**Night Animals**

**AUTHOR:** Gianna Marino  
**ILLUSTRATOR:** Gianna Marino  
**PUBLISHER:** Viking  
**COPYRIGHT DATE:** 2015  
**ART MEDIUM:** Gouache and ink  
**GENRE:** Animal Fiction

**BOOK SUMMARY:** Various nocturnal animals are afraid and try to hide from ‘night animals,’ until a bat explains that they are all night animals.

**BOOK TALK:** Can you think of some animals that only come out at night? Many nocturnal animals like wolves and owls and bats have a bad reputation for being scary. Poor Possum is so scared of night animals that he sets off a chain reaction of fear in the forest. It’s a good thing we humans can avoid night animals - or can we?

**CHALLENGING WORDS:** possum

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**  
1. What are some other animals that Possum might have met in the woods that night?  
2. Do you think real night animals would act the same way as the characters in the book? Why or why not?  
3. How would you have reacted if you were spending the night in the green tent at the end of the book?  
4. Why do you think the small bat was chosen to be the wisest character at the end?

**AUTHOR BIO:** Gianna Marino is a world traveling artist and illustrator who currently lives in Northern California. While she now paints and illustrates full time, her interesting career has included muralist, jewelry designer, toy designer, and carriage driver.  
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**ILLUSTRATOR BIO:** See AUTHOR BIO
Name:_________________________________________________________

Pick two animals from the story *Night Animals* and compare and contrast them.
Standards
1.LS.3 Make observations of plants and animals to compare the diversity of life in different habitats.

1.W.5: With support, conduct simple research on a topic.

Everyone chooses one nocturnal animal. Then research the animal and write three facts on an index card, including one fact about how they have adapted to being active at night. Write the name of the animal on the opposite side of the card. Trade cards with a classmate and see if you can guess their animal.

3.LS.3 Construct an argument that plants and animals have internal and external structures that function to support survival, growth, behavior, and reproduction.
Choose a nocturnal animal and describe its defense mechanism.
Write and draw your ideas below.
Modified Reader’s Theater: Night Animals by Gianna Marino

Characters & Props:
Narrator/Owl—headband, stepstool
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Skunk—headband
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Possum—headband, tail, 2 branches
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Wolf—headband
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Bear—headband
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Bat—headband
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Boy—flashlight, headband
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Girl—flashlight, headband
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Narrator: Night Animals by Gianna Marino, a “modified reader’s theater”——
It was dark, very dark. Possum looked around the woods from inside the hollowed out center of a tree.

Skunk: (enters from right) Hey, Possum! What are you doing in there?

Possum: (with branches) Shhhh! I’m hiding.

Skunk: (nervously looking around) Ohhhhhhh!

Narrator: And Skunk stuffed himself into a hollow tree trunk beside Possum.

Skunk: (takes a branch and squirms around) Uh. Oh. Ugh. What are we hiding from?

Possum: (scared; squirming) Night animals! Now keep QUIET!

Skunk & Possum: SH! SH! SH!

Skunk: (still squirming) Uh. Oh. Ugh. Can you move over?

Possum: (squirming) Uh. Oh. Ugh. Let’s find somewhere else.

Narrator: As they wiggled out of the tree trunk, they heard . . .

Wolf: (offstage) AAAAAARRRRRRROOOOOOO!

Skunk: (grabs Possum’s arm) Did you hear something?

Possum: (scared) Are you t-t-trying to sc-scare me?

Narrator: A wolf burst through the trees!

Wolf: (running in from right) Help ME! AAAAAAAAARRRRRRRRROOOOOOOOO!

Skunk: (scared) Help YOU? You’re a wolf!

Possum: (leans over) OOOOOHHHHHHH.

Wolf: But something is following me!

Skunk: What is it? (Possum falls on ground.)

Wolf: It’s big and hairy with long, sharp claws!

Possum: (faints) I’m not heeeerrrrrrreeeee.
Narrator: Just then something came crashing through the woods!

Bear: (runs in) You guys gotta help me! Something HUGE is coming!

Skunk & Wolf: A BEAR!!!!!!!!!!!!

Wolf: What can be bigger than a BEAR??????????????????????????

Skunk: (grabs Possum by the tail) Wh-why is the sky getting darker?

Possum: (moans) Oooooooohhhhhhhhhhhhh.

Bear, Wolf, Skunk: NIGHT ANIMAL!!!!!!!!!!!

Wolf: Run!

Skunk: Hide! (They all shuffle left with Skunk pulling Possum by the tail.)

Bat: (enters from left and flies past Bear, Wolf, Skunk, Possum to the right) Stop!

Narrator: A bat flew across the moon and hung from a tree. (Bat grabs the branch from Skunk, turns its headband upside down so the bat image is upside down, and puts the tree at the bat picture’s feet.)

Bat: What are you so scared of?

Bear: (grabs and clings to Wolf) We’re so scared of night animals!

Possum: (moans) Oooooooohhhhhhhhhhhhhhh.

Narrator: The bat folded its wings looked at the Bear, the Wolf, the Skunk, and the Possum.

Bat: (takes its headband off and folds the wings in putting it back on head) But you ARE night animals.

(The Bear and Wolf look at each other. The Skunk and Possum look at each other.)

Bear, Wolf, Skunk, Possum: Oooohhhhhhh!

Boy: (offstage on left) Did you hear something?

Boy & Girl: (enter & turn on flashlights) CLICK! (Bear, Wolf, Skunk, Possum freeze staring at them)

Bear, Wolf, Skunk, Boy, Girl: RUN! (Bear, Wolf, Skunk run right offstage; Boy & Girl run left offstage. The bat flies right offstage. Possum stares wide-eyed at audience.)

Narrator/Owl: (flies in, takes branch from Possum, and stands on stepstool putting branch under owl headband) Hoo, Hoo, Hoo!

Possum: (faints) Oooooohhhhhhhhhhhhhhh.

Narrator/Owl: (bows with a flourish of the branch) The End