



## When Lunch Fights Back: Wickedly Clever Animal Defenses

*Rebecca L. Johnson*

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The octopus spies a nice, tasty mantis shrimp. It swims over for a closer look at the small creature. Then--WHAM!--the mantis shrimp strikes a nasty blow with its hammer-like forelimb. The octopus shrinks back, defeated. That wasn't such an easy meal after all . . .

In nature, good defenses can mean the difference between surviving a predator's attack and becoming its lunch. Some animals rely on sharp teeth and claws or camouflage. But that's only the beginning. Meet creatures with some of the strangest defenses known to science. How strange? Hagfish that can instantaneously produce oodles of gooey, slippery slime; frogs that poke their own toe bones through their skin to create claws; young birds that shoot streams of stinking poop; and more.

## When Lunch Fights Back: Wickedly Clever Animal Defenses Details

Date : Published August 1st 2014 by Millbrook Press (Tm) (first published January 1st 2014)

ISBN : 9781467721097

Author : Rebecca L. Johnson

Format : Hardcover 48 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, Animals, Science, Childrens, Middle Grade, Picture Books, Environment, Nature, Juvenile, Kids



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## **From Reader Review When Lunch Fights Back: Wickedly Clever Animal Defenses for online ebook**

### **Sandra says**

Good nonfiction for reluctant readers. I'm a little iffy on some of the narrative introductions, and some of the photographs of the defense strategies could be better (or dare I suggest a diagram-as in how the ribs come out the sides of the body as spines?!) but the ick factor certainly has appeal.

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### **Rebekah Hughes says**

When Lunch Fights Back contains all the things my fourth-graders love: animals and discussion about gross things like poison, snot, projectile-vomit, and poop! Aside from the gross-factor, the layout of the book was great. The photographs were amazing(ly gross). This one is certainly a new favorite read aloud!

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### **Erin says**

Fascinating and gross! My fifth graders both hated and loved it! Any book that gets them sharing unbelievable facts with their parents is a win for me!

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### **Annette says**

From the compelling title to the extraordinary illustrations, **WHEN LUNCH FIGHTS BACK: WICKEDLY CLEVER ANIMAL DEFENSES** by Rebecca L. Johnson is an informational book that immediately grabs the reader's attention. Even the chapter titles like "slip-sliming away" and "here's blood in your eye" are designed to shock and entertain.

The author uses a short narrative to introduce each creature. Then, a "science behind the story" segment describes the species' method of defense featuring a scientist who studies how the defense system works.

Quality photographs and informational boxes bring attention to each featured creature. The glossary at the end of the book defines key vocabulary. Suggested books, websites, and videos are provided to extend the experience.

Aimed at upper elementary grades, this book will fit well into the school library collection. Containing a balance of entertaining narratives along with quality informative segments, it's is sure to attract a wide range of readers.

To learn more about this author, go to Rebecca L. Johnson's website at <http://www.rebeccajohnsonbooks.com/>.

For additional materials related to animal defenses, try the following online resources:

Animal Defenses from PBS LearningMedia - <http://goo.gl/6c7WVg>

Top 5 Animal Defense Tactics from National Geographic - <http://goo.gl/gU9MVB>

Animal Arsenal from Fact Monster - <http://goo.gl/njFWXQ>

ARC NetGalley

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### **The Styling Librarian says**

When Lunch Fights Back – Wickedly Clever Animal Defenses by Rebecca L. Johnson – Non-fiction – 3rd grade and up – Fantastic formatting in this book. Loved the contents- slip-sliming away, concealed weapons, toxic bubbles, master blasters, knockout punch, here's blood in your eye, of bullies and bait, and meet my bodyguards... they really pull a reader through. Especially science behind the story.

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### **Vannessa Anderson says**

**When Lunch fights Back Wickedly Clever Animal Defenses** is about how some animals use their bodies to defend themselves against predators and the sacrifices those who live in colonies make for those colonies. It was fascinating to learn of the numerous ways and techniques animals use to protect themselves and their colonies and their little ones.

What I liked about **When Lunch fights Back Wickedly Clever Animal Defenses** is I learned about animals I never knew existed. A fascinating and informative read.

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### **Raina says**

Dibs on booktalking this in Thurston County next May. You all did Zombie Makers anyway. ;)

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Yup, killer. Fantastic, the kids loved it. Whoever's doing Johnson's graphic design/layout is spot-on. All the kids wanted to hear me talk about it, and I talked about poisonous vomit, not projectile poop, insta-snot, tiny punchers, or hidden claws.

Loved it, yes, essential for libraries serving kids who want high appeal nonfiction. The "Science behind the story" is particularly awesome.

I'm trying to remember if there's a single thing wrong with this.

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### **Amelia says**

Great book for young readers. Super engaging. Love the use of narrative and explanatory styles. A provocative choice for future scientists.

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### **Becky says**

This is a wonderful companion book to Johnson's book *Zombie Makers: True Stories of Nature's Undead* (Exceptional Science Titles for Intermediate Grades) (Junior Library Guild Selection! The set up is the same - a few pages on each species, first with a true story and then with the (understandable) science. The pictures and topic will sell this book to upper elementary kids!

Although this book has an ick factor, it is not as creepy as *Zombie Makers: True Stories of Nature's Undead* (Exceptional Science Titles for Intermediate Grades) (Junior Library Guild Selection. I think that might be a plus for some kids!

Wonderful nonfiction that just might get kids looking for more!

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### **Kristi Betts says**

If the cover of this book does not intrigue elementary age students, I'm not sure what will capture their attention. It is not difficult to save the photographs in this book are amazing. It is difficult to say they are not creepy. From the hagfish (a primitive eel-like animal), which can pick "up the scent of a dead whale from more than 1 mile away" and then secrete slimed fibers when attacked to (my favorite...because I am a TCU fan after all) the Texas Horned Lizard (or TCU Horned Frog) which can squirt blood from his eye into the mouth of a predator when threatened. The following animals are also included in the book: African Hairy Frog, the Spanish Ribbed Newt, Neocapritermes Taracua Termites, Hoopoe, Fulmar, the Peacock Mantis Shrimp (which is pictured on the cover of the book), the Two-Spot Astyanax, and Black Mustard.

The descriptions of each of the animals and their defenses is fabulous, but the best part is the "Science Behind the Story" which follows each of the animals in order to give the reader the why and not just the how. Each animal spotlighted has a color photograph and an information box with the scientific name, distribution (where they live), the habitat, and size of the animal.

There is a table of contents, a note from the author, source notes, a glossary, selected biography, a more to explore section with additional book, web, and video resources, and an index.

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### **Laura Salas says**

High kid-appeal in this one! Reading about the fascinating ways that animals defend themselves is pretty addictive. Strong writing and mostly terrific photos (though there were a couple where I couldn't discern what was happening even with helpful arrows).

Each animal gets two features. In the first one, a present-tense scene plays out between predator and would-be prey. Dramatic language and great tension make these scenes fun to read. In the second spread, The Science Behind the Story, we get more direct, scientific information featuring quotes from a scientific authority as well as an explanation of how the defense works--and often how it was discovered or figured out by scientists. This dual approach works really well.

My only minor gripe was in the hairy frog scenario. The whole scene plays out between frog and otter, but then the caption for the otter photo reveals, "It's likely that these otters try to eat hairy frogs, although scientists have never caught one in the act." That made the scene feel too much like fiction to me.

But overall, a very enjoyable read.

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### **readknitread says**

Great pictures and short chapters! Upper elementary and middle school youth will enjoy this book.

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### **Melissa Mcavoy says**

Birds that can shoot deadly vomit 6 feet; Newts that can, like Wolverine, push sharpened bones through their skin, only better than Wolverine, their bones drip poison; and fish that can choke a shark with gobs of slime that fill the predator's mouth and gills: these are only three of the amazing animal defenses you'll discover in When Lunch Fights Back. Two page spreads with color photographs outline the dramatic defenses, followed by another two pages that detail the science behind the story. An index, source notes, a glossary, selected bibliography, photo credits and books, websites and videos for more information complete this fascinating package, perfect for anyone not allergic to ick.

Add in Johnson's excellent Zombie Makers and Masters of Disguise for a trifecta of insanely cool, decidedly gross, examples of astonishing evolutionary biology.

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### **Sharon Tyler says**

When Lunch Fights Back: Wickedly Clever Animal Defenses by Rebecca L. Johnson is a nonfiction book for children. This book introduces readers of all ages to living things with some of the strangest defenses known to science. There are termites that blow themselves up to save the colony, fish that produce copious amounts of slime, lizards that run on water, and much more. Readers that love to learn about nature, animals, and some odd animal abilities will devour this book.

When Lunch Fights Back: Wickedly Clever Animal Defenses is a book that my kids loved. My daughter loves anything animal related and my son loves anything that can be called gross or weird. this book made both of them happy. I think the real photographs along with the explanations of how these defenses take place were very well organized and explained so that young readers can get something out of it while older readers are learning even more and are not bored. Most of these defenses and odd animal abilities were not new to me, but some of the information was. I learned something, as did my children. I think this book can be a regular repeat read for many children.

When Lunch Fights Back: Wickedly Clever Animal Defenses has a good balance of photographs and information. It does not over or underwhelm readers, avoiding boring the older readers or making the younger readers feel left out. this would be a great high interest book for grabbing the attention of nature or oddity loving reluctant readers.

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**Kim says**

Fascinating information and great photographs.

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