

## Smalltalk Diaries

10 X 15 MINUTES

EPISODIC BREAKDOWN

### 1. Changelings

Changing your appearance doesn't change who you are, but might help you make friends. Some very ugly insects talk us through the tricky business of shedding their skins to become something utterly different and spectacular, proving that beauty is often no more than skin deep.

### 2. Inventors

Who's a clever bug, then? We discover that almost every human invention, including air-conditioning, farming, jet propulsion, mobile homes, paper, clothes, saws, were copied from the mini-beasts, the real geniuses of our technological world.

### 3. Decomposers

If it wasn't for the rubbish recycling service provided by mini-beasts, the world would be a dirtier and deadlier place, as the clean-it-up merchants in this episode explain. The woodlouse claims that it is the most important creature on the planet – by virtue of it being a decomposer – but the other creatures involved in the processing of the waste of life disagree.

### 4. Weapons

Bombs, chemical weapons, fangs, traps, stings, tusks all make up this murderous mini-beast arsenal. With so many gruesome and painful ways of wounding and destroying each other, you'd think these creatures might also have developed the brain power to make best use of their dangerous abilities.

### 5. Travellers

They may be small, but invertebrates are experts at getting around, up and down. Did you know that the American cockroach is the fastest animal on six legs or that a dragonfly can reach speeds over 30mph?

### 6. Predators

This show deals with the difficult issues of how to catch another living creature, and eat it alive without emotion – while it talks back to you. It helps if the prey animals are co-operative and have a sense of humour, but it also helps if you have some handy weapons.

## **7. Entertainers**

Music, dancing, aerobatics, light shows: an arts festival happens every day in the undergrowth. It's not just humans that put on shows to entertain each other. Many species use extraordinary displays to communicate and make friends. But are they entertaining? Are these acts rubbish or pure art? You decide.

## **8. Pollinators**

The gentle bumble bee shows us how pollination works, and takes us on a tour among some stunning flowers, then back to her nest where she shows us her family and her honey pots. The honey bee shows us how to industrialise the process for greater efficiency, and the bee orchids show us how to beat the system.

## **9. Parents**

Do you just dump your eggs in a likely looking place, hoping for the best, or do you look after your babies so they don't eat each other? These animals have strong views on parenthood, especially the paper wasp who frowns on the mass provisioning of the bluebottle.

## **10. Unloved & Unwanted**

It isn't fair: it seems not to matter if they're clever, colourful, useful or harmless, some mini-beasts are just doomed to be disliked. The slug and the snail have a good old moan about how unappreciated by humans they are. But the more upbeat fly and roach try to see the funny side of being misunderstood.