

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Stinky Parasite

By Lill Pluta

The Rafflesia is a parasite.  
It doesn't sting; it doesn't bite.  
Instead it smells like rotten meat  
or dirty, grubby, sweaty feet.  
It's putrid smell entices flies  
into a bloom of giant size  
that's wider than a traffic sign  
and stuck onto a jungle vine.



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## World's Stinkiest Flower

The Rafflesia is the world's largest flower, but you will not find it at your local florist shop. This bloom is too large and too smelly to be included in any bouquet. It grows to be about a yard wide, and it smells like rotting meat. The horrid odor helps this rare plant to survive. The stench draws flies, which in turn pollinate the Rafflesia. This is how the Rafflesia reproduces itself.

Rafflesias do not have stems, roots, or leaves. They do not produce chlorophyll. Rafflesias are parasites that attach themselves to vines. The vines serve as host plants which provide the Rafflesia with all its nutritional requirements.

Today the Rafflesia is in danger of becoming extinct. Loggers damage the flowers when they cut down trees. Tourists who come to observe the Rafflesia and other jungle wonders carelessly trample the blooms and crush the vines on which they grow. Many people are working together to make sure this extraordinary flower is still around for future generations to admire.

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# The Rafflesia

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1. Tell whether each fact can be learned from reading the poem, the article, or both. On each line below, write the word *poem*, *article*, or *both*.

\_\_\_\_\_ A Rafflesia flower smells like rotten meat.

\_\_\_\_\_ Rafflesia plants are endangered.

\_\_\_\_\_ Rafflesias do not have roots or stems.



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4. Name two reasons why the Rafflesia is in danger of becoming extinct.

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5. How does the terrible smell of the Rafflesia help it survive?

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**Part 1:** Match the vocabulary word on the left with the best definition on the right.  
Use a dictionary if you need help.

- |                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| 1. _____ florist | a. to attract  |
| 2. _____ stench  | b. moving pollen from one flower to another so the plant can reproduce |



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6. \_\_\_\_\_ entice      7. terrible smell

**Part 2:** Fill in each of the blank lines below, using one of the vocabulary words above.

7. Grandma is trying to \_\_\_\_\_ us to visit her by baking cookies.
8. When Bill took off his shoes, a terrible \_\_\_\_\_ filled the room.
9. The bees will buzz in and out of the apple blossoms, which will \_\_\_\_\_ the apple tree.
10. In autumn, maple tree leaves lose their \_\_\_\_\_, change color, and fall to the ground.

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1. Tell whether each fact can be learned from

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5. How does the terrible smell of the Rafflesia help it survive?

**The terrible smell attracts flies that help pollinate the flower.**

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Part 1: Match the vocabulary word on the left with

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7. The bees will buzz in and out of the apple blossoms, which will  
pollinate the apple tree.

10. In autumn, maple tree leaves lose their chlorophyll, change color, and fall to the ground.