i.kri/ (noun): The action of imitating someone or something in order to entertain or deceive.
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## Comprehension Questions

### Multiple Choice

1. Which feature of the *Mission Impossible* series adds an element of mystery and intrigue to the plot?
  - Option: Intricate mask reveals
  - Option: Explosive action sequences
  - Option: Romantic subplots
  - Option: Musical scores
2. What miraculous ability does the silver briefcase possess in *Mission Impossible*?
  - Option: Produces flexible masks
  - Option: Shoots lasers
  - Option: Generates illusions
  - Option: Communicates with satellites
3. What color is the termite mask located on the posterior of blow fly larvae?
  - Option: Red
  - Option: Blue
  - Option: Green
  - Option: Yellow
4. Where did researchers from the Institute of Evolutionary Biology discover the blow fly larvae in the termites' domain?
  - Option: Moroccan mountains
  - Option: Spanish Research Council
  - Option: Butterfly quest
  - Option: Carcasses or excrement
5. What adaptation of the blow fly larvae allows them to thrive within a termite colony?
  - Option: Termite mask on their posterior
  - Option: Bright red markings
  - Option: Ability to communicate with termites
  - Option: Ability to fly



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6. How do the blow fly larvae benefit from integrating into the termite community?

Option: Shelter and sustenance

Option: Camouflage

Option: Flight

Option: Hibernation

### True-False

7. The mask reveals in *Mission Impossible* involve sophisticated technological explanations.

8. The blow fly larvae rely on physical aggression to infiltrate the termite colonies.

9. The blow fly larvae were discovered by the Spanish Research Council intentionally seeking termite colonies.

10. The termite mask on the blow fly larvae includes antennae and respiratory openings.

11. The blow fly larvae have evolved to thrive in environments with abundant resources and pristine conditions.

12. The researchers speculate on the potential mutualistic relationship between blow fly larvae and termites.

### Gap-Fill

14. The blow fly larvae employ a clever strategy known as the " \_\_\_\_\_ " located on their posterior to integrate seamlessly into the termite community.

15. The blow fly larvae skillfully avoid detection by the termite hosts and capitalize on the colony's \_\_\_\_\_ .

16. The blow fly larvae are speculated to form a potential \_\_\_\_\_ with the termites, benefiting from their shelter and sustenance.



17. The blow fly larvae mimicry and olfactory deception allow them to seamlessly \_\_\_\_\_  
into the termite community.

18. The blow fly larvae pose a captivating mystery regarding the enigmatic adult form they will eventually  
\_\_\_\_\_.

## Answer

**Multiple Choice:** 1. Intricate mask reveals 2. Produces flexible masks 3. Red 4. Butterfly quest 5. Termite mask on their posterior 6. Shelter and sustenance

**True-False:** 7. True 8. False 9. False 10. True 11. False 12. True

**Gap-Fill:** 14. termite mask 15. resources 16. symbiosis 17. integrate 18. assume

## Answer

### CATEGORY

1. Sci/Tech - LEVEL6

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