Martin County Library System Book Discussion Kit:

Fuzz by Mary Roach

Included in the Kit:

- Book summary
- Author biography
- Discussion questions
- Recipe suggestions

Book Summary:

What's to be done about a jaywalking moose? A bear caught breaking and entering? A murderous tree? Three hundred years ago, animals that broke the law would be assigned legal representation and put on trial. These days, *as New York Times* best-selling author Mary Roach discovers, the answers are best found not in jurisprudence but in science: the curious science of human-wildlife conflict, a discipline at the crossroads of human behavior and wildlife biology.

Roach tags along with animal-attack forensics investigators, human-elephant conflict specialists, bear managers, and "danger tree" faller blasters. Intrepid as ever, she travels from leopard-terrorized hamlets in the Indian Himalaya to St. Peter's Square in
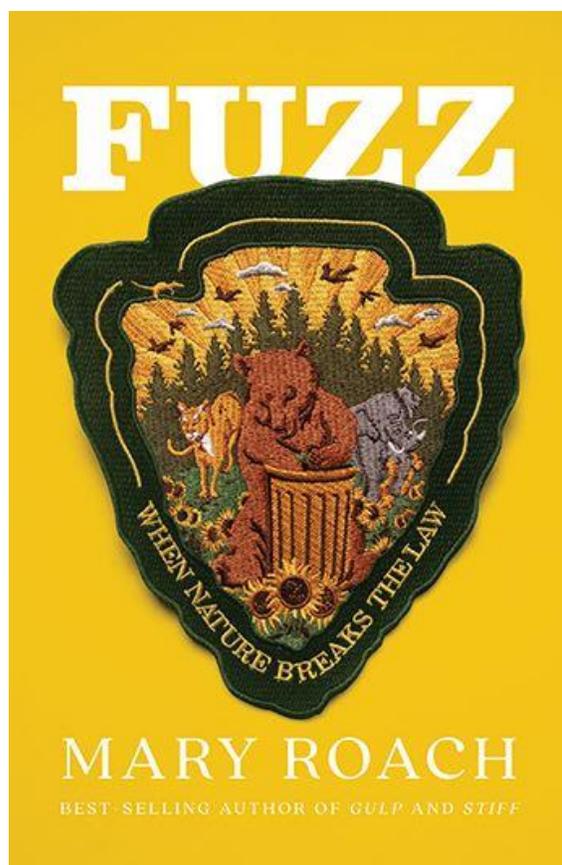
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the early hours before the pope arrives for Easter Mass, when vandal gulls swoop in to destroy the elaborate floral display. She taste-tests rat bait, learns how to install a vulture effigy, and gets mugged by a macaque.

Combining little-known forensic science and conservation genetics with a motley cast of laser scarecrows, langur impersonators, and trespassing squirrels, Roach reveals as much about humanity as about nature's lawbreakers. When it comes to "problem" wildlife, she finds, humans are more often the problem—and the solution. Fascinating, witty, and humane, *Fuzz* offers hope for compassionate coexistence in our ever-expanding human habitat.

Source: Author's website (https://maryroach.net)

Meet the Author:

Mary Roach is the author of seven *New York Times* bestsellers, including *STIFF: The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers*; *GULP: Adventures on the Alimentary Canal*, and *PACKING FOR MARS: The Curious Science of Life in the Void*. Mary's books have been published in 21 languages, and her second book, *SPOOK*, was a *New York Times* Notable Book. Mary has written for *National Geographic, Wired, The New York Times Magazine*, and the *Journal of Clinical Anatomy*, among others. She was a guest editor of the Best American Science and Nature Writing series and an Osher Fellow with the San Francisco Exploratorium and serves as an advisor for *Orion* and *Undark* magazines. She has been a finalist for the Royal Society's Winton Prize and a winner of the American Engineering Societies' Engineering Journalism Award, in a category for which, let's be honest, she was the sole entrant.

Born on March 20th, in 1959, Mary Roach grew up in New Hampshire. She attended Hanover High School and graduated with a B.A. in psychology from Wesleyan University in 1981. After that, she relocated to San Francisco, California, where she worked as a freelance copy editor. She didn't intend to become a science writer, but producing press releases for the San Francisco Zoological Society, on topics like elephant wart surgery and such, slowly led her to it. Years later, when she was interviewed by *The Verge*, she stated: "To be honest, it turned out that science stories were always, consistently, the most interesting stories I was assigned to cover. I didn't plan it like this, and I don't have a formal background in science, or any education in science journalism." Still, like any good writer, she asks questions that most of us are too afraid to voice, and she does whatever it takes to get the answers.

Source: Author's website (https://maryroach.net)

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Discussion Questions:

1. In researching this book, Mary Roach comes across a number of highly unusual job titles throughout her travels. Which unconventional job did you find most interesting or appealing? Which would you least like to do?

2. Roach's exploration takes her outside of the United States, particularly to India and New Zealand. How do the approaches to wildlife management in those countries differ from those taken in the United States? Which country's philosophy makes the most sense to you?"

3. Roach distinguishes the felony crimes that form the focus of the book's first half from the "less grievous but more widespread crimes that she explores in the second half. Does the punishments that species face throughout *Fuzz* match the severity of the crimes committed? If the magnitude of a crime doesn't determine the penalty, then what does? Do you think animals can be punished for following their instincts?

4. Hunters and more conservation-minded specialists have an uneasy relationship throughout *Fuzz*; yet Roach also notes, "Naturalists were the original biologists, and hunters and trappers were the original naturalists." Where in the book do hunters and conservationists but heads, and where are they unexpectedly aligned? How do farmers fit into the equation? And how are the perspectives of all three rooted in what Roach calls "the inside-out history of conservation in America?"

5. National Wildlife Research Center Public Affairs Specialists Gail Keirn reflects that "When it comes to wildlife issues, seems like we've created a lot of our own problems." What does Keirn mean by this and does Roach agree? Where in *Fuzz* do humans seem to be at the root of the wildlife problems?

6. After visiting Roger's Colorado feedlot, Roach writes, "I'd like to end this book right here (p 288). Why does she feel this way? How do the gene drives that Roach discusses earlier in the chapter complicate her hopeful ending?

7. What does Roach's investigation of the natural world in *Fuzz* tell us about ourselves as human beings?
8. Has *Fuzz* changed the way you think about the natural world? Will you approach your interactions with wildlife any differently?

Source: Pittsburgh Freethought Community
(https://pghfreethought.or/)

Recipes:

Elephant Ears/Palmiers

- ¾ cup Whole Milk
- 4 tablespoon Butter
- ½ teaspoon Salt
- 2 tablespoon Sugar
- 2 ¼ teaspoon Active yeast (1 packet)
- 2 cups All purpose flour
- Oil for frying

For coating

- 2 tablespoon cinnamon powder
- 6 tablespoon sugar

In a pan on medium flame, heat milk, butter, salt, and sugar until the butter has melted and the sugar has dissolved. Let this come down to 110 degrees F. Sprinkle yeast and let it rest until foamy. Add flour in increments and knead to form a smooth dough. Cover it and keep it aside for 30 minutes. Heat oil in a pan on medium heat for frying. Take around 2-inch balls from the dough and roll them into thin sheets. Fry it on both sides on a medium flame for 2 minutes till it puffs up and becomes golden brown. Transfer it to a paper towel to absorb any excess oil. In a bowl, mix cinnamon and sugar. Sprinkle it on warm fried elephant ears. Elephant ears are ready. Serve warm and enjoy.

Source: Cook with Kushi
(https://www.cookwithkushi.com/elephant-ears-recipe/)

Halabessa - spicy hummus drink

- 1 cup of dry chickpeas
- 1 medium tomato- quartered.
- 1 medium yellow onion- quartered.
- 2 garlic cloves - whole.
- ½ cup tomato sauce or 2 Tbs tomato paste.
- 1 teaspoon pink salt. Use regular if you do not have pink salt
- Spices to serve with: Salt ground cumin, chili powder and limes.

Wash chickpeas and soak in water at least for 3 hours, changing the water once or twice. Drain the water then put the chickpeas into a pot, cover with water and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat to medium, and simmer the chickpeas for 20 minutes, skimming the foam every now and then. Add onion, tomato, garlic and tomato sauce and salt then keep simmering the chickpeas until it is done, will take about an hour. Serve hot with spices, lemon wedges on the side.

Source: Amira's Pantry
(https://amiraspantry.com/chickpea-soup/)