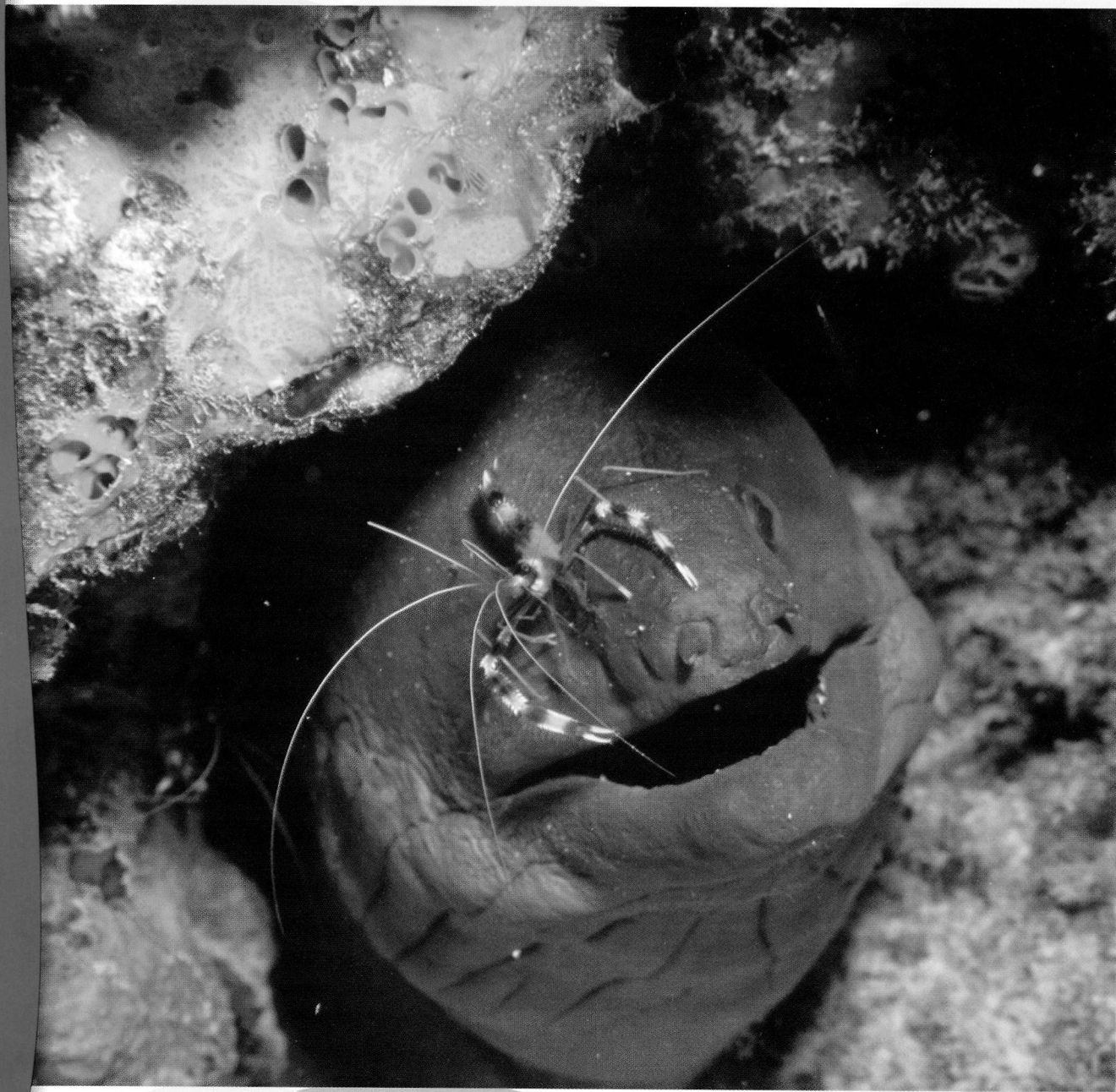


The Eel and Its Partner

by Ruth H. Dudley



- 1 Animals often work together in nature. They may work together to build nests. They may work together to find food. They may help each other keep clean. Now this is no surprise when the animals are two of a kind. You may have seen two cats licking each other clean or two birds caring for their babies together. That seems quite natural to us.
- 2 However, sometimes two entirely different animals work together. Sometimes they are so different, you'd think they could never get along. The moray eel and the red-and-white shrimp are a good example.
- 3 Eels are fish that look much like snakes. The moray eel is one of the largest. It's about three and a half feet long. It has long jaws and teeth as sharp as needles. Like most eels, the moray feeds on shrimp. Most shrimp are afraid of the moray eel. They slip away and hide when they see a moray eel coming. But not the red-and-white shrimp.
- 4 This shrimp isn't afraid of the moray eel at all. It doesn't try to hide from the eel. In fact, it wants the moray eel to see it. It sits on a piece of coral and waits. When it sees a moray eel coming, it waves its antennae, or feelers. Its movements mean that it wants the eel to come close.
- 5 Now, an ordinary shrimp wouldn't last long if it did this. The eel would eat it in one big gulp. After all, a shrimp is only about three inches long, except for its long legs and long antennae.
- 6 But when the moray eel sees the red-and-white shrimp moving its feelers, it swims quickly up to the shrimp. To the eel, this shrimp is not a quick, easy meal. It's a useful partner.
- 7 When the eel comes close to the shrimp, a surprising thing happens. The shrimp reaches out and strokes the eel gently with its feelers. Then the eel lies back in the water, as though it wants to be stroked. However, the eel is not there to be petted. It is there to be cleaned.
- 8 This cleaning is an important job to both partners. So the shrimp does not keep its customer waiting. First it gets a good hold on the eel's body with a pair of its long front legs. Then, with a shorter pair of legs, it picks off tiny parasites. These are tiny sea animals that live on the eel's body, in its gills, and in its mouth. The eel lies still while the shrimp cleans it. It seems to enjoy every minute of this. The shrimp must enjoy it too. It eats each parasite it finds. It is a cleaning job for the eel and a good meal for the shrimp.
- 9 When the shrimp has finished, it loosens its hold on the eel. The moray eel glides away. It feels cleaner. Then the shrimp slips back to its coral station. It waits there for another customer.
- 10 The small shrimp has had a good meal, and the eel has been cleaned. The shrimp and the eel need each other. Each lives a better life because of its partner.

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COMPREHENSION

A Choose the best ending for each sentence. Write *a*, *b*, or *c*.

- 1 This story mainly shows how
 - a** the red-and-white shrimp finds food.
 - b** two different animals work together.
 - c** the moray eel gets clean.
- 2 It is surprising that the moray eel and the red-and-white shrimp are partners because
 - a** most eels eat shrimp.
 - b** most shrimp hide from eels.
 - c** Both **a** and **b**
- 3 Each time the shrimp wants to eat,
 - a** it waves its feelers at any moray eel that comes along.

b it looks around the coral to find parasites.

c it always waits for the same partner.

- 4 You can tell the red-and-white shrimp is probably always hungry because
 - a** it likes to eat the parasites on eels.
 - b** when it's finished with one eel, it waits for another.
 - c** Neither **a** nor **b**
- 5 The eel and the shrimp are partners because
 - a** they both like parasites.
 - b** they each get something they need.
 - c** Both **a** and **b**

LEARN ABOUT WORDS

B Often you can find out the meaning of a word by seeing how it is used in a story. The other words in the story give you clues.

Find the word in the story that best fits each meaning. (A paragraph number tells you where to look.) Write the word.

- 1 normal; as it should be (1)
- 2 completely; wholly (2)
- 3 greedy swallow (5)
- 4 animal or person who works with another (6)
- 5 rubs; touches gently (7)
- 6 client; one who uses the services of another (8)
- 7 lets go of; frees (9)

C A word may have more than one meaning. Its meaning will depend on how it is used.

The *fly* buzzed around the room.
The bird will *fly* to its nest.

Look at each word in **bold type** below. Note the paragraph number. Look back at the paragraph. Which meaning does the word have there? Write *a* or *b*.

8 slip (3)

- a** move quietly
- b** slide by mistake and fall

9 last (5)

- a** continue to live
- b** coming at the end

10 station (9)

- a** stopping place for a train
- b** place where someone or something waits

THINK ABOUT IT

D Read the sentences. Each one tells about an event in the story. Put the five events in the correct order by writing *a*, *b*, *c*, *d*, or *e*.

- 1 The eel swims to the shrimp.
- 2 The shrimp sits on a piece of coral and waits for an eel.
- 3 The eel lies back in the water.
- 4 The shrimp waves to an eel.
- 5 The shrimp strokes the eel with its feelers.

E sadly = sad + **ly**
sadness = sad + **ness**

The letters *-ly* and *-ness* are called suffixes. A suffix is added to the end of a word. It changes the word's meaning. Adding the suffix *-ly* to a word makes the new word tell *how*. Adding the suffix *-ness* to a word makes the new word tell *what*.

Read each sentence. Which word in parentheses () makes sense? Write the word.

- 6 The shrimp isn't scared by the eel's (largely, largeness).
- 7 It doesn't fear the (sharply, sharpness) of an eel's teeth.
- 8 The shrimp eats (quickly, quickness).
- 9 The eel likes the shrimp's (gently, gentleness).
- 10 Now the eel is (entirely, entireness) clean.

F A word was left out of each sentence. Look at the two words in **bold type** below each sentence. Which word best completes the sentence? Write the word.

- 11 Eels, fish, and _____ live in the ocean.

gulls shrimp

- 12 The moray eel has a mouth, a tail, and _____.

partners gills

- 13 An animal's length is measured in inches, _____, and yards.

feet pound

- 14 An eel's teeth are as sharp as _____, pins, and tacks.

thread needles

- 15 Coral, sand, and _____ cover the ocean floor.

rocks sparks