



AN OLD BOOK

Max Darwin held his breath. Two fearsome barbed pincers appeared over the top of the garden wall. The creature's head followed, its feelers waving in the air, hunting for prey. Finally, a gleaming black body pulled itself into view, grasping the wall with six hooked legs.

Wow! A stag beetle! Max thought, his

eyes level with the beetle's enormous jaws. There were thirty different species of stag beetle in the United States, but Max had never seen one in the wild before. Hardly daring to breathe, he crept forward for a closer look, but the insect must have spotted him. Opening the hard black casing on its back, the beetle spread its wings and whirred away into the evening sky. Max watched until it was just a tiny dot. He couldn't wait to add it to his insect records.

Max *loved* insects. He kept a notebook filled with facts about all the bugs he observed in the garden and yard. The stag beetle was his most interesting find yet.