



The Lonely Sea: Collected Sea Stories

Alistair MacLean

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Collection of riveting tales of the sea including the story that launched his writing career, the account of the epic battle to sink the German battle ship, Bismarck, and two new stories collected here for the first time.

THE MASTER STORYTELLER IN HIS ELEMENT...

Alistair MacLean has an unmistakable and unrivalled skill in writing about the sea and its power and about the men and women who sail it, and who fight and die in it.

His distinctive voice was evident from his very first prize-winning story, 'The Dileas', and has been heard time and again in his international career as the author of such bestsellers as H.M.S. Ulysses and San Andreas.

The Lonely Sea starts where MacLean's career started, with 'The Dileas', and collects together his stories of the sea. Here is a treasury of vintage MacLean, compelling and brilliant, where the master storyteller is in his element.

This reissue includes two new stories, 'The Good Samaritan' and 'The Black Storm', which bear all the classic hallmarks of MacLean's finest writing and are published here for the very first time.

The Lonely Sea: Collected Sea Stories Details

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Author : Alistair MacLean

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From Reader Review The Lonely Sea: Collected Sea Stories for online ebook

Christopher Taylor says

A nice collection of short pieces, some fiction and some almost like fable, with the others being short accounts of major and significant WW2 sea events such as the sinking of the Bismark. All are handled well, with often a very strong criticism of the Admiralty during WW2, but tight and factual and well-told with MacLean's typical skill.

Ed says

SS - a collection of nautical short stories. The Dileas (1954), Maclean's prize-winning first story. The Arandora Star, Rawalpindi, The Meknes, Lancastria, City of Benares, and The Jervis Bay are accounts of WWII disasters published in the Sunday Express (1960). Article Alistair MacLean on the Rewards and Responsibilities of Success published in the Glasgow Herald (1982). Also, St. George and the Dragon - a slight romance / The Sinking of the Bismarck - an account of the short life of the German battleship / MacHinery and the Cauliflowers - the drug trade in Malaya / McCrimmon and the Blue Moonstones - a comic tale of the Alexandria underworld / They Sweep the Seas - a tribute to WWII minesweepers / The Gold Watch - a very short comic piece of theft in the Mideast / Rendezvous - Underground agents in WWII France and Italy.

P.S. Winn says

Great collection by a suspense, adventure writer who knows how to tell a story. This book has some great battle stories that readers will love.

Jamie says

Short story collection ranging from good to great. The Dileas (MacLean's first published story as I recall) is one of the best short stories I have ever read.

Lbaker says

The first story of the book made me cry, it was Mr MacLean's first story, won first prize - 100 pounds, and began his writing career.

Each of the stories were well written, seemed quite unbiased, railed against bureaucracy and seemed well researched. I gave this book to my husband to read, think he will like it even more than I did.

Dusk Peterson says

This collection of Alistair MacLean's short works ends with a rather sad essay by the author, in which he disavows any intentions to be literary or meaningful - sad because his first novel, "H.M.S. Ulysses," was in fact both literary and meaningful, and all the more entertaining as a result. Alas, he reports that a couple more of his meaningful novels didn't go over well with the readers. (I suspect that one of them must have been "The Last Frontier," which, for all its virtues, includes long monologues about the benefits of peace between nations.) MacLean concluded from the readers' reactions that "messages are for Western Union," rather than concluding, as he should have, that a skillful writer must make his messages entertaining and must integrate them carefully into the storyline.

Fortunately, Alistair MacLean's disavowal of meaningful content was not applied to many of the works in this collection.

The subtitle "Collected Short Stories" is misleading, because eight of the works in this collection are actually narrative nonfiction on World War II maritime disasters . . . but are no less compellingly written than MacLean's fiction.

When the *Hood* was with you, nothing could ever go wrong. Every man in the Royal Navy knew that.

And not only in the Navy. It is seventeen years now since the *Hood* died but none of the millions alive today who had grown up before the Second World War can forget, and will probably never forget, the almost unbelievable hold the *Hood* had taken on the imaginations and hearts of the British public. She was the best known, best loved ship in all our long naval history, a household name to countless people for whom *Revenge* and *Victory* were only words. The biggest, most powerful ship of the line in the inter-war years, she stood for all that was permanent, a synonym for all that was invincible, held in awe, even in veneration. For millions of people she *was* the Royal Navy, a legend in her own lifetime . . . But a legend grows old.

And now, with the long night's high-speed steaming over, the dawn in the sky and the *Bismarck* looming up over the horizon, the legend was about to end forever.

In these accounts, MacLean shows himself to be a first-rate nautical history writer, with a fine eye for detail and for the human aspects of the story. I suspect (though I can't verify it, since he usually doesn't cite his sources) that he is also demonstrating his talent for investigative journalism, digging down to find the deeper reasons why the disasters occurred.

The remaining stories include a quietly moving fictionalization of a typical day for minesweeping boats during World War II; a boating melodrama that first won him his fame; and four light comedies, including the wryly witty story, "McCrimmon and the Blue Moonstones."

Shocked into comparative sobriety and hoarsely uttering the war cry of his clan, McCrimmon leapt back. A high-speed camera would have recorded but a blur as his hand streaked for his Stilson wrench. Wild Bill Hickok, at his best, would have stood in silent wonder. Alas for

McCrimmon, the miraculous speed of his draw was grievously hampered by the plethora of assorted cutlery in his pocket. True, it caused but a second's delay: but it is a scientifically established fact that a heavy stool, impelled by the arms of an enraged Armenian, can cover a distance of four feet in less than half that time.

But the star of the fictional works in the collection is surely "Rendezvous," a World War II naval espionage tale that begins with as effective a hook as any of MacLean's novel-length thrillers.

It was quite dark now and the Great North Road, the A1, that loneliest of Europe's highways, almost deserted. At rare intervals, a giant British Roadways truck loomed out of the darkness: a courteous dipping of headlamps, immaculate hand-signals, a sudden flash of sound from the labouring diesel - and the A1 was lonelier than ever. Then there was only the soothing hum of tyres, the black ribbon of highway, and the headlights of the Jaguar, weirdly hypnotic, swathing through the blackness.

Loneliness and sleep, sleep and loneliness. The enemies, the co-drivers of the man at the wheel; the one lending that extra half pound of pressure to the accelerator, the other, immobile and ever-watchful, waiting his chance to slide in behind the wheel and take over. I knew them well and I feared them.

But they were not riding with me tonight. There was no room for them. Not with so many passengers. Not with Stella sitting there beside me, Stella of the laughing eyes and sad heart, who had died in a German concentration camp. Not with Nicky, the golden boy, lounging in the back seat, or Passiere, who had never returned to his sun-drenched vineyards in Sisteron. No room for sleep and loneliness? Why, by the time you had crowded in Taffy the engineer, complaining as bitterly as ever and Vice-Admiral Starr and his bushy eyebrows, there was hardly room for myself.

MacLean does such a good job at depicting the shifting fortunes of the characters in "Rendezvous" that one yearns for a theme which is equally memorable - one of those Western Union messages which MacLean deliberately dropped from his later fiction. But the reader can remain grateful that, over the span of his lifetime, MacLean gave us as much as he did. This collection is testimony to that fact.

Martin Hill says

Scottish author Alistair MacLean is one of those writers I usually identify as having a great impact on my own writing career. Though I have not read his entire oeuvre, I read enough of his novels in college for the experience to have had a lasting impact on my work.

Service in the Royal Navy during WWII placed in MacLean an eternal love of the ocean, and that became the scene of his first short story, "DiLeas." I developed a similar love of the ocean when I served in the U.S. Coast Guard, and many of my stories take place on boats or at sea, including "Something Far Away," first published in Alfred Hitchcock Mystery Magazine and republished in my short story collection, *Duty*. Many of his books I've read two or three times. I re-read *Ice Station Zebra* for inspiration while writing my own

submarine-based mystery thriller, *The Killing Depths*.

Despite MacLean's influence, I had never read any of his short stories or articles on naval history. Then I found *The Lonely Sea*. Though billed as "Collected Short Stories," *The Lonely Sea* is actually a collection of short fiction and nonfiction. Many of the works collected here are articles on sea battles and tragedies that occurred during WWII. Among those is his lengthy and critical study on the sinking of the German pocket battleship, Bismarck.

Among the short stories are his first published work, "DiLeas," about a sea rescue in which a boat captain must make a heart-wrenching choice. The story "Rendezvous" is pure MacLean, the master of the double- and triple-twist spy story. In "The Good Samaritan," the author shows no good deed goes unpunished—unless you're a quick thinker.

If you're a MacLean fan, *The Lonely Sea* is a must read. If you're not a MacLean fan, read it anyway.

Vionna says

I'm not usually a short story fan, but I enjoyed his collected sea tales, mostly from World War II.

Tim says

as is often the case with collections this one has a rather mixed flavor. there are humorous stories and there are some very very serious ones. some I found less than Stellar in content or Style. but most were very readable very enjoyable and I learned quite a bit from them. in general I thoroughly recommend this to anyone with likes Alistair McLean's writing.

John McAbee says

ExA book about nautical subjects that comes from facts and results is a well rewritten story. The nautical picture created adds to the story and makes one have to relationship with subject matter

To your increased knowledge of going down to the sea in ships. The description of sea conditions is realistic and exactly what to expect in the North Atlantic.

Shalini M says

'The Lonely Sea' is a collection of all the short stories written by Alistair McLean over his entire career, starting with his first story 'The Dileas', that launched his career as a writer. The stories encompass a wide range of plots; the common thread, as the name suggests, being a connection with the sea, in one form or other. He has an unmatched gift in writing about sea, and I think it would be his career in the Royal Navy during the war, that armed him with this skill.

Nearly half of the stories in this collection are non-fictional accounts of wartime encounters – tales of

heroism, sacrifice, bravery, as well as of tragedy, and bureaucratic blunders. The stories are extremely well written, vivid, and engaging. Unfortunately, I didn't like these so much, because after a point they started having a lot of similarity, but more so, because they are invariably gory, depicting massive destruction, tragedy and loss. Such stories leave me quite sad, and disenchanted with humankind.

The others are fictional, with quite a variety in theme and tone, some of them are light-hearted, and some serious. These, I loved. Most of these have a twist in the end, very like O. Henry (another author I love!).

The edition I have also includes a newspaper article by McLean, titled "The Rewards and Responsibilities of success", an interesting read. The highlight of the article would be an honest opinion of himself as a writer – he admits to no literary pretence (let alone greatness), but his purpose to entertain the readers. Or, as we can put it, to give everyone (the publisher and the readers) a worth for their money.

Tyler Lees says

This is a collection of short stories and short historical sketches of famous or notorious World War Two ships.

Most are serious, some are humorous, and most are quite enjoyable reading. Great if you are somewhat episodic in your reading habits like me; I can read a story or sketch then book the book down for a couple of days to do something else.

Neil Fulwood says

Although it's subtitled 'Collected Short Stories', only half of the pieces on offer here are short fiction. The volume is rounded out with articles about wartime naval engagements. MacLean wasn't renowned as a writer of non-fiction - his books on Lawrence of Arabia and Captain Cook are neither remembered or easy to find - yet 'The Lonely Sea' shades up from a curio to a genuinely unmissable MacLean because of them. Accounts of the sinking of the Bismarck and the defiance, against hopeless odds, of the Jarvis Bay are standouts and MacLean's passion for his subject and affinity for the sea are palpable.

Bill says

I love nautical fiction, and Alistair Maclean's emotive but harsh style is perfect for it.

Shelley says

All the short stories in this book are about sailing and navy during wartime. Considering that's not something I've ever really been interested in, this was surprisingly enjoyable.
