

The Snarkout Boys and the Avocado of Death Short Guide

The Snarkout Boys and the Avocado of Death by Daniel Pinkwater

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Overview

How often do you see a line like this: "They were great performers—all of them—including the chicken"? The Snarkout Boys and the Avocado of Death has this line and many like it. Walter Galt, the narrator, and Winston Bongo believe themselves the originators of Snarking Out, a maneuver that encompasses sneaking out of their homes during the night, taking a bus to the Snark movie theater, and watching whatever old movies the theater happens to be showing. They include in their Snarking Out trips to other venues such as doughnut shops and diners; Walter even makes a speech in a park about the awfulness of Genghis Khan High School, which he attends.

Their Snarking Out becomes complex when Walter discovers Bentley Saunders Harrison Matthews, a girl commonly called Rat because of her features. She has actually been Snarking Out longer than either of the two boys, and she leads them into a world of mad scientists, fiendish master criminals, underground streets, a detective who paints on his sideburns, singing chickens who are actually good singing chickens, alien real estate agents, and a giant avocado that may save the world from the alien menace. "This enormous avocado is a living, thinking, feeling thing. By the way, it also makes a beautiful salad," notes the world's greatest detective, Osgood Sigerson.

About the Author

Daniel Pinkwater looks like many of the main characters of his novels—not particularly tall, chubby, bespectacled, and somewhat odd—and he has made it his career to write about eccentric children and young adults, people who, as in his own case, do not quite fit into school or the ordinary activities of daily life. These offcenter young people usually gravitate to others like themselves to form tiny groups within the larger communities of schools and neighborhoods.

These creative oddballs, regardless of their circumstances, always author their own adventures, seeing the action through to the end as the key actors in their personal dramas. Wilkie Collins, the nineteenth-century author of some terrific thrillers, once asserted that an author's job was to find the romance in everyday life. This means finding the-amazing-in-the-ordinary by those who have eyes to see; it is also a key aspect of Pinkwater's fiction. His protagonists may be ordinary kids, but they uncover amazing places and people, usually right where they live, and they sometimes discover themselves to be also amazing.

Daniel Manus Pinkwater was born on November 15, 1941 in Memphis, Tennessee, to Philip and Fay (nee Hoffman) Pinkwater, a rag collector and a chorus girl. He grew up in Chicago, and his love for that city is evident in fiction such as *The Education of Robert Nifkin* (1998; see separate entry, Vol. 9). He seems to know where all the really interesting parts of Chicago are, as well as the best places to hang out. An avid reader as a youngster, particularly of adventure stories, Pinkwater contemplated becoming a writer, eventually rejecting the idea because "Writer's lives are disgusting, and writing is a horrible unhealthy activity". He attended Bard College in New York, decided to become a sculptor, and only turned to writing after four years of art study, graduating in 1964.

Pinkwater began his career as a professional writer almost by accident. He had made some drawings for a book envisioned for children, and he decided that dealing with someone else writing the text would be more annoying than writing the text himself. Even after the publication of this book, *The Terrible Roar* (1970), he still saw himself as a sculptor and illustrator. Nevertheless, he continued to write texts for his illustrations until he reached the point of being pulled so deeply into the creation of stories that he became a full-time writer. To this day he continues to illustrate most of his books.

Pinkwater married Jill Miriam Schultz on October 12, 1969, and they live in Hyde Park, New York. Pinkwater has been a commentator since 1987 for *All Things Considered* on National Public Radio; his often hilarious observations have won him a large audience. Although he has occasionally had small exhibitions of his art works, it is his fiction that has won him the most notice. *Lizard Music* (1976) was named an American Library Association notable book; *Fat Men from Space* (1977) was a Junior Literary Guild selection; *The Last Guru* (1978; see separate entry, Vol. 9) was named an Outstanding Book by the *New York Times*; and *The Wuggie Norple Story* (1980, illustrated by Tomie

de Paola) received a Children's Choice award from the International Reading Association.



Setting

Walter and Winston live in a world they think boring, though Walter is unaware that his father is a champion Snarker from way back. Genghis Khan High School is so dreadful an educational environment little learning takes place there. As Walter says, "Besides, at Genghis Khan, being half asleep helps kill the pain of spending a whole day with nothing worthwhile to do!" The best education the school has to offer is cheating, because "but it's more challenging to cheat. At least this way, we're actually learning some skills." Genghis Khan High School shares many traits with schools in Pinkwater's other books, most particularly the same biology teacher, who seems to haunt the author's scholastic memory: "I assume that somewhere there's a school in which the biology class doesn't consist of a bunch of miserable kids locked in a room with a poor old lunatic every day, but that school isn't Genghis Khan."

Walter finds his parents at first so dreadfully odd that they make home life something he wants to escape, though he learns to respect his father before the end of the novel. His father has a fixation on avocados—"Every time he brings one home, he acts like it's a three-hundred-pound sailfish he's caught singlehanded." So far as Walter is concerned, "What I think of avocados is this: On principle, I do not eat green slimy things." It surprises Walter to learn that not only does his father have a truly interesting life he knows little about, he actually approves of his son's nighttime adventures.

When Walter and Winston hazard their nocturnal journeys, they go into the city of Baconburg, mostly to an old theater that shows motion pictures around the clock. As the boys become involved with Rat and her family, they discover a wonderland that has always been in the city, but one they have never noticed before. The Snarkout Boys and the Avocado of Death celebrates the fascinating diversity of urban life, that vast range of people who live, work, and seek pleasure in the varied topographies of our great cities. When they eventually journey into the underworld—not a criminal place, but a hidden realm under the surface city—they discover the people who work during the night to serve those who live by day: truckers, fish vendors, and distributors of goods for the stores and restaurants above ground. It is as if they have fallen down Alice's rabbit hole and landed in a place of colorful lights, strange people, and shadowy mystery. When Walter and Winston walk out of the underworld to Beanbender's Beer Garden, they transcend Alice's experience in Alice's Adventures in Wonderland.

Alice wakes as if from a dream and leaves wonderland behind, but the underworld Walter and Winston encounter is real and turns out to be part of their daily lives; they wake with the aid of Rat from their trance of unrecognition to see cityscapes they had never noticed before.

This is the city beneath the city.

There is where the guts are. It goes round the clock. I'm sort of surprised you didn't know it was here," she says—and Captain Shep Nesterman, who leads them to Tin Town and Beanbender's, "a strange looking structure. At first, it was hard to get any idea



of its shape; it just seemed to be a collection of odd-looking dark lumps in the night. Then we could see that Beanbender's was made up of a number of dead trucks and a couple of railroad cars arranged in a circle." Beanbender's unites the underworld with the overworld familiar to Walter and Winston. The boys, after their journey through the night, will know that life is mysterious and wonderful.



Social Sensitivity

The Snarkout Boys and the Avocadoof Death could be mistaken for a book that only dramatizes social and personal issues in the emotionally charged contexts of teenagers in high school, but it is better seen as a wildly imaginative, fresh look at life's endless variety and possibilities. The unfettered imagination that is so prominent a feature of the novel does not hide the fact that the story confronts issues dealt with in other Pinkwater books. A fine example of this is the wretched school which appears in different forms in most of Pinkwater's novels: sometimes it is a junior high school, more often a high school; sometimes it is in a suburb, other times in a city; sometimes the majority of students are very clean-cut, other times they are antisocial; sometimes the majority of students constitute a not inconsiderable part of the problems with the school, sometimes the students are all victims. What is consistent is the failure of the school to teach anything, to ever engage the minds of students and to encourage them to think creatively.

These harsh portrayures of schools might be regarded as merely a buythis-book-because-it-tells-you-thatyou-are-right-to-hate-everything-youhate ploy, pandering to the baser instincts of a young audience, were it not that Pinkwater's indictment of typical American schools is too detailed, too consistent, and too telling to be dismissed as mere ministering for effect and attention. Pinkwater describes a system of education that is a structure of misery for everyone involved, one that brutalizes and corrodes the human spirit. The insane biology teacher that recurs in his works is a mentally mutilated casualty of the stresses of trying to teach in a school day structured not for students to learn but to keep them from learning as little as possible. Others like Mrs. Macmillan have either devolved under the pressure of too many disappointing school years or have found the structure of school to be an invitation to pour their anger onto trapped, unwilling listeners. Pinkwater's novel *The Education of Robert Nifkin* offers his most complete depiction of what he believes is wrong with many schools; though set in the 1950s, its parallels with modern schools are clear, striking, and stinging.

Anti-Semitism is another important social issue that appears frequently in Pinkwater's fiction. Although deeply reprehensible in itself, it tends to be presented as representative of one of the worst aspects of schooling—the creating, passing on, and spreading of bigotry and outright lies. In *The Education of Robert Nifkin*, students passively listen to one teacher's diatribes about how Jews have been subverting western civilization for thousands of years, but in *The Snarkout Boys and the Avocado of Death*, the alienated student body takes action: "Every semester, kids who aren't Jewish, and Jewish kids who don't have them, borrow Jewish stars to wear around their necks in Mrs. Macmillan's class. It's fun to watch her panic when she realizes that she's facing another all-Jewish class.

She believes that Jews creep around, plotting the end of civilization—and seeing all those Stars of David makes her crazy." In *The Snarkout Boys and the Avocado of Death*, the topic of anti-Semitism is not covered in depth, but only briefly noted as part of a larger indictment of life in school.



This theme is echoed in a curious and painful way in a later section in the novel where Walter does not like the poorly lighted section of Lower North Aufzoo Street because it reminds him of a Polish motion picture in which people were in the sewers of Warsaw during World War II. This allusion to the horrors in the Jewish ghetto of Warsaw under German occupation makes explicit the dangers posed by the venomous bigotry that possess teachers like Mrs. Macmillan and a school system that allows racist instructors unchecked sway in the classroom over young, impressionable, and easily damaged charges. One must struggle to escape the tyranny of evil-minded prejudice wherever one finds it, whether in school, the work place, or personal relations. Walter journeys through a frightening and unfragrant section of underground road to emerge into a life of amazing adventure. He begins the process of leaving behind the misery-inducing bias and bigotry of his high school life by entering a new world that requires open-mindedness for survival. His mind, previously locked in a struggle with the nightmare of school, opens to the full potentialities of life, transcending even his own misery.

Literary Qualities

One cannot generally count on Pinkwater to follow literary rules. His books may have convoluted plots that go nowhere, or different narrative voices that interrupt each other and ramble on about this or that, as in *Slaves of Spiegel* (1982; see separate entry, Vol 9), in which the third-person omniscient narrator, a staple of myth-making and story-telling for thousands of years, has to introduce itself in order to be distinguishable from the other voices. In *The Snarkout Boys and the Avocado of Death*, there is a recognizable plot which, though it has twists and turns that would tie a snake into knots, actually goes towards and achieves a resolution. Pinkwater likes to have his protagonists tell their own stories, and in this book the narration is fully coherent as Walter provides an especially effective narrative voice; courageous, willing to take a chance, insecure yet loyal, he is very good company for the reader. He is intelligent, has a good command of English, and sounds like the bookish sort who would prefer Mozart to rock 'n' roll (although he concedes that bands such as Scallion have their merits, especially with songs such as "Human Beings All Gotta Be Like Me or I'll Kill Them"), and he tells his story the way a high school student fed up with school would and should tell it.

One of the outstanding qualities of Walter's narrative are the sparkling, vivid, and interesting descriptions of places and people. Even for adults descriptions can sometimes be dull, and one can fall into the habit of skipping descriptive passages, but in *The Snarkout Boys and the Avocado of Death* to skip a passage is to miss something rich: Lower North Aufzoo Street was a jumble of activity. There were bright yellow fluorescent lights making the street-below-a-street as brilliant as day. Big trucks rumbled along. Some were parked, being loaded or unloaded. Truck drivers and guys who work loading and unloading stood around, chewing on cigars, talking, and joking. There were piles of garbage, broken cartoons, and big barrels of wastepaper filling the sidewalk every so often. There was a lot of noise down there. Trucks grinding gears and honking horns and banging into the curb, guys hollering, things bumping and crashing, all amplified by an echo. It was almost too much to take in all at once.

Walter knows what is interesting and focuses on it, giving us telling details that form a complete picture. It is as if we were there hearing the noises and seeing the sights. He also knows when to stop describing and get on with the story before the momentum of the narrative lags.



Themes and Characters

At Genghis Khan High School, "The big thing for most of the kids is getting into various kinds of trouble outside of school." It is an unpleasant place where teachers have stopped trying to teach, where anti-Semitism is openly preached, and where Walter Galt feels utterly alone. He clearly expresses his loneliness and alienation: "I'm about the shortest kid in school. Also the fattest. People refer to me as No Neck.

It's my nickname. I don't care for it. I happen to look like a penguin. Is that so bad?" Then Snarkout master Winston Bongo makes a grand entrance into Walter's classroom, falling down and scattering his belongings over the floor. "The poor kid is retarded," Walter thinks, "I'll be nice to him." Meanwhile, Winston sees Walter and thinks, "The poor kid is retarded . . .

I'll be nice to him."

Winston "was sort of heavy and thick in his body. His black hair looked like it had been cropped with dog clippers. His nose was long and fat at the same time, and his eyes seemed to wander against his will." It turns out that Winston is a wrestler and skilled at taking falls. He also practices Snarking, the sneaking out of his home in the early morning hours to take a bus to the Snark Theater. He introduces Walter to this addictive diversion, who soon becomes skilled at getting enough sleep while spending a few hours at night far from home. Their partnership is somewhat similar to the one described by Mark Twain in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, with Walter as Huck and Winston as a nicer Tom Sawyer. They also resemble other characters in Pinkwater's work such as Leonard Neeble and Alan Mendelsohn in *Alan Mendelsohn, the Boy from Mars* (1979; see separate entry, Vol 9). Walter and Leonard, though having their own unique traits, can be seen as stand-ins for Pinkwater himself; all are or were outcasts from the social lives of their schools who are short and fat, "portly" as Leonard insists. Pinkwater has said that he pictures his audience as those who are unsocial and unathletic, which may explain why his young adult fiction abounds with awkward, lonely, and chubby boys.

On the other hand, Winston and Alan are figures who introduce an element of independence in the lives of boys like Walter. Alan Mendelsohn, who shares with Leonard the condition of being the perpetual outsider, is almost too good to be true—skilled at fighting, clever at tripping up self-important people, and a great friend to the friendless. Winston is a more muted version of the boy who befriends the lonely kid; like Walter, he has a face and body that does not match the school's prevailing standards for acceptable looks, and he possesses a personality that does not conform well with the characteristic temper of the daily life of school. Despite these disadvantages, he brings an interesting life to bear on his friends— not only does he Snarkout, but he wrestles with some skill, and he has an uncle who is a professional wrestler.

Though Walter is a good guy he still has his faults, and he tends to be somewhat immodest about his Snarkout escapades. At first somewhat fearful of Snarking Out on



his own when Winston can't come, Walter nonetheless manages fairly well by himself and even gives a public speech about how wretched Genghis Khan High School is. He is proud of this, and he is proud that he is the world's second foremost Snarker after Winston, who he thinks invented Snarking. Then he meets Bentley Saunders Harrison Matthews: a girl, a little taller than me, with a pointy rat nose and pimples. She had short blonde hair, tinged with green and sticking out in all directions. She was wearing a baggy red skirt that came below her knees and black, pointy shoes.

She had skinny legs. She was also wearing a jacket about five sizes too big for her.

Her high school is George Armstrong Custer, and she has escaped the notice of Walter and Winston until Walter and she meet at Ed and Fred's Red Hots after his speech. "You can call me Rat," she says, and it turns out that she has been Snarking Out for longer than even Winston has. She is an intelligent and strong-minded loner with an extraordinary family life who is more than a match for the admiring Walter and Winston. She also has a tremendously powerful hi-fi that "can electrocute you at a distance of a foot on a humid night."

This trio goes on to have wonderful adventures in a complicated story in which the whole Snarking Out conceit, an idea that would completely fill a book for many authors, only serves as the prime mover for even more remarkable events. One of the key figures among the many eccentrics Walter and Winston meet is Rat's Uncle Flipping Hades Terwilliger, known simply as Flipping. He has been Snarking Out "Every night for seventeen years—that's um, six thousand two hundred and five as of a couple of months ago. Add sixty—no, fiftyeight—that's six thousand two hundred sixty-three times." This may make him the all-time champion Snarker. He is also a scientist with an unusual habit of disappearing abruptly from anyplace and anytime, who then needs to be tracked down by his family and friends.

This character gives Walter one the bigger shocks of his life when he learns that his father has been one of these trackers and has actually found Flipping a few times. He approves of Walter's going out at night on the hunt when Flipping once again vanishes, this time from home. These revelations about his father cause Walter to rethink his view of him, making him realize that his father's odd sausage manufacturing business, in which no sausages are manufactured, may seem ordinary to him but could seem highly unusual to others. It is also strange in the extreme to have a mad scientist like Flipping in the family. In any case, Rat notes about her Uncle, "Mad scientists—really mad ones—aren't that easy to come by. Plenty of companies haven't got one. We're lucky to have him."

Flipping's secret project uses a rare giant avocado as the centerpiece for a computer that will rid America of a terrible menace: "You know, I suppose," Rat's mother said, "that realtors are all actually beings from other planets. You see, they have to have some sort of disguise or cover so they can move among us Earthlings without drawing attention to themselves. What happened is that in the early 1950s they all came here in flying saucers. One by one, they replaced legitimate real estate brokers. Now all realtors are extraterrestrials."



The emanations from the Alligatron, the avocado machine, will rid the world of the alien real estate brokers.

When archcriminal Wallace Nussbaum becomes involved the Alligatron is endangered, and Walter, Winston, and Rat become involved in a desperate contest to save the remarkable machine. Along the way they meet amazing people, such as Captain Shep Nesterman and "Dharmawati, the greatest performing chicken of the age," who appeared in *Lizard Music*, a book for younger readers. They also meet Winston's uncle, the professional wrestler named the Mighty Gorilla, who occasionally works for the world's greatest detective, Osgood Sigerson, a man with painted sideburns, who is as dense as a fence post but good at pretending that whatever people tell him he somehow already knew, and his dust-mop-wig-wearing companion Dr. Ormond Sacker, who actually does the real detective work but is so naive that he thinks Sigerson thought of everything before he did.

These wonderful parodies of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson are deftly drawn and made memorable through their delightful eccentricities. Other characters also share these traits of delicious whimsy. But do not make Walter's mistake about the real dangers underlying the surface lunacy: "What with all the excitement and possibility of danger, the fascinating atmosphere of Beanbender's Beer Garden, and being afraid of the mysterious man in the hood, I had neglected the obvious facts that I was dealing with crazy people here." Crazy, certainly, but the menace is not a figment; also, by the way, keep an eye on the butler.



Topics for Discussion

1. Does Snarking Out seem like fun?

What purpose would it serve?

2. Walter prefers Mozart to rock 'n' roll. Given his personality, does this seem realistic? Why?

3. Why would Pinkwater not make any of his major characters— Walter, Winston, and Rat—physically attractive?

4. Pinkwater's books, especially *The Snarkout Boys* and *the Avocado of Death*, are notable for appealing to a very wide audience of young readers, even though his main characters tend to be quiet, unpopular people. Even Pinkwater says that he is sometimes surprised by this. This broad appeal suggests that his books touch on "universals," aspects of the human condition that most people recognize as part of their lives. What universals are there in *The Snarkout Boys* and *the Avocado of Death*?

5. Did the ending surprise you? Is it a good ending?

6. Have you ever heard of a "Snark hunt"? What is it? How is *The Snarkout Boys* and *the Avocado of Death* like a Snark hunt?

7. Which of the characters in *The Snarkout Boys* and *the Avocado of Death* do you like the best? What makes them appealing to you?

8. Walter finds school very boring.

What are some constructive ways that he could liven up his days?

9. What is the significance of Walter's discovery that his father has had an interesting life of his own, including hunting for Flipping?

10. Walter has a policy against eating green, slimy things. Are there kinds of food you will not eat? What makes them repulsive to you? Why would other people like those foods, the way many people like eating avocados?

11. Where in your community would be good places to Snark Out?

12. Does Rat have a good life?



Ideas for Reports and Papers

1. There are high schools, usually but not always private, that are often called "alternative" schools because they provide educational programs or philosophies different than the ones offered in traditional high schools.

What are some of the alternative forms of instruction being offered? What purposes do they have? Where can they be found?

2. Baconburg has an old town in it, a section with old houses and populated by artists and nonconformists. Is there an area like that in your city? Where is it? To what uses have the old buildings been put? Who lives there?

3. Does your town have a repertory motion picture theater, a venue that shows old movies, art films, and relatively obscure foreign films that do not appeal to large audiences? What manner of movies are shown there? Who frequents the theater? How does the theater attract audiences?

4. Walter, Winston, Rat, and Flipping like old motion pictures. Do you like old movies? What kinds? What makes them interesting to you? Walter mentions liking a couple of old Sherlock Holmes films. What are your particular favorites among old movies?

5. Walter discovers a world of activity when he enters Lower North Aufzoo Street. It is a place where much of the work that goes into keeping a city alive occurs, most of it at night. Is there such an area in your city or in a city near where you live? Does it have a name? What happens there? Who does the work?

6. There is a park in *The Snarkout Boys* and *the Avocado of Death* in which people make speeches to whoever will listen. Where are there parks like that?

Do they have any rules about who can speak or what can be said?

7. Walter describes some bad situations in Genghis Khan High School.

Does your school district have any policies governing what to do about a teacher who has lost his or her wits?

What about preaching hatred? What about lying about history? Does the federal Department of Education have any guidelines governing the disciplining or dismissal of teachers? Does the state's education department have any such guidelines? Do teachers' unions have any such guidelines?

8. If you could change your educational system, what would you keep and what you replace? What would your changes be? How would they work?

9. Who are Sherlock Holmes and Dr.



Watson? Who wrote about them? How does Pinkwater have fun with them in *The Snarkout Boys* and *the Avocado of Death*?

10. Can you out-Snark the master, Daniel Pinkwater? Write a story about a great Snark Out.

11. Who was Ghengis Khan? Why is this an appropriate name for the high school?



For Further Reference

Acton, Gary. *Science Fiction & Fantasy Book Review* (July-August 1982): 42.

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Andrews, Peter. *New York Times Book Review* (April 25, 1982): 51. Andrews says that *The Snarkout Boys and the Avocado of Death* "is a literary enigma the National Security Agency would have difficulty deciphering."

"D(aniel) M(anus) Pinkwater." In *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Volume 35. Edited by Daniel G. Marowski, Roger Matuz, and Jane E. Neidhardt. Detroit: Gale Research, 1985, pp. 317-321. A gathering of snippets from reviews of Pinkwater's novels.

Dirda, Michael. "The Chicken at the Edge of the Universe." *Washington Post Book World* (June 10, 1984): 6. In one of the best reviews of Pinkwater's work, Dirda says that *The Snarkout Boys and the Baconburg Horror* "is a terrific book, nearly as good as the first, magical Snarkout boys adventure."

Hammond, Nancy C. *Horn Book Magazine* 60, 5 (September-October 1984): 594. An admiring review of *The Snarkout Boys and the Baconburg Horror* (the sequel to *The Snarkout Boys and the Avocado of Death*), which she finds "refreshing."

Horn Book Magazine 58 (June 1982): 292.

A review that finds *The Snarkout Boys and the Avocado of Death* to be disappointing.

Horn Book Magazine 60 (September-October 1984): 594. An admiring review of *The Snarkout Boys and the Baconburg Horror*, the sequel to *The Snarkout Boys and the Avocado of Death*.

Kenny, Kevin. *Voice of Youth Advocates* 5,3 (August 1982): 35. Kenny notes the strengths of *The Snarkout Boys and the Avocado of Death* and considers it "demanding" and "rewarding."

Kirkus Reviews 50, 5 (March 1, 1982): 276. The reviewer of *The Snarkout Boys and the Avocado of Death* says that "this is mainly random silliness without the inspired absurdity of *Lizard Music* and *Alan Mendelsohn* or even the buildups and comic eruptions of *Yobgorble* and *The Worms of Kukumlima*. It's more on the order of bus reading for a Snarkout."

Madden, Susan B. *Voice of Youth Advocates* 7, 3 (August 1984): 144. Praises *The Snarkout Boys and the Baconburg Horror*, the sequel to *The Snarkout Boys and the Avocado of Death*.



Pendergast, Tom. "Pinkwater, Daniel Manus." In *Contemporary Authors: New Revision Series*. Volume 38. Edited by James G. Lesniak and Susan M. Trosky. Detroit: Gale Research, 1993, pp. 335-338. A brief summary of Pinkwater's career.

People Weekly 22 (December 17, 1984): 42. Praises *The Snarkout Boys and the Baconburg Horror*, the sequel to *The Snarkout Boys and the Avocado of Death*.

Piehler, Heide. *School Library Journal* 30, 9 (May 1984): 92. Piehler says that the mixing of narrative voices in *The Snarkout Boys and the Baconburg Horror* makes it less "polished or witty" than *The Snarkout Boys and the Avocado of Death*.

Telgen, Diane. "Pinkwater, Daniel Manus." In *Something about the Author*. Volume 76. Detroit: Gale Research, 1994, pp. 177-181. An overview of Pinkwater's career with juicy quotations from an interview of Pinkwater.

Related Titles

The sequel to *The Snarkout Boys and the Avocado of Death* is *The Snarkout Boys and the Baconburg Horror*. In it the evil Nussbaum escapes from Devil's Island and begins another diabolical plot to take over the world. The Snarkout Boys, who are more properly the Snarkout Boys and the Girl, Rat, are swept up in a world of bizarre beasts and strange settings as they confront the Baconburg Horror, a werewolf who destroys automobile interiors.

The settings for the novel are almost as good as those in *The Snarkout Boys and the Avocado of Death*, with the Garden of Earthly Bliss Drive-In and Pizzeria and never closing; *The Deadly Nightshade Diner* is among the highlights. The humor is as crazy and the adventure as delightful as in *The Snarkout Boys and the Avocado of Death*.

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