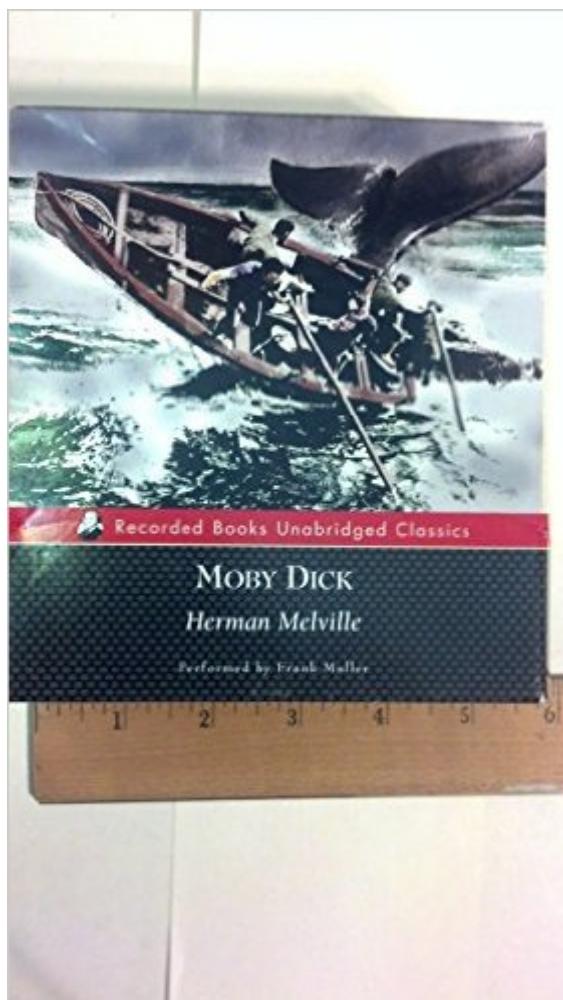


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Moby Dick [UNABRIDGED Audiobook] (Recorded Books Unabridged Classics)



Synopsis

Its famous opening line, "Call me Ishmael," dramatic in its stark simplicity, begins an epic that is widely regarded as the greatest novel ever written by an American. Labeled variously a realistic story of whaling, a romance of unusual adventure and eccentric characters, a symbolic allegory, and a drama of heroic conflict, Moby Dick is first and foremost a great story. It has both the humor and poignancy of a simple sea ballad, as well as the depth and universality of a grand odyssey. When Melville's father died in 1832, the young man's financial security went too. For a while he turned to school-mastering and clerking, but failed to make a sustainable income. In 1840 he signed up on the whaler, Acushnet, out of New Bedford, Massachusetts. He was just 21. A whaler's life turned out to be both arduous and dangerous, and in 1842, Melville deserted ship. Out of this experience and a wealth of printed sources, Melville crafted his masterpiece. 18 unabridged CDs comprising 21 Hours of content.

Book Information

Audio CD

Publisher: Recorded Books, LLC; 18 CDs edition (1987)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1428108335

ISBN-13: 978-1428108332

Product Dimensions: 6.2 x 5.4 x 2.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (26 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

For those who don't know the name, Frank Muller was among the best when it came to transmitting books into audio form. He respected the work, the voice of the author and he knew enough to put himself second and the work first. So why do I speak of him in past tense? Because this man with a gift for words, language and acting (he had classical training as an actor) died on June 4, 2008. You can read more about that on my profile page, if you are so interested. In the meantime, if you want an audio version of Melville's classic work and if you want to be entranced by the tale of man and whale, you can't do better than this version. Yes, you could read it...yes, you could try to cipher out

the meaning in the work but I'd make the argument that listening to Frank Muller read this is likely to lead you towards a greater understanding of this work than if you read it on the page. A controversial view, perhaps, but think of how many plays or works of art or pieces of music you've seen or heard and then consider how much fuller the experience can be when you have a multi-sensory approach. Audiobooks offer that opportunity and when it comes to man and whale and reader and book...well, listen to the version by Frank Muller. For sheer power, grace, beauty and the ability to transmit the MEANING of this novel, you won't do better. If you don't already know the plot, well...on the surface it is about a man's obsession with hunting one particular whale. The surface, of course, is just that. I'd had to read this book during college and can say that it wasn't till I heard the book read aloud, by Frank Muller, that I began to have a stronger sense of why this book is considered a classic. The man puts the nuances into the words, leads the reader in directions unexpected...

Frank Muller's voice is clearly modern, but rich and bright. He does not do any phony sea tar accent either, but doubtless one would tire quickly of either a Shakespearean actor or any sort of actor, in this project. After 40 minutes you forget any dissonance from what you might have expected, and it carries you along. Muller's pronunciation and poise are also remarkable given both the density of Melville's language and the ripping speed of the delivery. This is an 18 hour Olympic voice marathon, never below trotting speed. I wished, perhaps, he had modulated his speed and delivery somewhat -- but he does give you more varying shades of color when he does the voices of the characters. This is, of course, a highly dramatic work, heavily influenced by both Elizabethan drama and language, and the wonderful thing here is you get not only the whole book, but something sounding convincingly like a radio play from the 1930s or 40s. Muller wisely skips the plethora of footnotes about whales from world literature, which Melville placed before the book's opening (they are put in after the end) and starts right with the great and famous opener: "Call me Ishmael." For those who do not know the story, it is about a mid 19th century whaling voyage out of Nantucket that degenerates into the chase of one particular whale -- an albino sperm whale named Moby Dick. It once maimed the captain, and he goads on the crew to his unholy (and illegal) cause by greed and fear. The narrator is an able seaman named Ishmael, bored with the life of a landlubber, and the boat is full of remarkable characters all superbly rounded out and dramatized, including 3 striking and highly skilled natives. For those who do not know the book, be warned -- this is hardly straight narrative.

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