

# PARASITE



# REX

INSIDE THE BIZARRE WORLD OF  
NATURE'S MOST DANGEROUS CREATURES

CARL ZIMMER

# Parasite Rex Inside The Bizarre World Of Natures Most Dangerous Creatures

**Carl Zimmer**



## **Parasite Rex Inside The Bizarre World Of Natures Most Dangerous Creatures:**

**Parasite Rex** Carl Zimmer, 2000-09-21 Combining the literary sensibility of David Quammen with the scientific rigor of Stephen Jay Gould Carl Zimmer reveals the power danger and beauty of the surprising creatures who dominate the earth parasites For centuries parasites have lived in nightmares horror stories and the darkest shadows of science In Parasite Rex Carl Zimmer takes readers on a fantastic voyage into the secret universe of these extraordinary life forms which are not only among the most highly evolved on Earth but make up the majority of life s diversity Traveling from the steamy jungles of Costa Rica to the parasite riddled war zone of southern Sudan Zimmer introduces an array of amazing creatures that invade their hosts prey on them from within and control their behavior He also vividly describes parasites that can change DNA rewire the brain make men more distrustful and women more outgoing and turn hosts into the living dead This comprehensive gracefully written book brings parasites out into the open and uncovers what they can teach us all about the most fundamental survival tactics in the universe the laws of Parasite Rex

**Parasite Rex** Carl Zimmer, 2001-11-09  
IMAGINE A WORLD WHERE parasites control the minds of their hosts sending them to their destruction IMAGINE A WORLD WHERE parasites are masters of chemical warfare and camouflage able to cloak themselves with their hosts own molecules IMAGINE A WORLD WHERE parasites steer the course of evolution where the majority of species are parasites WELCOME TO EARTH For centuries parasites have lived in nightmares horror stories and in the darkest shadows of science Yet these creatures are among the world s most successful and sophisticated organisms In Parasite Rex Carl Zimmer deftly balances the scientific and the disgusting as he takes readers on a fantastic voyage Traveling from the steamy jungles of Costa Rica to the fetid parasite haven of southern Sudan Zimmer graphically brings to life how parasites can change DNA rewire the brain make men more distrustful and women more outgoing and turn hosts into the living dead This thorough gracefully written book brings parasites out into the open and uncovers what they can teach us about the most fundamental survival tactics in the universe

**At the Water's Edge** Carl Zimmer, 1999-09-08 Everybody Out of the Pond At the Water s Edge will change the way you think about your place in the world The awesome journey of life s transformation from the first microbes 4 billion years ago to Homo sapiens today is an epic that we are only now beginning to grasp Magnificent and bizarre it is the story of how we got here what we left behind and what we brought with us We all know about evolution but it still seems absurd that our ancestors were fish Darwin s idea of natural selection was the key to solving generation to generation evolution microevolution but it could only point us toward a complete explanation still to come of the engines of macroevolution the transformation of body shapes across millions of years Now drawing on the latest fossil discoveries and breakthrough scientific analysis Carl Zimmer reveals how macroevolution works Escorting us along the trail of discovery up to the current dramatic research in paleontology ecology genetics and embryology Zimmer shows how scientists today are unveiling the secrets of life that biologists struggled with two centuries ago In this book you will find a dazzling brash literary talent and a

rigorous scientific sensibility gracefully brought together Carl Zimmer provides a comprehensive lucid and authoritative answer to the mystery of how nature actually made itself

**Parasitology** Eric Loker, Bruce Hofkin, 2015-03-02 Parasitology A Conceptual Approach focuses on the conceptual basis of parasitology with the goal of providing students with an enriched view of parasites and their biology Concentrating on concepts will enable readers to gain a broader perspective that will increase their ability to think critically about all kinds of parasitic associations The interfaces between the study of parasitism and prominent biological disciplines such as biodiversity immunology ecology evolution conservation biology and disease control are highlighted Studying individual parasites is an essential part of parasitology so Parasitology A Conceptual Approach contains an appendix which provides a concise overview of the biology of important human and veterinary parasites End of chapter questions are provided as is an instructor manual

**Parasitism** Timothy M. Goater, Cameron P. Goater, Gerald W. Esch, 2014 Synthesizes the latest developments in the ecology and evolution of animal parasites for a new generation of parasitologists

**Venomous** Christie Wilcox, 2016-08-09 A thrilling tale of encounters with nature s masters of biochemistry From the coasts of Indonesia to the rainforests of Peru venomous animals are everywhere and often lurking out of sight Humans have feared them for centuries long considering them the assassins and pariahs of the natural world Now in Venomous the biologist Christie Wilcox investigates and illuminates the animals of our nightmares arguing that they hold the keys to a deeper understanding of evolution adaptation and immunity She reveals just how venoms function and what they do to the human body With Wilcox as our guide we encounter a jellyfish with tentacles covered in stinging cells that can kill humans in minutes a two inch caterpillar with toxic bristles that trigger hemorrhaging and a stunning blue ringed octopus capable of inducing total paralysis How do these animals go about their deadly work How did they develop such intricate potent toxins Wilcox takes us around the world and down to the cellular level to find out Throughout her journey Wilcox meets the intrepid scientists who risk their lives studying these lethal beasts as well as self immunizers who deliberately expose themselves to snakebites Along the way she puts her own life on the line narrowly avoiding being envenomated herself Drawing on her own research Wilcox explains how venom scientists are untangling the mechanisms of some of our most devastating diseases and reports on pharmacologists who are already exploiting venoms to produce lifesaving drugs We discover that venomous creatures are in fact keystone species that play crucial roles in their ecosystems and ours and for this alone they ought to be protected and appreciated Thrilling and surprising at every turn Venomous will change everything you thought you knew about the planet s most dangerous animals

**A Planet of Viruses** Carl Zimmer, 2015-10-06 For years scientists have been warning us that a pandemic was all but inevitable Now it s here and the rest of us have a lot to learn Fortunately science writer Carl Zimmer is here to guide us In this compact volume he tells the story of how the smallest living things known to science can bring an entire planet of people to a halt and what we can learn from how we ve defeated them in the past Planet of Viruses covers such threats as Ebola MERS and chikungunya virus tells about recent scientific

discoveries such as a hundred million year old virus that infected the common ancestor of armadillos elephants and humans and shares new findings that show why climate change may lead to even deadlier outbreaks Zimmer's lucid explanations and fascinating stories demonstrate how deeply humans and viruses are intertwined Viruses helped give rise to the first life forms are responsible for many of our most devastating diseases and will continue to control our fate for centuries Thoroughly readable and for all its honesty about the threats as reassuring as it is frightening *A Planet of Viruses* is a fascinating tour of a world we all need to better understand

*Parasites and the Behavior of Animals* Janice Moore, 2002-01-31 When a parasite invades an ant does the ant behave like other ants Maybe not and if it doesn't who if anyone benefits from the altered behaviors The parasite The ant *Parasites and the Behavior of Animals* shows that parasite induced behavioral alterations are more common than we might realize and it places these alterations in an evolutionary and ecological context Emphasizing eukaryotic parasites the book examines the adaptive nature of behavioral changes associated with parasitism exploring the effects of these changes on parasite transmission parasite avoidance and the fitness of both host and parasite The behavioral changes and their effects are not always straightforward To the extent that virulence for instance is linked to parasite transmission the evolutionary interests of parasite and host will diverge and the current winner of the contest to maximize reproductive rates may not be clear or for that matter inevitable Nonetheless by affecting susceptibility host parasite lifespan and fecundity and transmission itself host behavior influences parameters that are basic to our comprehension of how parasites invade host populations and fundamentally how parasites evolve Such an understanding is important for a wide range of scientists from ecologists and parasitologists to evolutionary conservation and behavioral biologists The behavioral alterations that parasites induce can subtly and profoundly affect the distribution and abundance of animals

*Spook: Science Tackles the Afterlife* Mary Roach, 2006-09-26 The author looks to science to determine whether the human soul exists in death and travels to various places around the world to discuss supernatural occurrences with spirit guides and mediums

*Microcosm* Carl Zimmer, 2008-05-06 A Best Book of the Year Seed Magazine Granta Magazine The Plain Dealer In this fascinating and utterly engaging book Carl Zimmer traces *E. coli*'s pivotal role in the history of biology from the discovery of DNA to the latest advances in biotechnology He reveals the many surprising and alarming parallels between *E. coli*'s life and our own And he describes how *E. coli* changes in real time revealing billions of years of history encoded within its genome *E. coli* is also the most engineered species on Earth and as scientists retool this microbe to produce life saving drugs and clean fuel they are discovering just how far the definition of life can be stretched

**Why Elephants Have Big Ears** Chris Lavers, 2002-11-16 *Why Elephants Have Big Ears* is the result of one man's lifelong quest to understand why the creatures of the earth appear and act as they do In a wry manner and personal tone Chris Lavers explores and solves some of nature's most challenging evolutionary mysteries such as why birds are small and plentiful why rivers and lakes are dominated by the few remaining large reptiles why most of the large land dwellers are mammals and

many more Mother Nature Is Trying to Kill You Dan Riskin, 2014-03-04 A fun exploration of the darker side of the natural world reveals the fascinating weird often perverted ways that Mother Nature feeds only for herself. It may be a wonderful world but as Dan Riskin, cohost of Discovery Canada's Daily Planet, explains, it's also a dangerous, disturbing, and disgusting one. At every turn, it seems living things are trying to eat us, poison us, use our bodies as their homes, or have us spread their eggs. In *Mother Nature Is Trying to Kill You*, Riskin is our guide through the natural world at its most gloriously ruthless. Using the seven deadly sins as a road map, Riskin offers dozens of jaw-dropping examples that illuminate how brutal nature can truly be. From slothful worms that hide in your body for up to thirty years to wrathful snails with poisonous harpoons that can kill you in less than five minutes to lustful ducks that have orgasms faster than you can blink, these fascinating accounts reveal the candid truth about gentle Mother Nature's true colors. Riskin's passion for the strange and his enthusiastic expertise bring Earth's most fascinating flora and fauna into vivid focus. Through his adventures, which include sliding on his back through a thick soup of bat guano just to get face-to-face with a vampire bat, befriending a parasitic maggot that has taken root on his head, and coming to grips with having offspring of his own, Riskin makes unexpected discoveries not just about the world all around us but also about the ways this brutal world has shaped us as humans and what our responsibilities are to this terrible, wonderful planet we call home.

*Evolution* Carl Zimmer, 2003 In this remarkable book, a companion volume to the PBS series, a rich and up-to-date view of evolution is presented that explores the far-reaching implications of Darwin's theory. Photos and illustrations. **The Parasite Menace** Skye Weintraub, 2000-09-30 Parasites. The word typically conjures images of impoverished living conditions, foreign travel, or questionable eating establishments. But the presence of parasites is much more common than most people think. Contaminated water supplies, poor hygiene, and ignorance coupled with the presence of various commonly found parasites puts infection rates among North Americans as high as 85 percent, according to some experts. In *The Parasite Menace*, Dr. Skye Weintraub educates the reader about parasites, how to prevent infection, detect their presence, and rid ourselves of them by through diet and nutrition, herbal and supplemental therapies, and other natural practices. Dr. Weintraub also examines proper hygiene practices, water filters, proper food handling, immune system fortification, and other ways to decrease our risk of being infected with parasites.

*She Has Her Mother's Laugh* Carl Zimmer, 2019-06-04 2019 PEN E. O. Wilson Literary Science Writing Award Finalist. Science book of the year. The Guardian. One of New York Times 100 Notable Books for 2018. One of Publishers Weekly's Top Ten Books of 2018. One of Kirkus's Best Books of 2018. One of Mental Floss's Best Books of 2018. One of Science Friday's Best Science Books of 2018. Extraordinary. New York Times Book Review. Magisterial. The Atlantic. Engrossing. Wired. Leading contender as the most outstanding nonfiction work of the year. Minneapolis Star Tribune. Celebrated. New York Times columnist and science writer Carl Zimmer presents a profoundly original perspective on what we pass along from generation to generation. Charles Darwin played a crucial part in turning heredity into a scientific question, and yet he failed

spectacularly to answer it The birth of genetics in the early 1900s seemed to do precisely that Gradually people translated their old notions about heredity into a language of genes As the technology for studying genes became cheaper millions of people ordered genetic tests to link themselves to missing parents to distant ancestors to ethnic identities But Zimmer writes Each of us carries an amalgam of fragments of DNA stitched together from some of our many ancestors Each piece has its own ancestry traveling a different path back through human history A particular fragment may sometimes be cause for worry but most of our DNA influences who we are our appearance our height our penchants in inconceivably subtle ways Heredity isn't just about genes that pass from parent to child Heredity continues within our own bodies as a single cell gives rise to trillions of cells that make up our bodies We say we inherit genes from our ancestors using a word that once referred to kingdoms and estates but we inherit other things that matter as much or more to our lives from microbes to technologies we use to make life more comfortable We need a new definition of what heredity is and through Carl Zimmer's lucid exposition and storytelling this resounding tour de force delivers it Weaving historical and current scientific research his own experience with his two daughters and the kind of original reporting expected of one of the world's best science journalists Zimmer ultimately unpacks urgent bioethical quandaries arising from new biomedical technologies but also long standing presumptions about who we really are and what we can pass on to future generations Peeps Scott Westerfeld, 2006-09-07

A year ago Cal Thompson was a college freshman more interested in meeting girls and partying than in attending biology class Now after a fateful encounter with a mysterious woman named Morgan biology has become literally Cal's life Cal was infected by a parasite that has a truly horrifying effect on its host Cal himself is a carrier unchanged by the parasite but he's infected the girlfriends he's had since Morgan All three have turned into the ravaging ghouls Cal calls Peeps The rest of us know them as vampires It's Cal's job to hunt them down before they can create more of their kind Bursting with the sharp intelligence and sly humor that are fast becoming his trademark Scott Westerfeld's novel is an utterly original take on an archetype of horror *Ecology of Invertebrate Diseases* Ann E. Hajek, David I. Shapiro-Ilan, 2017-10-27 A rapidly growing interdisciplinary field disease ecology merges key ideas from ecology medicine genetics immunology and epidemiology to study how hosts and pathogens interact in populations communities and entire ecosystems Bringing together contributions from leading international experts on the ecology of diseases among invertebrate species this book provides a comprehensive assessment of the current state of the field Beginning with an introductory overview of general principles and methodologies the book continues with in depth discussions of a range of critical issues concerning invertebrate disease epidemiology molecular biology vectors and pathogens Topics covered in detail include Methods for studying the ecology of invertebrate diseases and pathogens Invertebrate pathogen ecology and the ecology of pathogen groups Applied ecology of invertebrate pathogens Leveraging the ecology of invertebrate pathogens in microbial control Prevention and management of infectious diseases of aquatic invertebrates *Ecology of Invertebrate Diseases* is a necessary and long overdue addition to the world

literature on this vitally important subject This volume belongs on the reference shelves of all those involved in the environmental sciences genetics microbiology marine biology immunology epidemiology fisheries and wildlife science and related disciplines     The Tangled Bank Carl Zimmer,2013-10-21 Used widely in non majors biology classes this is the first textbook about evolution intended for the general reader Zimmer an award winning science writer takes readers on a fascinating journey into the latest discoveries about evolution In the Canadian Arctic paleontologists unearth fossils documenting the move of our ancestors from sea to land In the outback of Australia a zoologist tracks some of the world s deadliest snakes to decipher the 100 million year evolution of venom molecules In Africa geneticists are gathering DNA to probe the origin of our species In clear non technical language Zimmer explains the central concepts essential for understanding new advances in evolution including natural selection genetic drift and sexual selection He demonstrates how vital evolution is to all branches of modern biology from the fight against deadly antibiotic resistant bacteria to the analysis of the human genome     **Rabid** Bill Wasik,Monica Murphy,2013-06-25 The most fatal virus known to science rabies a disease that spreads avidly from animals to humans kills nearly one hundred percent of its victims once the infection takes root in the brain In this critically acclaimed exploration from the authors of *Our Kindred Creatures* journalist Bill Wasik and veterinarian Monica Murphy chart four thousand years of the history science and cultural mythology of rabies From Greek myths to zombie flicks from the laboratory heroics of Louis Pasteur to the contemporary search for a lifesaving treatment *Rabid* is a fresh and often wildly entertaining look at one of humankind s oldest and most fearsome foes A searing narrative *The New York Times* In this keen and exceptionally well written book rife with surprises narrative suspense and a steady flow of expansive insights the world s most diabolical virus conquers the unsuspecting reader s imaginative nervous system A smart unsettling and strangely stirring piece of work *San Francisco Chronicle* Fascinating Wasik and Murphy chronicle more than two millennia of myths and discoveries about rabies and the animals that transmit it including dogs bats and raccoons *The Wall Street Journal*     *Dark Banquet* Bill Schutt,2009-10-06 A witty scientifically accurate and often intensely creepy exploration of sanguivorous creatures *San Francisco Chronicle* Bill Schutt turns whatever fear and disgust you may feel towards nature s vampires into a healthy respect for evolution s power to fill every conceivable niche Carl Zimmer author of *Parasite Rex* and *Microcosm E coli* and the *New Science of Life* For centuries blood feeders have inhabited our nightmares and horror stories as well as the shadowy realms of scientific knowledge In *Dark Banquet* zoologist Bill Schutt takes us on a fascinating voyage into the world of some of nature s strangest creatures the sanguivores Using a sharp eye and mordant wit Schutt makes a remarkably persuasive case that blood feeders from bats to bedbugs are as deserving of our curiosity as warmer and fuzzier species are and that many of them are even worthy of conservation Examining the substance that sustains nature s vampires Schutt reveals just how little we actually knew about blood until well into the twentieth century We revisit George Washington on his deathbed to learn how ideas about blood and the supposedly therapeutic value of



bloodletting first devised by the ancient Egyptians and Greeks survived into relatively modern times Dark Banquet details our dangerous and sometimes deadly encounters with ticks chiggers and mites the latter implicated in Colony Collapse Disorder currently devastating honey bees worldwide Then there are the truly weird vampire finches And if you thought piranha were scary some people believe that the candiru or willy fish is the best reason to avoid swimming in the Amazon Enlightening and alarming Dark Banquet peers into a part of the natural world to which we are through our blood inextricably linked

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