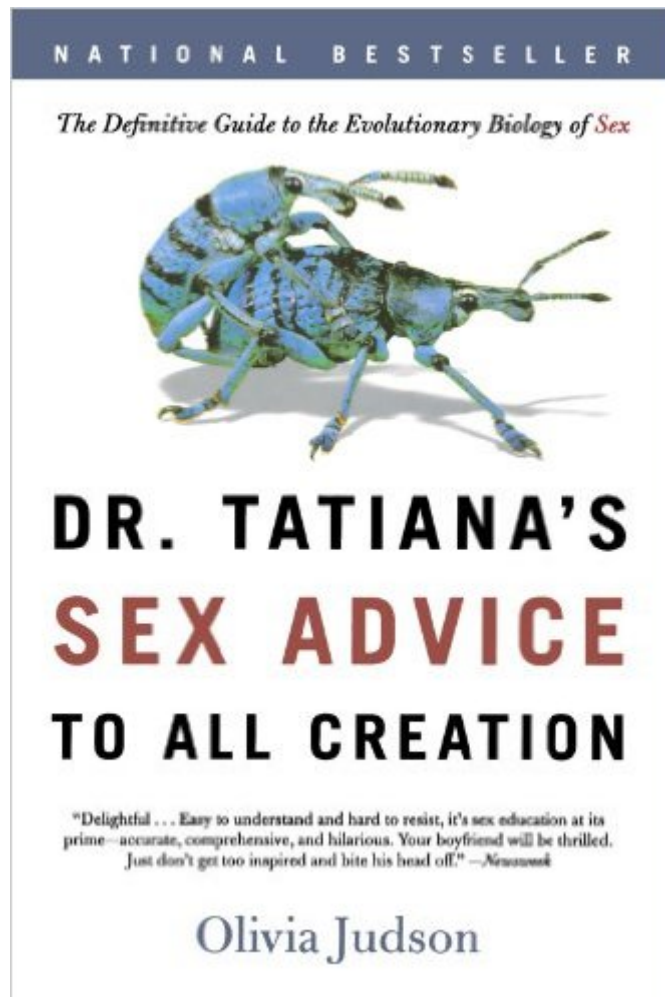


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Dr. Tatiana's Sex Advice To All Creation: The Definitive Guide To The Evolutionary Biology Of Sex



Synopsis

A sex guide for all living things and a hilarious natural history in the form of letters to and answers from the preeminent sexpert in all creation. Dr. Tatiana's Sex Advice to All Creation is a unique guidebook to sex. It reveals, for example, when necrophilia is acceptable and who should commit bestiality with whom. It discloses the best time to have a sex change, how to have a virgin birth, and when to eat your lover. It also advises on more mundane matters -- such as male pregnancy and the joys of a detachable penis. Entertaining, funny, and marvelously illuminating, the book comprises letters from all creatures worried about their bizarre sex lives to the wise Dr. Tatiana (a.k.a. Olivia Judson), the only sex columnist in creation with a prodigious knowledge of evolutionary biology. Fusing natural history with advice to the lovelorn, blending wit and rigor, she is able to reassure her anxious correspondents that although the acts they describe might sound appalling and unnatural, they are all perfectly normal -- so long as you are not a human. In the process, she explains the science behind it all, from Darwin's theory of sexual selection to why sexual reproduction exists at all. Applying human standards to the natural world, in the end she reveals the wonders of both. "Delightful . . . Easy to understand and hard to resist, it's sex education at its prime -- accurate, comprehensive, and hilarious." -- Newsweek

Book Information

Paperback: 320 pages

Publisher: Holt Paperbacks; 1 edition (May 1, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0805063323

ISBN-13: 978-0805063325

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.9 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 11.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (102 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #51,914 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #49 in Â Books > Science & Math > Nature & Ecology > Natural History #114 in Â Books > Science & Math > Biological Sciences > Zoology #237 in Â Books > Science & Math > Biological Sciences > Anatomy

Customer Reviews

This extraordinary book can be read at many levels: humor, sexology, general science, evolutionary biology, and it is amazingly successful in all its various layers; some of the information it imparts is so fantastic that it will strain one's sense of reality. Can a mammal be born through the clitoris of the

mother? UH?? Well, YES, it can. The spotted hyena delivers its pups through her clitoris (leading to the frequent mortality of the pups or the hyena moms). Read all about it. Or consider the well known fate of the male praying mantis, whose head keeps his sexual urges in check until this organ is devoured by the amorous female: the male's sexual inhibitory mechanisms (residing in the head) are removed, and he becomes a veritable sexual athlete while in the throes of death. Adds Dr. Judson: "Something analogous even happens in humans: Throttle a man and like as not he'll get an erection, not from erotic pleasure in dying, but because 'Down, boy' signals from the brain stop coming." The variety of sexual behavior among the critters that populate planet earth is so extraordinary that after reading this book it will be unlikely that the extremely narrow band of sexual "deviance" among humans will have much of an impact on the reader. Sexual bondage? Pschaw! Consider the sagebrush cricket (*Cyphoderris strepitans*), who carries a gin trap with open jaws on his back. Those teeth clamp on the female's belly when she approaches the male (the female preference is to be on top) and immobilizes her so that the male can have his way, whether she wants to or not. Incest, cannibalism, rape, masturbation, homosexuality, they all flower in incredible variety among the users of this planet. The book is written with scientific seriousness and literary humor.

Birds do it. Bees do it. But exactly *how* do they do it? Every which way! And evolutionary biologist Olivia Judson is here, in the person of Dr. Tatiana, agony columnist to the biosphere, to print their epistolary pleas for amatory advice, and to answer all their questions - and ours. Let her count the ways. Judson's humor is not quite as sparkling as she takes it to be. But that's all right, because she doesn't lay it on too thick, being too eager to get down to what she really likes to talk about: the dazzling variety of behaviors, strategems, perils and contortions to be found in the universal mating game. And let's not kid ourselves, that's what her readers also really want to get down to. From the Asian stick insect who stretches one copulation out for months at a time, to the fruit fly only five percent as long as one of his own sperm, to the slime mold with its 500 sexes, 13 of which have to get together to make a little baby slime mold, Dr. Tatiana covers the beat and covers the bases. There's a fresh astonishment on every page. They're delivered in bite-sized two or three paged morsels, which explains why Nature magazine's generally favorable review suggests this as the perfect book for your family sittin'-and-thinkin room. The fun, like the devil, is in the details, and there's a cornucopia of details, ranging across a hundred species or more. But the good Doctor manages along the way to touch on plenty of possible generalizations, evolutionary conundrums and controversies and imponderables. For example, she thoroughly debunks the one dogma about

animal sexuality that I was brought up on: Bateman's principle that sex is more costly to females, making males more promiscuous. It turns out that, for most species, the reverse is true.

Whether the reader is a newcomer or season ticket holder with regards the comparative sex behaviour literature, this volume will surely prove itself to be both tremendously entertaining and educational. Judson's novel 'agony aunt' Q & A style of presentation makes for a clearly accessible text for a wide audience of all ages and levels of understanding. This is a great way to impart much of the bewildering array of comparative morphology and associated knowledge concerning the rich diversity of sexual behaviour across a broad swathe of species. This book will surely attract many from the younger generation to the study of evolutionary and comparative biology/psychology. Many of us will wish that we had written this one! Not only do we read here about the birds and the bees?, mammalian phyla are well represented throughout the 13 chapters. The full tour includes gender differences (as well as similarities) and the how's and why's of the sex that might take place between them, whether that be in (serial) monogamy, polygyny, polyandry, or even parthenogenetic circumstances. The implications of each section for our better understanding of human sexual behaviours (both normal and abnormal) are rarely explicit, and for the most part (possibly intentionally so), are presented rather tongue-in-cheek. This is not a failing of the work, however. There is ample material here to occupy the lateral-thinking reader in this regard. Although this book makes for a terrific vacation or conference-trip read whilst in transit, it also has much of seriousness to offer the student of comparative psychology, sociology, anthropology, zoology or medicine. For those wishing to cut to the chase with the primary literature concerning particular issues, over 20 pages of extensively referenced notes are provided.

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