

# The smelly monster

Can You Stand The Beautiful Flower That Has The Most Unbearable Smell?

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Amidst the vast jungles of Sumatra was a huge castle owned by Mr Vine. Welcoming, loving, and kind at heart, Mr Vine provided shelter to all. The castle was a home to various insects, bees, etc., as tenants. Happily they all lived together. But as they say, nothing lasts forever, and so did, or rather didn't, the peace and happiness in the castle.

The tenants, along with Mr Vine, welcomed their new tenant, Miss Rafflesia. The bees welcomed her with honey, the squirrels handed her a nut, while Mr Vine provided her a cozy room to live in. All was well until a few flies were found missing. The fellow tenants were aghast and unable to guess the culprit, given that all of them lived happily.

The numbers kept increasing, as more bees joined the 'gone missing' race. Distressed by the situation, Mr Vine called for a meeting. Everyone, except Miss Rafflesia, arrived. The hall room was filled with faces full of worry and misery. "I don't understand why my roommates would leave this place" said Mr Fly. "Neither do I. I have known you all since I was a young man. I have grown old seeing you all live happily here with me. I just can't understand what went wrong in my..." sobbed Mr Vine.

A feeble voice from behind interrupted Mr Vine. "I may help you all decode the mystery." It was little Miss Butterfly. "What do you mean?" enquired Mr Squirrel. "The last time I saw the flies, they were talking to Miss Rafflesia, and soon after that, they went missing. The same incident happened the other night, when I was on my way back from the garden, I saw the

## The science of it

Rafflesia is the largest known individual flower on Earth. They have a strong unpleasant odour to attract pollinators.

two bees outside Miss Rafflesia's room with some honey. And guess what? The bees were never seen after that," revealed Miss Butterfly. "Moreover, the fact that Miss Rafflesia doesn't step out of her room so often makes me more doubtful," she

added. "I will confront Miss Rafflesia right now. How can she do this?" said Mr Squirrel. Mr Vine, who was quiet all along, gathered all of them and plotted a plan.

The next day, another fly purposely flew in front of Miss Rafflesia's room. Hearing the buzz, she came out and started talking. A few minutes into the conversation, she invited the fly into the room, and as soon as she entered the room, a siren started to wail. Miss Rafflesia was surprised, while on the other hand, all the tenants, with Mr Vine, arrived in front of her room. Anxious, Miss Rafflesia opened the door and was full of terror to see all of them together.

After a series of intense confrontation Miss Rafflesia confessed how her foul smell like that of rotten meat attracts pollinators like flies to keep the reproduction process of

the plant in place. Enraged by her sins, Mr Vine used his mystical power to curse her, "For your sins, you will bloom only for a short span of 5-7 days. No one will ever plant you in their beautiful gardens."

Hearing the same, Miss Rafflesia started crying and her foul smell filled the room. Mr Vine asked her to leave the castle at once. Peace and happiness filled the place once again while Rafflesia continued to live with the foul smell for the rest of her life.

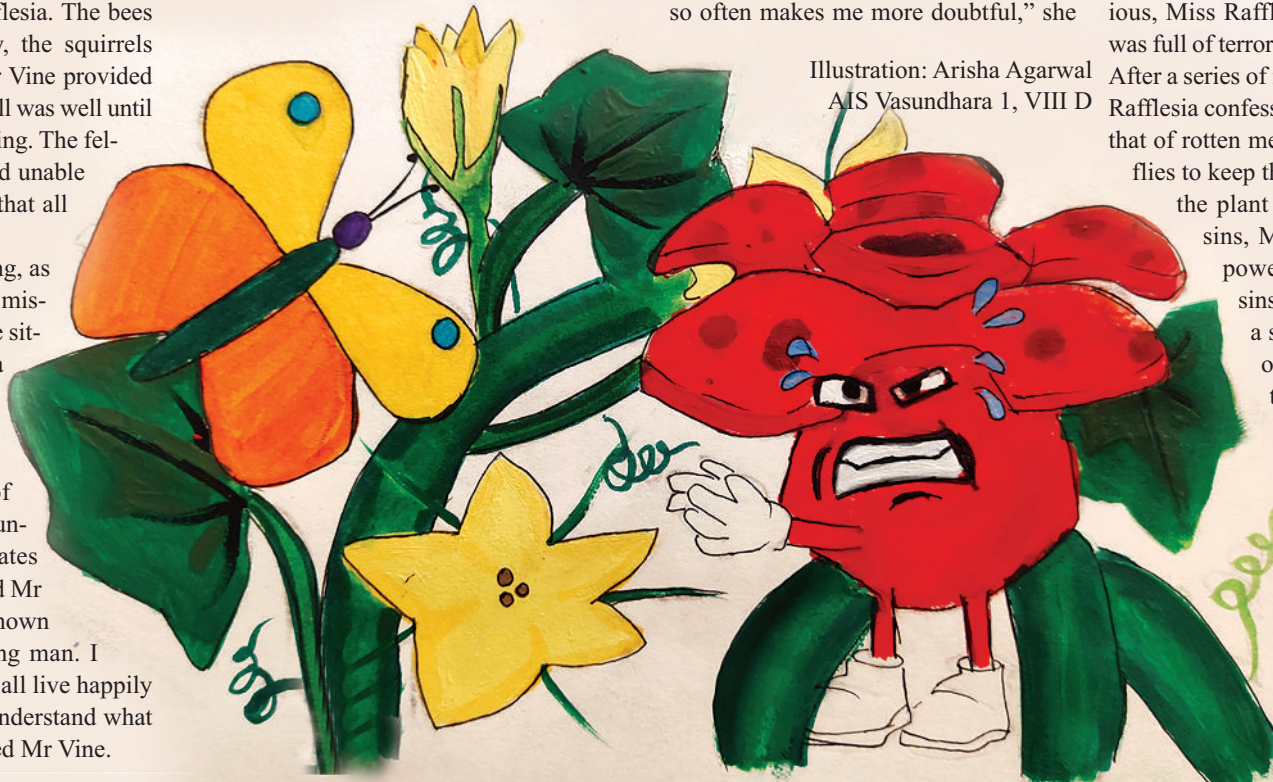


Illustration: Arisha Agarwal  
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## An atmospheric discovery

Celebrating Anna Mani's Contribution In The Field Of Meteorology

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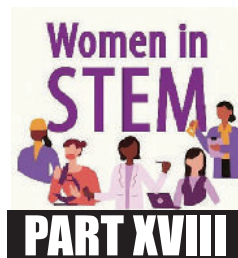
Born in 1918 in Kerala, Anna Modayil Mani was a voracious reader since childhood. Her father was a civil engineer, so being interested in science came easy to her. She always remained engrossed in books, and it is said that by the time she was eight, she had read almost all the books in Malayalam at the nearest public library. On her eighth birthday, she declined to accept her family's customary gift of a set of diamond earrings, asking instead for a set of Encyclopedia Britannica. She completed her graduation in Physics

and Chemistry in 1939 and went on to win a scholarship in 1940 for research at the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. When she wanted to spread her wings further, she decided to enroll herself at the Imperial College in London in 1945 where she ended up specialising in meteorological instruments.

After returning to India in 1948, she joined the meteorology department in Pune, where she published numerous research papers on meteorological instrumentation. By 1953, she had become the head of a di-

vision of 121 men. Mani's greatest wish was to make India independent in weather instruments. She standardised the drawings of nearly one hundred weather instruments. In 1957 and 1958, she set up a network of stations to measure solar radiation. Not just this, she also established a small workshop in Bangalore that manufactured instruments to measure wind speed and solar energy, and worked on developing an apparatus to measure ozone.

Recognising her immense contribution in



this field, she was made a member of the International Ozone Association. Following which, she set up a meteorological observatory and an instrumentation tower at the Thumba Equatorial Rocket Launching Station (TERLS) facility in Kerala. She retired as the deputy director general of the Indian Meteorological Department in 1976 and was felicitated with INSA KR Ramanathan Medal in 1987 for her extraordinary contribution in the field of science. [G I](#)