

# The Many Minds of the Octopus

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Cephalopods are having a moment. An octopus stars in a documentary nominated for an Academy Award (“My Octopus Teacher”). Octos, as scuba-diving philosopher Peter Godfrey Smith calls them, also play a leading role in his marvelous new book “Metazoa,” alongside a supporting cast of corals, sponges, sharks and crabs. (I like Mr. Godfrey-Smith’s plural, which avoids the tiresome debate over Latin and Greek endings).

Part of the allure of the octos is that they are both very smart, probably the smartest of invertebrates, and extremely weird. The intelligence and weirdness may be connected and can perhaps teach us something about those other intelligent, weird animals we call homo sapiens.

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