

# ***Martina the Beautiful Cockroach: A Cuban Folktale***

**By:** Carmen Agra Deedy  
**Illustrated By:** Michael Austin

**Publisher:** Peachtree Publishers  
**Copyright:** 2007

**Art Medium:** Acrylic  
**Genre:** Folk Literature

**SUMMARY:** In this humorous retelling of a Cuban folktale, a cockroach interviews prospective husbands and tries to decide whom to marry.

**BOOKTALK:** Have you ever heard of the Coffee Test? What do you think that might be? Let's read this book together and see how Martina uses the Coffee Test. I wonder if any of our predictions will be correct?

## **AUTHOR:**

### **Carmen Agra Deedy**

Carmen Agra Deedy was born in Havana, Cuba. She and her family moved to the United States in 1963 after the Cuban Revolution. She grew up in Decatur, Georgia and now lives in Atlanta with her three daughters. She has been writing and traveling around the world telling stories for almost twenty years. To learn more about the author, visit her web site at <http://www.carmendeedy.com>.

### **Other books written by the author include:**

*Agatha's Feather Bed: Not Just Another Wild Goose Story*  
*TreeMan*  
*The Secret of Old Zeb*  
*The Last Dance*  
*The Library Dragon*  
*The Yellow Star: The Legend of Christian X of Denmark*

## **ILLUSTRATOR:**

### **Michael Austin**

Michael Austin is a graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi. He lives in Georgia with his wife and sheep dog. Learn more about the author at <http://www.austinillustration.com>.

**Other books illustrated by the illustrator include:**

*The Horned Toad Prince*  
*Late for School*  
*Railroad John and the Red Rock Run*  
*13 Monsters Who Should be Avoided*  
*Late For School*  
*Bats! Bats! Bats!*

**CHALLENGING WORDS (pronunciation, spelling, defining):** Senora, tia, una peineta, una mantilla, abuela, un consejo incredible, gallo, custom, reflection, un perica

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. Explain what the Coffee Test is. Was it a good test for Martina to use in the story?
2. Did the story's ending surprise you? Why or why not?
3. Has your grandmother ever given you good advice? What was it?
4. What is a suitor and why were they coming to see Martina?
5. Who finally passed the Coffee Test?
6. How were human items used to decorate Martina's house?
7. What new Spanish words did you learn in the story?

**SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:**

**Language Arts**

- When reading the story aloud, stop before the last page and have children predict how the mouse knew about the coffee test.
- Keep a list of all the Spanish words the author uses in the story and discuss their meanings.

**Science**

- Compare and contrast Martina with real cockroaches

## **Social Studies**

- Locate Cuba on a map or globe.
- Share information about Cuban culture, foods, customs and history.

**Life Skills:** Resourcefulness, sense of humor, caring, truthfulness, and common sense

## **INTERNET SITES:**

Visit the author's web site at <http://www.carmendeedy.com/>.

Visit the illustrator's web site at <http://www.austinillustration.com>

Learn more about cockroaches at:

<http://www.amentsoc.org/insects/fact-files/orders/blattodea.html>

<http://yucky.discovery.com/noflash/roaches/>