



The Maldive Shark

Herman Melville

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'No voice, no low, no howl is heard; the chief sound of life here is a hiss.'

Stories and poems by Herman Melville drawn from his years at sea Introducing Little Black Classics: 80 books for Penguin's 80th birthday. Little Black Classics celebrate the huge range and diversity of Penguin Classics, with books from around the world and across many centuries. They take us from a balloon ride over Victorian London to a garden of blossom in Japan, from Tierra del Fuego to 16th century California and the Russian steppe. Here are stories lyrical and savage; poems epic and intimate; essays satirical and inspirational; and ideas that have shaped the lives of millions.

Herman Melville (1819-1891).

Melville's works available in Penguin Classics are Moby-Dick, Pierre, The Confidence-Man, Omoo, Redburn, Israel Potter and Billy Budd, Sailor and Other Stories.

The Maldive Shark Details

Date : Published February 26th 2015 by Penguin Classics

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Author : Herman Melville

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From Reader Review The Maldive Shark for online ebook

Ruchi Patel says

Reading #classics always makes you nostalgic!!

I feel reviewing books is sometimes a drawback because I don't hVe much time to read #classics and #bestsellers . #qotd - Do anyone here feel the same?

I love the language, description and wordplay used in this book. I guess there is nothing much to write for reviews for classics!!

Sandra says

I do love the little black classics from Penguin (perfect for the train).

This was another good one though I can't say I'm really wild about it, but maybe thats because I'm a land animal. Either way this is a seamans guide by a man who has obviously spend a great amount of time at sea and has a love for it.

It was a pleasant and intruing read.

JK says

This is the second Melville work I've read in a few months, having previously never ventured into any of his at-sea ramblings. I felt exactly the same about this one as I did about his long famous rambling *Moby Dick* : underwhelmed and exasperated.

Not only did this edition reintroduce me to Melville's whimsical pointless sea life drivel, it also included words in the form of my academic arch-nemesis, *poetry*. He drones on and on in sentences the length of which Joyce would have been proud. I think I'd rather have read a fucking autobiography.

Bombasticness aside, his love of underwater creatures does not resonate well with an ichthyophobic like myself. Typing *The Maldive Shark* into a search engine almost sent my wine glass flying across the room, closely followed by my own vomit.

Why use one word when you can use twenty, Herman? Set me on fire and call me Ishmael.

Caroline says

Interesting writing, but this edition is greatly flawed. That is, it is a collection of short Melville writings, and the most substantial is a series of "sketches" about the Encantadas Isles (what we would call the Galapagos). After reading, I was left intrigued -- the mood established is powerful and rather frightening, not at all the friendly post-Darwin science-guy / eco-tourism outlook of today. But the work was enigmatic, and unsatisfying. Curious, I did some research and learned that two "sketches" belonging to the work are omitted.

These appear to be the lengthiest and most narrative. This was likely done to fit the work into the length limit of the Little Black Classics format. But to do so without any acknowledgement or notice to the reader is unacceptable, an act of editorial mutilation and misrepresentation of something Melville intended as an integrated novella. Sorry for the rant, but this book violates the covenant between publisher and reader.

Βασ?λειος Μ?γας says

Excellent although dark. So poetic that makes you want to jump on a ship and sail...

Tyler Jones says

This book, which contains soaring, witty and inventive prose, gets a consistently low rating from goodreads reviews, and I think I know why. As a slim little book, the reader expects something accessible; how dense can a book be that is only fifty-five pages long? Plenty dense as it turns out. So those hoping to breeze through a little Melville-lite get understandably frustrated. Adding to the reader frustration is the back cover copy, which sells the book as; *Dark, nightmarish sea stories and poems inspired by Melville's adventures around the world's oceans in a whaler*. This statement is simply false, for there is little or nothing dark or nightmarish in the slightest in this book, unless you are terrified of semi-colons. And no "stories" either - these are sketches of the island group known as the Encantas -descriptions or sketches, but not stories. So yeah, I can see how someone picking this book up expecting to read stories about sharks or what have you would be very disappointed - hence the bad ratings.

This makes me so sad, because I really love Melville. In particular I love the humour you will find in *Redburn* and *Israel Potter*, and the wonderful experimental strangeness of *The Confidence Man*. I love the one about the whale too, but I don't think I need to tell you about that one. It breaks my heart a bit to think of people picking this up, finding it inaccessible, and putting down never to try Melville again - and what makes it *really* sad is that this is actually a great little sample of what a wonderful writer Melville was - a fact the reader might realize if they approached the book as a piece of non-fiction reportage; a book part natural history and part travel writing; not "stories" and certainly not "dark and nightmarish."

Leigh says

This is one is hard to rate, I liked most of the poetry and found some lacking depth or feeling. Overall Herman Melville is better known for his novels. I wish I could give a better review but honestly I am just not sure what to say apart form what I have said above.

Laura (b00k-witch) says

I thought the three poems and the first sketch were particularly pleasant. Melville's style was one that I agreed with, and found myself loving the description of these islands. And then he went on. I think the sketches after the first were repetitive and too descriptive with no action or haste in the writing, which gets dull after a while.

I did like the tone in general so I'm still looking forward to reading a novel of his, likely *Moby Dick*, which promises sea-faring adventures, and while this was a nice wee introduction to his style, I do hope there's not a Tolkein like narrative in the longer works.

Joey Woolfardis says

Herman Melville was an American writer, best known for *Moby Dick*. Call me Ishmael, thanks.

This was an odd one to rate. I quite enjoyed the rhyme of the poetry; it flowed well though the subject matter and word choice were often rather mystifying. The notes, or sketches, he took of his journey around the Galapagos were full of wonderful things, but the way he wrote of them was just inane. He had no flow whatsoever, though I can't quite put my finger on my disdain.

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Daren says

Meh. So I read this to encourage me to re-read *Moby Dick*, but on this basis, I need other motivation! This was a strange, disjointed sort of book. The poetry was never going to fly for me, but I had hopes for the text.

Peter says

Turgid. Herman Melville is distinctly the most boring writer it has been my misfortune to read. When talking of any events or places he fails on description, you can tell he has no knowledge of his subject at all. He wastes words by the hundreds and an extensive ignorance shines through. This man does not deserve the accolades he has accrued thru the ages. Having been forced to read *Moby Dick* at school, I was hoping in my maturity to appreciate his work better, but to no avail. He really is, based on other works of excellence at this time, mediocre.

Incompetent writer at best, there are greater writers of this period that should be looked at.

AVOID AT ALL COSTS.

Spencer Fancutt says

A rather peculiar little collection of descriptive sketches and poems. Taken as such, it is fine, but readers expecting any more would be disappointed. I feel a bit sorry for Melville here, because I'm sure he never intended these jottings to stand alone as a text. I shall read *Moby Dick* to say sorry for my 'meh' at the end of this one.

Bookdragon Sean says

Herman Melville's poetry has come from his own personal experience as a seaman. The result is a choice of language that is precise, which really blends its self well to his poems. This, I think, is the strongest feature of his work. The Maldive Shark is a short poem that contrasts the shark, with its doting brains and superb killing ability, with the pilot fish that is alert and sleek, but is ultimately fated to end its life in the shark's powerful jaws.

At least, that is what I thought it meant. This poem doesn't have a clear cut meaning or quantifiable interpretation, and the last line threw me off completely. I don't think the poem was the best in this edition. Indeed, this is another edition that I think should have been named differently. With many of the Penguin Little Black Classic it appears as if the names have been chosen at random or because they sound the most appealing, although they are not the entry with the most merit. It's a shame really because poem titled "The Berg" was of a higher standard.

I only recommend this edition if you are a lover of Melville's novels. I think his poetry id ok, but would be appreciated most by those that like his style. Having read the poetry in this edition, I have no interest in seeking anymore out by this author; however, I am most interest in reading Moby Dick in the near future.

Penguin Little Black Classic- 38

The Little Black Classic Collection by penguin looks like it contains lots of hidden gems. I couldn't help it; they looked so good that I went and bought them all. I shall post a short review after reading each one. No doubt it will take me several months to get through all of them! Hopefully I will find some classic authors, from across the ages, that I may not have come across had I not bought this collection.

Darwin8u says

"Nothing can better suggest the aspect of once living things malignly crumbled from ruddiness into ashes. Apples of Sodom, after touching, seem these isles."
- Herman Melville, "The Encantadas: Sketch First"

Vol N° 38 of my Penguin Little Black Classics Box Set. This book contains three poems (The Maldive Shark, The Berg (A Dream), The Enviaible Isles, and a series of sketches (Eight in all) of the Encantada Isles (Enchanted Isles) aka the Galapagos.

The poems were fine. I was thrilled with Melville's sketches of The Galápagos Islands (The Encantadas, or Enchanted Isles). The sketches were done by an anonymous narrator and each sketch starts with a bit of poetry from Spenser's The Faerie Queene. These sketches were all written AFTER Moby-Dick flopped financially and Melville was hustling money (these sketches were published in *Putnam*) In a couple of the

sketches he seemed to be poking a bit of fun at Darwin's Voyage of the Beagle.

Anyway, I would have probably have given this book four stars, except it contained ALL the sketches but eight and nine (so for those keeping score at home: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10). Now, I have to go and find those two so I can say I've read them all. Perhaps, I'll save those two for my future bucket list trip to the Encantadas.

Lea says

Another writer I feel bad about for not liking (in the same way as Dickens... I used to feel the same way about Hemingway but have since come to the conclusion that Hemingway is just objective bad...), mostly because my complaint is that I find myself incredibly bored while reading.

This short book mainly let me re-live my experience of reading Moby Dick and the sigh of relief I let out when I'd finished it.
