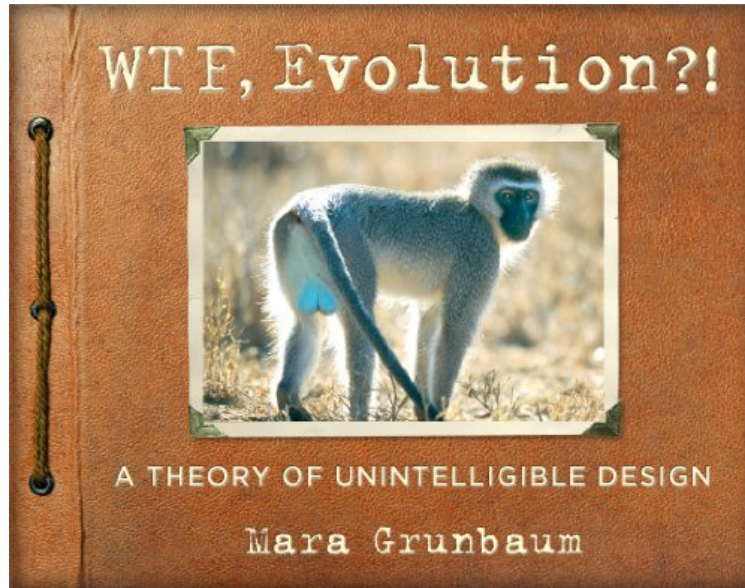


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WTF, Evolution?!: A Theory of Unintelligible Design

Mara Grunbaum

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Mara Grunbaum : WTF, Evolution?!: A Theory of Unintelligible Design before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised WTF, Evolution?!: A Theory of Unintelligible Design:

45 of 48 people found the following review helpful. Fun, funny, educational and enlightening. By Gavin Scott
The book presents around 101 unusual real-world creatures that are the product of billions of years of evolution. The most bizarre looking and behaving animals (and a few plants) that the author could find. I was impressed because nearly half the species in the book were ones I'd never heard of before, so it was pretty exciting to see all these creatures that look like something from an Avatar movie sequel but which are actually real. It's presented mostly as a dialog with an anthropomorphized Evolution. Here's an example of the style: "New idea!" "Mm hmm." "Floppy, inflatable nose... ON AN ANTELOPE!" "Evolution, are you taking this seriously at all?" "This actually isn't as annoying as you might think, and the text is well written. It's light and silly and makes the book completely approachable to someone who might otherwise get bored reading a bunch of details that might be interesting only to a scientist. Just don't expect a serious scientific work. This is a picture book that basically makes fun of funny-looking animals. There are also short chapter introductions (the book is roughly organized into groups like "Awkward Solutions", "Dirty Jokes", etc.) and the occasional fact-boxes with greater detail about a creature's evolutionary oddity. In case you're wondering, this is a pro-evolution book in that the author clearly believes in evolution and is not making fun of the idea of evolution itself. That said, you could change the word Evolution to God throughout the book and it would be just as funny. The pictures are very good and the quality of the printing is excellent. It's about 270 pages long so there's more content than you usually get in this sort of cutesy "gift book", and there's at least some re-readability for wanting to look up "oh yeah, what was that weird creature again?". Kids will LOVE all the pictures of funny animals. They do tend to point out the exotic mating habits and genitalia features of creatures here and there (and no shortage of "ha, ha, it looks like a PENIS" creatures) so be prepared to gloss over or explain those possibly embarrassing questions that will result. But really there's not TOO much of that in the book. So I give it 4.5 stars (rounding up to 5) and I'm glad I bought it. G.10

of 10 people found the following review helpful. Some of The More Humorous Evolutionary Mistakes By Frederick S. Goethel Anyone who knows anything about evolution knows about the process of natural selection working to improve the odds of a species survival. Each gene, however, covers numerous aspects of what the final creature will become. Sometimes evolution picks good genes to pass on good survival traits, but these same genes can also have strange side effects. This book is a look at some of the stranger side effects and survival mechanisms of various species. The photography in the book is excellent. The author mixes using a question and answer format of talking to "evolution" and just explaining the various traits. I should also note that this book will pretty much punch holes in the intelligent design theories that are floating around. No "intelligent designer" would make the "oops" that are featured in this book. The discussion part can get a little annoying, but overall the book is fun and interesting. A great read for anyone interested in evolution, biology or with a curious mind. 7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Perfect humor level for young teenage boys, but caution about drug humor By Kenneth I. Mayer This is a fun book for adults and for teenagers. I got it as a gift for my 11 year old nephew, and I *mostly* think the tone is perfect. If you have ever read the Tumblr "Texts From Dog" you will be familiar with the authorial voice--some patient rational "everyman" person interacting with "Evolution", who does crazy stuff seemingly randomly. While I thought my brother and his wife would be OK with their son getting a book with WTF in the title and I believe the kid would thoroughly enjoy the scatological and immature sex references, I have second thoughts about the drug/alcohol/party humor. A bunch of creatures are presented as "I'm not saying Evolution took some controlled substances at the party last night, but the next day he created THIS [some utterly inexplicable creature], so I defy you to say that he wasn't totally out of it." It's not the picture of adult life that I want to provide. There is only a thin veneer of science here, but it should spur the curious to read more about some of the creatures. I was introduced to easily 50 creatures that I'd never seen or heard of, and some that I'd heard of but never seen or never knew particular aspects about.

We all have our off days. Why should Evolution be any different? Maybe Evolution got carried away with an idea that was just a little too crazy? like having the Regal Horned Lizard defend itself by shooting three-foot streams of blood from its eyes. Or maybe Evolution ran out of steam (Memo to Evolution: The Irrawaddy Dolphin looks like a prototype that should have been left on the drawing board). Or maybe Evolution was feeling cheeky? a fish with hands? Joke's on you, Red Handfish! Or maybe Evolution simply goofed up: How else to explain the overgrown teeth of the babirusas that curl backward over their face? Oops. Mara Grunbaum is a very smart, very funny science writer who celebrates the best? or, really, the worst? of Evolution's blunders. Here are more than 100 outlandish mammals, reptiles, insects, fish, birds, and other creatures whose very existence leaves us shaking our heads and muttering WTF?! Ms. Grunbaum's especially brilliant stroke is to personify Evolution as a well-meaning but somewhat oblivious experimenter whose conversations with a skeptical narrator are hilarious. For almost 4 billion years, Evolution has produced a nonstop parade of inflatable noses, bizarre genitalia, and seriously awkward necks. What a comedian!

"This book cracks me up. Grunbaum lends the pitch-perfect voice to nature's absurdities." -Jennifer Holland, New York Times bestselling author of Unlikely Friendships