

A Reader's Theater adaptation of Carmen Agra Deedy's *Martina the Beautiful Cockroach*

**By Dixie Allen
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**©*Martina the Beautiful Cockroach: A Cuban Folktale* by Carmen Agra Deedy,
published by Peachtree Publishers.**

Approximately 4 minutes.

Readers:

Narrator 1
Narrator 2
Narrator 3
Narrator 4
Narrator 5
Martina
Abuela

Narrator 2: This is taken from the opening pages of *Martina the Beautiful Cockroach* retold by Carmen Agra Deedy.

Narrator 1: Martina Josefina Catalina Cucaracha was a beautiful cockroach.

Narrator 2: She lived in a cozy street lamp in old Havana with her big, lovable family.

Narrator 3: Now that Martina was 21 days old, she was ready to give her leg in marriage.

Narrator 4: The Cucaracha household was crawling with excitement! Every señora in the family had something to offer.

Narrator 5: Tía Cuca gave her una peineta, a seashell comb.

Narrator 3: Mamá gave her una mantilla, a lace shawl.

Narrator 2: But Abuela, her Cuban grandmother, gave her un consejo increíble, some shocking advice.

Martina: "You want me to do WHAT?"

Narrator 1: Martina was aghast.

Abuela: "You are a beautiful cockroach."

Narrator 4: said Abuela.

Abuela: Finding husbands to choose from will be easy—picking the right one could be tricky.”

Martina: B-b-but,”

Narrator 5: stammered Martina.

Martina: “How will spilling COFFEE on a suitor’s shoes help me find a good husband?”

Narrator 1: Her grandmother smiled.

Abuela: “Trust me, Martina. The Coffee Test never fails.” You will see the true character of your suitor.

Narrator 2: Martina wasn’t so sure.

Narrator 4: Meanwhile, Papá sent el perico, the parrot, to spread the word.

Narrator 5: Soon all Havana—from the busy sidewalks of El Prado to El Morro castle—was abuzz with the news.

Narrator 3: Martina the beautiful cockroach was ready to choose a husband.

Narrator 1: Will Martina find the right husband?

Narrator 4: Will he treat her the way she should be treated?

Narrator 2: Will he be a true gentleman?

Narrator 5: Better yet, will Abuela’s coffee test REALLY work?

Narrator 3: You’ll want to read the rest of *Martina the Beautiful Cockroach* and find out what happens next.