



# The Queen's Shadow: A Story About How Animals See

*Cybèle Young*

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## **The Queen's Shadow: A Story About How Animals See** Cybèle Young

In this informational picture book, award-winning author and illustrator Cybèle Young interweaves the science of animal eyesight into a clever whodunit involving a haughty queen. It is during the Queen's Ball, at which “society's most important nobility” are in attendance (all of whom are animals), that a “major crime has been committed”: the queen's shadow has been stolen! Mantis Shrimp, the Royal Detective, takes the lead in the investigation to find the perpetrator, and one by one the animal suspects defend their innocence. From a shark and a snake to a dragonfly and a goat, each creature's testimony explains their version of the scene of the crime based on their own unique eyesight, while the finely textured and detailed artwork illustrates the ballroom as viewed by that animal. In sidebars to the story, the author provides factual information about how the eyesight of each animal works, and why. As each animal's perspective sheds new light on the mystery, it becomes clear to children that there are many different ways to see what goes on in the world. A section on how human vision works, background on each of the animals mentioned in the story and a glossary are provided at the back of the book. This is a unique and sophisticated book unlike any other. It would be an excellent resource for life science lessons on animal and human characteristics. The sly humor, engaging storytelling and layered narrative also make it a terrific mystery read.

## **The Queen's Shadow: A Story About How Animals See Details**

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Author : Cybèle Young

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# From Reader Review The Queen's Shadow: A Story About How Animals See for online ebook

Wayne McCoy says

'The Queen's Shadow: A Story about How Animals See' is a clever science lesson disguised as a whodunnit. I enjoyed the story and the science.

When the Queen's shadow goes missing during a sudden blackout, all the animal guests are potential suspects. Mantis Shrimp, the royal detective, sets out to find out the truth. Since all the guests are animals, like a shark or a dragonfly or a snake, we get to learn how all of these animals see the world. We see eyes set back or can only see certain colors or with pit organs. Children learn that there is wonder in nature, and there are many ways to see the world around us.

The story is good and the science presented is interesting without being overwhelming. I liked the illustrations, but they seemed out of proportion at times. Also, some pages were a little too busy for me. But this is still a good book for a curious child who wants to learn something interesting about some of the creatures who inhabit the planet with us.

I received a review copy of this ebook from Kids Can Press and NetGalley in exchange for an honest review. Thank you for allowing me to review this interesting ebook.

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**XX Sarah XX (former Nefarious Breeder of Murderous Crustaceans) says**

~~Fleet Admiral DaShrimp~~ **Mantis Shrimp, Royal Detective, to the rescue!**

**This little book** here is an ode to the glory of me the **Wondrous Mantis Shrimp** (WMS™). Okay, so it might ~~mainly~~ also be a slightly cool **Whodunit cum Scientifically Informational Thingie** (WcSIT™) about animal sight: The Queen's shadow has been stolen/lost/whatever, and ~~Fleet Admiral DaShrimp~~ Mantis Shrimp, Royal Detective is all, "**This cannot be! This will not do! Off to investigate I am!**" and stuff.

**I have to admit that**, as awesome as our Royal Detective is, he has a bit of a hard time figuring out who the culprit is. In his defense, he was called a *shrimp* \*shudders\* by Sir Chameleon early in the investigation, which didn't sit quite right with him. **To say the least**. I can't say I'm surprised. This is, after all, one of the most degrading, insulting, humiliating things you can say to a **Most Scrumptious Mantis Shrimp** (MSMS™).

**You have all the right** to be slightly outraged, comrade. Some things are just not done! No wonder you weren't in your best investigative mood after **being defamed in such scandalous way!** I am quite put out on your behalf. I am actually thinking of awarding you with the **Gold Nefarious Medal of Outstanding Mantishrimpiness** (GNMoOM™) for your exemplary behavior in this exacting inquest. Because ~~surviving~~ having to deal with *Goat, the Malodorous Earl of Pancake, malicious mollusks, awful arthropods* and **distastefully underage sea urchins** (of all things) should be rewarded somehow.

**Yeah, okay, well**, technically, you didn't exactly solve the mystery, did you now? I mean, your investigative skills were **slightly substandard here**, were they not? Sorry, what? Oh, spoiler spoiler spoiler and all that? Okay, sure, whatever. It wouldn't be too good for your image to reveal the **awful truth** anyway, would it now? Okay, okay, I'm shutting my lovely little mouth shut, **no need to get violent and stuff**.

*Right. So you say. Seems to me you sounded awfully defensive a few minutes ago. But anyway.*

**So, to sum things up:** Queen's shadow goes poof, Mantis Shrimp goes "arr," shadow goes "why, hello again! Long time no see and stuff!" **Mystery solved**. Nothing to see here, move along, you bunch of **aggravating animals with eyeballs**.

» And the moral of this **Mantis Shrimp are the Deadliest Sexiest Animals in the Universe Damn Right They Are Crappy Non Review** (MSatĐSAitUDRTACNR™) is: I don't give a fish about animals. I don't give a fish about science. I lurves this book so much I read it twice. **So QED and stuff**.

(view spoiler)

Miriam said "**Mantis Shrimp Royal Detective**," and I said:

**And also:**

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## **Margie says**

Yesterday morning before the sun rose, a crescent moon hung in a deep blue sky over black lace treetops. The air was filled with birdsong. In fact, the birds seemed to be participants in some celebratory party as many were wildly flying from point to point. As I moved toward the end of my driveway two flew past me at breakneck speed. They were so close I felt the rush of air as they passed.

I wondered how they could see so well in the dim light of dawn. I wondered how they missed colliding with me. The Queen's Shadow: A Story About How Animals See (Kids Can Press, March 1, 2015) written and illustrated by Toronto-based author illustrator Cybele Young artfully explores the vision of many animals through a mysterious theft.

My full recommendation: <http://librariansquest.blogspot.com/2...>

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## **Becky says**

Although the concept of this book is cool, I do not think that it was as well carried out as it was conceived. At a party, during a short blackout, the queen's shadow is taken. Each guest at the party is accused by the Court Detective Mantis Shrimp of stealing the shadow. In turn each animal guest uses their own unique vision to blame the next guest at the party.

#### Strengths:

The idea to use fiction to introduce nonfiction to some kids.

The nonfiction passage on each page further explaining the animal's vision.

Back matter includes more information about each of the animals in the story as well as a glossary.

#### Weaknesses:

Why would anyone want to steal a shadow? The motive is never discussed.

The structure of the book is very repetitive.

The flow of good fiction does not happen in this story. This book, although clever in its concept, ultimately does not follow through, and so does neither fiction nor nonfiction incredibly well. The nonfiction point of this story is not incorporated well enough into the fiction to make the fictional situation feel at all real. The story seems like just a prop to info dump the nonfiction. If you are going to info dump nonfiction, just write nonfiction. I found Jenkins book *Eye to Eye: How Animals See The World* more compelling.

Back matter does not include references!

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### **Miriam says**

I'm not a fan of Thinly Disguised Informative Books (lots of kids are interested in learning, and if they're not I don't think this will successfully trick them into it) but I guess this is at least an attractively-presented one. I think it could have used more basic explanation of how seeing works, biologically -- are kids who have already learned about rods and cones etc likely to pick up picture books?

Also, maybe it's just me but it seems a little odd to frame what's basic science facts with an impossible premise of a shadow being stolen.

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### **Debra Schoenberger says**

A science book that's not a science book. The wonderfully detailed, pen and ink illustrations remind me of the work of Edward Gorey.

The story is a mystery about the Queen's missing shadow. The Royal Detective, a mantis shrimp, takes charge of the investigation to find the missing shadow.

As he investigates the different animal guests at the party, we learn about the ways different animals see. I learned a lot by reading this book. I love chamelons, but didn't know that they must have both eyes focused on the same thing to be able to see in three dimensions.

There is a section at the back of the book entitled "What is Vision" as well as two other sections entitled "More about the animals in this book" and a glossary.

I would highly recommend this book.

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### **Annette says**

THE QUEEN'S SHADOW: A STORY ABOUT HOW ANIMALS SEE by Cybele Young is a beautifully illustrated informational picture book. When the Queen's shadow is stolen, each creature contributes a piece of evidence that helps to solve the crime.

Designed for ages 7 through 11, the ingenious story masterfully incorporates factual information about animal sight while telling an engaging story.

Young weaves together distinctive collages of digital, pen-and-ink illustrations. Of particular note are the close-ups demonstrating how animals such as the pigeon sees.

Younger children may have difficulty distinguishing the factual information about vision from the imaginary aspects related to losing a shadow. As such, this is a book that would work better in a small group learning environment than as a book for independent reading.

At the end of the book, factual information is provided about how vision works along with descriptions of the animals in the book. The backmatter also includes a useful glossary.

This informational picture book provides endless possibilities for library-classroom partnerships. Involve children in writing their own stories about how animals see. Or, ask them to research other animals senses and write detective stories about those.

Available March 1, 2015 and published by Kids Can Press, a NetGalley ARC was used for the review.

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### **Lindsey Lewis says**

A gorgeously illustrated children's Whodunnit where all the suspects are from the animal kingdom. The Queen is hosting a dinner party, but when the lights flicker and turn back on, she discovers someone has stolen her shadow! The Royal Detective, a colorful Mantis Shrimp, helps her question each of the animals in attendance.

The story is broken up as each character is questioned and then a small insert explains the real, scientific fact about the animal's eyesight that inspired its character's role in the story. At the end is a note about how eyesight works as well as additional information about each of the animals.

The story is fantastically written, educational enough for the classroom but entertaining enough to keep young children interested. Its satisfying and hilarious conclusion will teach children about jumping to conclusions and about different perspectives.

**I received a free digital ARC of this book from NetGalley to review.**

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## **Jess ✨Harbinger of Blood-Soaked Rainbows✨ says**

Thanks to the lovely Miriam for pointing out that one of the characters in this book is a Mantis Shrimp.

And therefore I must have it.

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## **Neda says**

A really interesting book both entertaining and instructional. The story was rather boring but the information about each category of living things was just amazing. The great point about the book is that the writer has taken into account all sorts of animals and insects, fish, birds and sea animals. This is informative and by the help of its satiric points, it becomes a memorable reading.

Thanks Cybele

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## **Tasha says**

This fascinating and unique nonfiction picture book takes a mystery and turns it into information about how various animals see. At the Queen's Ball, several different animals have gathered. Then there is a flash of lightning and a moment of darkness. When the lights come back on, the Queen's shadow has been stolen! Who stole it and how can they prove it? One by one, each animal offers testimony to what they witnessed "colored" by the way they are able to see the world. There are the eyes of the chameleon who can look in two directions at once but only shoot out his tongue when both eyes are focused on the same thing. The shark excels at seeing contrast more than anything and notices patterns of light and dark. Pit viper sees in heat and cool. Dragonfly offers perspective from compound eyes. It will take each of their ways of seeing the world to solve this mystery.

Young creates an entirely abstract and amazing world here. There is a strong sense of decorum throughout the book, no animals attacking each other and the human queen unafraid of any of her more predatory guests. She combines information for the mystery about what was witnessed through that specific set of eyes and then shares strictly scientific information in offset text boxes too. The result is a book that keeps you turning pages not only to solve the mystery but to continue seeing the world in such unique ways and learning more.

The illustrations have a feel of vintage illustrations with finely detailed ink drawings washed with color. This style is reworked though when seeing through other animals' eyes so that with each turn of the page, the art is ever-changing and fascinating.

Peculiar in a delightful way, this nonfiction picture book is one that will appeal to children wanting to "see" more of the natural world. Appropriate for ages 6-9.

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## **Orsolya says**

Small children ask many questions about the way the world works. An often repeated one is whether animals

can see in the dark or how they see at all. Author and illustrator Cybele Young aims to provide some insight on this topic (no pun intended) in, “The Queen’s Shadow: A Story about How Animals See”.

“The Queen’s Shadow” is a story book following a Queen at her ball who has “lost” her shadow during a lightening storm. With the help of her Royal Detective (whom happens to be a Mantis Shrimp); each animal guest is questioned on the possible theft thus exploring each animal’s ability to see. The story is creative and whimsical with the quirky laughs that children enjoy but is infused with a strong scientific and educational base.

It can be argued, however, that “The Queen’s Shadow” is slightly too educational as the text includes larger words and the eyesight of each animal is somewhat in-depth. Even as an adult, I learned new facts! Therefore, “The Queen’s Shadow” is better suited for children approximately 7-10 years of age.

Young’s illustrations are unique and attention-grabbing mixing elements of woodcuts, coloring books, and a dose of newspaper comics making “The Queen’s Shadow” stand out amongst a sea of children’s books which tend to be overly similar.

“The Queen’s Shadow” ends in a humorous way children will love which flows into a scientific overview of how human eyesight works. Young then offers mini bios of the animals within the story and a glossary of terms.

Young’s “The Queen’s Shadow” is creative and informative for both children and adults making it enriching and perfect to be read over-and-over again. The book is a strong, ‘cute’ story much recommended for small children.

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## **Sarah Monsma says**

The queen has lost her shadow, and all the animals at the ball are suspect. How will their unique ways of seeing help Mantis Shrimp, the royal detective, solve the mystery of who stole the queen's shadow?

Cybele Young's detailed but whimsical illustrations and engaging story present the mystery as a way to explore how different creatures see. From a goat's blind spot to the depth perception of a chameleon, the guests at the queen's ball all have different ways of seeing the world. As each suspect is accused, we see through the illustrations how that suspect sees the room. Detailed sidebars explain how each animal's eyesight works.

End matter provides even more science information. One endnote explains in detail how human vision works, another gives more information about the animals featured in the text. A glossary page gives detailed definitions of terms used in the text.

The Queen's Shadow is a creative and engaging treatment of an interesting subject. This would be a wonderful book to introduce to students who are particularly interested in science or animals. It would also be great to use in coordination with the Next Generation Science Standards as there are specific standards related to eyes and vision. Though this is a picture book, it is geared toward older elementary and middle school readers.



I read this book as an electronic Advance Reader Copy courtesy of Kids Can Press and NetGalley.

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## **Karatepop says**

Actually a 3.5/5.

Full disclosure: I received a copy from NetGalley in exchange for my honest thoughts on the book. So, here are my honest thoughts:

This book was thoroughly enjoyable. I'm a total snob about children's books - I don't understand why they have to be so BOLD and LOUD and UGLY. Fortunately, there are books out there that are enjoyable for parent and child alike! This is one of them.

In a nutshell, the queen's having a party, her shadow goes missing, a Clue-esque investigation ensues with Mantis Shrimp leading the way. Each of the accused (mostly sea creatures) defends themselves and then accuses another. Each new potential culprit's vision is what clears away doubt about their innocence. For example: chameleon says he was looking at two things when the shadow went missing, so it couldn't be him. It is explained in a little aside that chameleons don't have depth perception until both of their eyes are locked on target.

My adult self really liked the illustrations, the page layouts, the colours. Cybele Young's art is interesting and in a sort of surrealist editorial style. They're reminiscent of old woodcuts, and not garishly coloured. A few pages are laid out very similarly, which I thought was a bit of a cheat for a minute, until I realised it was like a court - prosecutor and client vs the defendant. Clever!

I also liked that the book was not remotely condescending. Scientific or technical words are not substituted for simpler, possibly less correct ones. This makes it a really great book for reading with your little. In the back is a glossary and a bit more about each of the animals in the story.

If I were a kid, say between five and ten, I'd be really into this book. I think it's a book that will age well with children - each year they can take away something new.

The typeface felt a bit out of place, though. I'm not entirely sure why, or how I'd change it, but it just didn't feel right (though, that same type being used in the asides with the animal facts and at the end of the book was perfect). Also, although it was definitely fun, it did feel a bit too repetitive.

I love science books. I think there should be more science books for kids - I don't think kids need to be tricked into liking science, because it's just plain interesting. They don't have to be dumbed down or red, yellow, and blue. When my bub is older, we'll be reading this together for sure.

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## **Cheryl says**

Gosh I dunno. I like the art; it reminds me of a childhood favorite, Beatrice Schenk De Regniers. I like the science. The animals say some witty stuff when they deny being the thief. Good further science in the back. But overall it doesn't seem, to me, to have the special charm to enable me to rate it more highly. Sorry; the

best I can do is 2.5 stars rounded up.

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