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Kleptoparasitic spiders of the subfamily Argyrodinae: a special case of behavioural plasticity

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Abstract: Throughout this book we have seen numerous examples of the flexible nature of spider behaviour. This includes flexibility in silk and web production and design; foraging, antipredatory and deceptive behaviour; and sociality and courtship behaviour. We have also seen how behavioural plasticity and learning enhances the flexibility of these different behaviours. In this chapter we will look at a subfamily of spiders, Argyrodinae (Theridiidae), to see how all these forms of flexibility contribute to the success of this group. Argyrodinae are by no means the most successful group of spiders, nor are they likely to be the most intelligent (if it were possible to measure such a thing in spiders, that award would undoubtedly go to individuals in the *Portia* genus) but they are an interesting group of spiders that illustrate many of the concepts discussed in the book, and they also show some unusual takes of common themes.

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