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FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE

{ FOR KIDS }

# The New York Times

EDITORS' NOTE:  
THIS SECTION SHOULD NOT BE READ  
BY GROWN-UPS



## Trick OR TREAT?

THE  
HALLOWEEN  
ISSUE

FLIP THIS  
COVER OVER  
EEK!

SINISTER SECRETS OF SOUR CANDY • CUTE BUT DEADLY: THE SLOW LORIS  
• PLAY IF YOU DARE: THE ULTIMATE FUN & FRIGHTFUL GAME • A HORRIBLE  
HEAD-IN-A-JAR PRANK • THE CURSE OF A HALLOWEEN HOMETOWN

ARTWORK BY MARK RYDEN



## SCIENCE

# ADORABLE BUT Deadly

BY RACHEL NUWER  
ILLUSTRATION BY RENÉE FRENCH



**ANIMALS DON'T GET** much cuter than the slow loris. Huge, shining saucer eyes. A catlike nose. A fuzzy, round body. Teeny bear ears! Even the way lorises move is adorable, slooowwwwly making their way through the trees. And the way they lift their little arms above their heads as if they're getting in a good stretch — it makes you just want to reach out and give them a big hug.

But you probably shouldn't do that.

That's because behind all that cuteness, slow lorises are hiding a nightmarish trick: needle-sharp teeth that can carry venom that literally rots flesh. And they're not afraid to use them.

Slow lorises are among the few venomous mammals, and the only venomous primate (the group that also includes apes, humans and monkeys).

Their venom contains chemicals that destroy cells, and scientists think they originally evolved this feature to help them digest tree gum, their favorite food in the rain forests of South and Southeast Asia. Now they use their flesh-rotting venom on each other, researchers have found — going head-to-head in gruesome death matches over territory.

When a loris comes across another loris in its swath of forest, it prepares for attack. The venom, weirdly, is made in glands in the upper arms, and to use it, the loris must lift its little pint-size limbs and quickly lick its underarms — ugh, so cute! — to pool the venom into grooves in its pointy teeth. Then the two opponents will engage in an upside-down battle while hanging from branches with their feet. "They try to bite each other on

the top of the head," says Anna Nekaris, a primate conservationist at Oxford Brookes University in Britain. Slow lorises can inflict grisly wounds on each other that often lead to missing ears or toes, deformed body parts or even death. Sometimes, Nekaris says, the flesh of the losing loris "just rots off their head."

Even though the lorises mostly save their aggression for one another, they can lash out at humans if they feel threatened. Nekaris has been bitten once herself, while trying to put a radio collar on one for research. The angry loris's teeth punctured straight through her gloves and triggered a serious allergic reaction. "It was very painful," she says. Another researcher who was bitten on the finger never regained the use of it. Now, how about that hug? ♦

## HOW SOUR CANDY Tortures Us

BY CHELSEA LEU • ILLUSTRATIONS BY CHRISTIAN NORTHEAST



**CLOSE YOUR EYES** and imagine you're holding a Sour Patch Kid. Pop it into your mouth, and picture it on your tongue. Now back to reality: Are your salivary glands pumping? All that spit is actually your body's way of protecting itself. Because even though sour candy is delicious, it's also a mischief maker.

Sour Skittles, Warheads, Sour Patch Kids and the like all get their tang from the same kinds of acid you find in fruit, and candy makers use and combine them for different effects. For example, citric acid, which is found in lemons and limes, has a bright, tart taste that fades quickly. Malic acid, which is found in apples, stays longer on the tongue. The thing about these acids, though, is that they can eat away at the tissues in your mouth and throat. "It hurts for a reason," says Cordelia Running, a scientist who studies spit at Purdue University. (Don't worry — the damage isn't permanent.)

That's where the protective spit comes in: Saliva contains a chem-

ical called bicarbonate, which reacts with the acid and prevents that irritation. Just thinking about sourness is enough to make our mouths start watering in preparation. But sour candy is so delicious that once we start eating, sometimes our spit just can't keep up. That's why your tongue starts feeling raw and sensitive when you're halfway through eating an entire bag of sour gummy worms.

It's still kind of a mystery why we like sour candy so much even though it also hurts us. But scientists suggest it's probably for the same reason that some people love spicy food: It's a challenge. Or maybe it's because sour candy is a more intense version of the fruit flavors we're used to already. But most likely it's because of the payoff. Think about it: Candy makers often use acids in a coating of dust or sparkly crystals, creating a gauntlet of painful puckering you have to endure before you hit the sweet center. Maybe sour candy's greatest trick is making that relief seem even sweeter. ♦

## TRICK Q's

WHAT HAS SIX FACES, BUT NO NOSE OR MOUTH?



WHAT STARTS WITH AN E AND ENDS WITH AN E, BUT HAS ONLY ONE LETTER IN IT?



WHAT TRAVELS THE WORLD WHILE STUCK IN ONE SPOT?



A DIE: A SWIMMING ENVELOPE.

## YOUR BODY: Friend or Foe?

BY SUSAN COSIER  
ILLUSTRATIONS BY KELSEY DAKE

**IF YOU'VE EVER** accidentally let out a fart at the wrong time and place, you know the feeling: Sometimes it can feel as if your own body is out to get you, pulling all kinds of unpleasant, embarrassing pranks. But in some cases, a bodily function that feels like a cruel trick is actually your body's way of helping you out.



### VOMITING

You're sitting in class feeling queasy, remembering that questionable burrito you ate at lunch. Suddenly you just know it: You're going to hurl. You run for the nearest bathroom, cursing your body for putting you in this situation. Well, you should think about being a little more grateful. When we begin to digest something harmful (like a burrito where bacteria have grown), the toxic intruders are detected by a part of the brain that keeps watch over substances in the bloodstream. Then it passes the message along to the gut, so it can eject as much of the offending food as possible. Though vomiting up partly digested food isn't fun, it gets some of the poisons we ingest out of our bodies.



### FARTING

Few bodily functions have the ability to humiliate us as much as the humble fart. But instead of living in fear, think of gas as your digestive system sending you a thumbs up. When the bacteria that live in our intestines break down the food we cannot digest, they produce gases in our digestive tracts. As those gases build up, our intestines can stretch and we may start to feel pressure. Needing to fart is a sign that your digestive system is working the way it should — so return the favor by letting it out!



### SWEATING

On the hottest days, when sweat is dripping from every surface of your body, you may sort of feel as if you're cooking in your body's own juices. But in fact, sweat is keeping you from feeling even hotter. When we're hot or active, our brains activate glands that draw water from our bodies and push it out to the skin's surface as sweat. As our sweat then evaporates into the air, it cools our bodies down, allowing us to keep running or playing when the temperature rises.



### ACNE

Pimples are a drag, no question — especially the more severe outbreaks experienced by the many teenagers who have acne. But they may end up being a gift to your future self. Many acne sufferers produce lots of natural skin oils, which can help keep their skin hydrated and protect it from damaging sunlight. And that may prevent wrinkles — the major skin bane of adults as they age — when they grow up. ♦