



Small Worlds Around Us
By Lynn M. Watkins

The Star-Fish is a Pretty Peculiar Fish. Equipped by Nature with five or more "arms" and several hundred "legs," the star-fish, which isn't a fish at all, makes a nuisance of himself. Along the bottom of all the world's oceans the tiny tube-like feet or "legs" of the star-fish propel their owner slowly forward, in a constant search for food or mate.

To see the "feet" of this aquatic creature, it is necessary to turn one over. They are arranged in rows along the underside of the "arms." When they move they all move in unison. On the end of each "arm" is a tiny, usually red, eye spot. The mouth is also underneath, at the junction of the numerous "arms."

There are several hundred species of star-fish, distributed pretty generally over the entire globe, reaching from the shallow water near the shore, to several hundred feet in depth. Underwater pictures, taken at great depths, show that there, too, the sea-star is at home.

Many Lives
A sea-star has more "lives" than the proverbial cat. They can even grow new arms, and can regenerate other missing parts. The eggs are laid in the early spring, and hatch into tiny, transparent larvae that swim about for a short time, before assuming the characteristic star-fish shape and sinking to the bottom.

But having many arms and feet is not the only remarkable accomplishment of these strange creatures. They even enjoy the convenience of having a retractable stomach. When the occasion demands Mr. Sea Star can turn his stomach wrong side out, and it works equally well. He does this when he encounters food in the person of an oyster. The star-fish crawls up on the oyster's shell and clasps it with his arms, in much the same fashion a human hand would grip a book.

In this position, and with his mouth opposite the two shell edges of the oyster, it begins a relentless pull against the two valves of the bivalve. The sea-star is in no hurry, so it pulls slowly, with a steady pressure, which will persist for an hour if need be, until the oyster tires and allows its shell to gape open. The second this happens the sea-star projects its own stomach into the soft body of the doomed oyster.

When the flesh is eaten the sea-star retracts its stomach, releases the empty shell, and crawls away.

In 'Radiate' Group
It is easily understandable that even for a creature as unusual as this, for this is an animal belonging to the group called "radiate," the rays or "arms" are covered with a skeleton of loosely connected pieces of rough, limy shell. The tube-like "feet" are moved by varying the water pressure within the body, under control of the nervous system.

The sea-star reacts violently to vibration, or to a shadow falling across the water. If the sluggish creature can escape by moving, it will; otherwise it will "freeze" and wait until the danger is past.

Turned over on its back by a wave, or a curious foot, the star-fish will wave its many legs frantically, or until it regains its normal position, or dies in the sun. Nature favored the common star-fish with a great many perplexing traits, or habits. The lowly creature does not deserve all the functions it possesses. It seems to have too much of everything.

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Creative Thinking Helps To Do Job

New York (Science Service) Creative thinking is helped by doing the whole job rather than by extreme division of labor.

This was reported here today by Dr. Abraham S. S. Luchins of the University of Florida, Miami, to a conference on the psychology of thinking sponsored by the New York Academy of Sciences.

A relatively high degree of freedom of action is also involved in creative production, he said.

Yet while creativity is highly individual, it is also a social concern. Society helps determine what will be considered creative.

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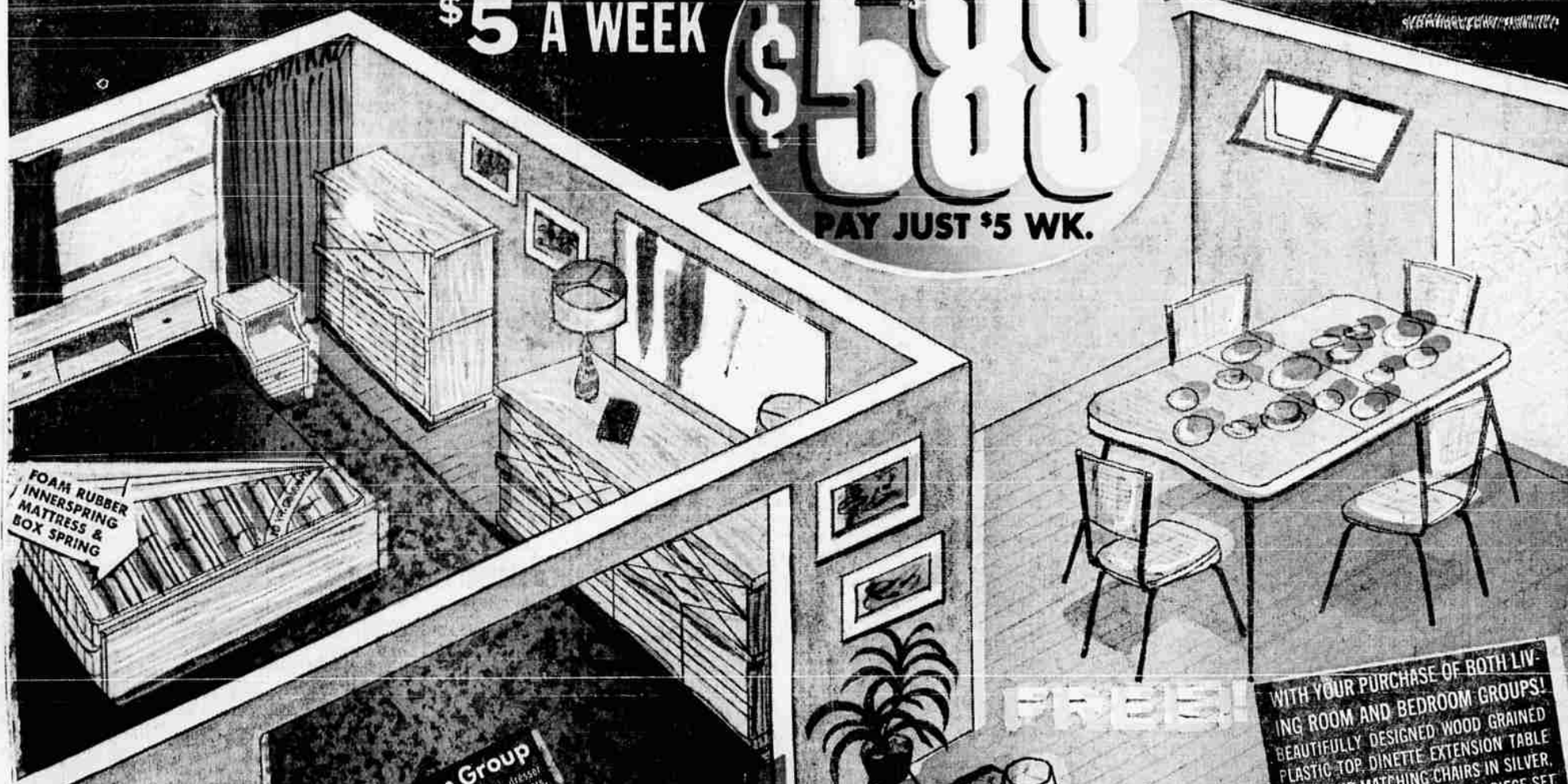
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