

Enough for All

“When you were just a boy,” my father told me, “you said: 'I want a pin collection!' and I couldn't understand what you were saying. I hadn't the slightest idea. A collection of pins?”

Well, soon he understood what I wanted, where he was a professor of biology and where pins of the sort I wanted were sold.

He brought them home to me. The pins were black and some three inches long with rounded golden heads.

I remember the surprise I felt upon seeing them. They were beautiful. With them, I could impale insects in a cigar box.

You had to impale the insects according to some simple but strict rules. For example, beetles had to be impaled through the right wing close to the “shoulder” and wasps and butterflies through the central part of the thorax. Of course, one could never use an ordinary pin.

The other kids in the neighborhood became aware of what my brothers and I were doing, and they, too, took up the hobby.

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In those days of yesteryear, we used to invite our friends to spend the night in the back yard where we camped out. One day, my brother got an idea. We could put lanterns out in the back yard and catch the insects they attracted.

“Maybe we can attract a rhinoceros beetle!” my brother said excitedly, referring to one of the most sought-after beetles by insect collectors.

“That's not a bad idea although I doubt that a rhinoceros beetle will show up,” I said, “But there'll be moths and other insects, and you can bet that I'll be there.”

The other kids also were eager to participate. They came with their jars and nets

and pins and a great deal of enthusiasm.

We collected a lot of insects, and it was a good get-together and a lot of fun even though the lanterns didn't attract any of the prized beetles.

When it was getting late and we were about to go to bed, we heard a buzzing from the dirt alley behind the back yard. There was no fence there—just the grass of the back yard and the small dirt road. We heard more buzzing and suddenly, from the holes that were in the alley, beetles erupted. Hundreds of them.

Dear reader, stop! I know what you are going to ask, and *no*—they were not rhinoceros beetles but beetles even more magnificent. They were longhorn beetles! Five inches long, black as coal with the curved horns of some creature from a UFO and with spiked necks like the collars on the hounds of hell.

Marvelous, stupendous, spectacular were those beetles!

And there were enough for all.