

Beetle Mania

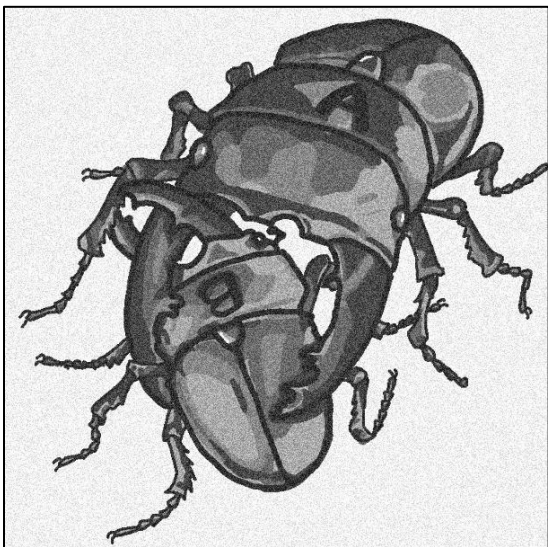
All your beetle battle news

Leona Breen

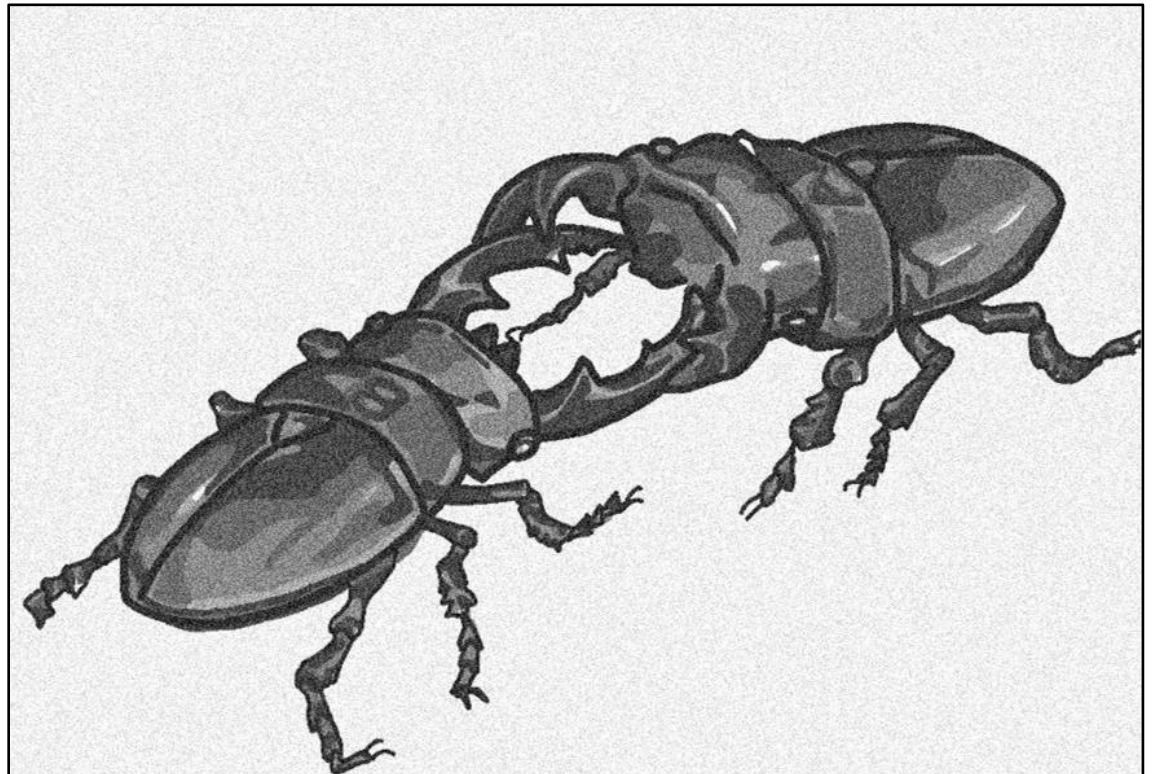
Shocking Ash Tree Showdown

The latest updates

Last night on the fallen ash tree, the Beetle-Mania match delivered not just brute force but a shocking twist that left spectators gasping in disbelief. What began as a classic showdown between two recently emerged golden titans, ended in a cunning move that no one could predict.



The Alpha in an attempt to dislodge his smaller opponent, the Beta¹¹



Alpha and Beta grapple in the ring¹¹

Leona Breen

Golden Stags Take the Ring

The latest updates to get you through the day

The main event featured two insects from southeast Asia, an 89mm powerhouse Alpha, a young man known for escalating directly into aggressive tactics, as well as his slightly smaller, yet almost equally ferocious rival, a 65mm Beta¹. Both of these males went head-to-head sporting a classic broad orange margin on the outer edge of their elytra, complimented by their elaborate elongated mandibles². Like any male *Odontolabis cuvera*, these boys only had three things on their mind: territory, sap sites and most importantly, females³. From the ring of the bell, the two giants locked horns, trading thunderous slams in a battle for dominance and the admiration of the beloved female.

The two warriors battled ferociously for nearly half an hour as they exhausted their immense strength.

The predicted outcome showed that the Alpha had an 85% chance to win⁴, as this colossus was ready to employ his signature move. Using his tarsal claw to cling to the log, the Alpha was struggling to dislodge his slightly smaller opponent. The Alpha was seen using the distal zone of his elongated mandible in an attempt to dislodge his opponents leg, even though this tactic transferred less bite force⁵, it is seen as a classic and almost flawless move in the world of lucanid wrestling.

The crowd were on the edge of their seats, eagerly waiting for one of the boys to dislodge their opponent and drop him off the tree, but as the action began to peak, a third unexpected male made his move.

Alpha Male



Contestant one⁶

Beta Male



Contestant two⁶

Gamma Male



Contestant three⁶

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Golden Stags Take the Ring Continued

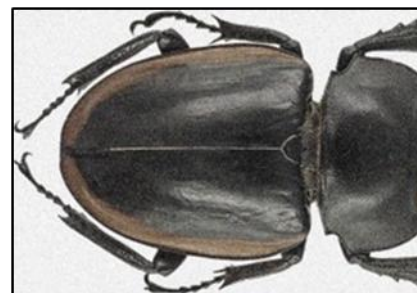
The latest updates to get you through the day

A Gamma male entered the venue, an elusive man known more for his cunning and speed than his size. At a mere 43mm¹, and almost indistinguishable from the small mandibles of the female. The crowd watched eagerly, knowing that at his size he wouldn't stand a chance against the two beasts in front of him. Yet, as the Alpha and Beta males in the ring threw around their weight, oblivious to anything outside of the stump, the Gamma slid past the ring. The audience erupted in shock as the Gamma male approached the female, and charmed her with his fitness⁶. With his short mandibles, and weighing much less, the Gamma had much greater mobility⁷. Without a single grappling move, the diminutive trickster dashed from the log with his prize before the two

This strategy is so rare we have only ever seen it once before, in a contest between the little stag beetles, *Dorcus rectus* back in 2013⁸. Professionals have named this 'trimorphism', the occurrence of sexually competing males having three distinct morphs, as opposed to the usual two⁹. Last night was a huge day in beetle battle history, and coleopterists around the world will never forget the first sighting of our second ever Gamma male. By the time the Alpha and Beta released their grapple and realised what had happened, it was too late. A stunned silence fell over the fallen tree, quickly replaced by a roar of disbelief from the crowd. The two behemoths, still locked in

frustration as the spotlight shifted to the puny Gamma male. Fans are left wondering: was this a pre-planned stunt, or has the Gamma genuinely outsmarted the lucanid wrestling world?

One thing is certain, last night's event will go down in stag beetle battle history as the match where the smallest male walked away with the biggest prize.



The female that last night's contestants went head-to-head for.¹⁰

brutes had noticed the
absence of the female.

a stalemate, could only
watch in

Article total 723 words.

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11. Illustrations by Leona, inspired by
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