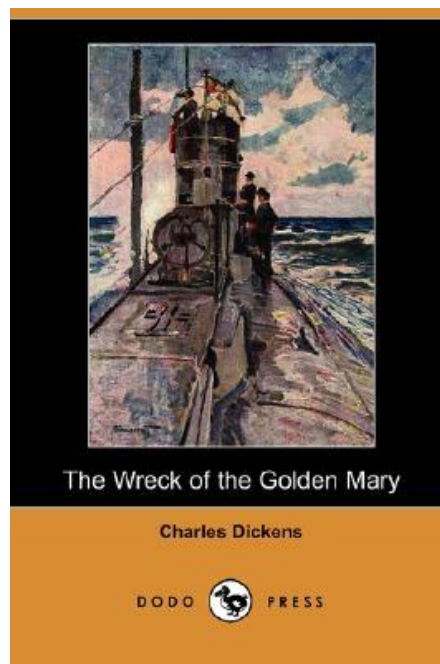




The Wreck of the Golden Mary

Charles Dickens

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Charles John Huffam Dickens (1812-1870), also known as "Boz," was the foremost English novelist of the Victorian era, as well as a vigorous social campaigner. Considered one of the English language's greatest writers, he was acclaimed for his rich storytelling and memorable characters, and achieved massive worldwide popularity in his lifetime. The popularity of his novels and short stories has meant that not one has ever gone out of print. Dickens wrote serialised novels, the usual format for fiction at the time, and each new part of his stories was eagerly anticipated by the reading public. Among his best-known works are Sketches by Boz (1836), The Pickwick Papers (1837), Oliver Twist (1838), Nicholas Nickleby (1839), Barnaby Rudge (1841), A Christmas Carol (1843), Martin Chuzzlewit (1844), David Copperfield (1850), Bleak House (1853), Little Dorrit (1857), A Tale of Two Cities (1859), Great Expectations (1861) and Our Mutual Friend (1865).

The Wreck of the Golden Mary Details

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From Reader Review The Wreck of the Golden Mary for online ebook

Vipula says

I almost squealed with delight when I saw this book in the library. No, I had never heard of it nor anyone had ever recommended it to me. But what made me happy was that this book was written by Charles Dickens and Wilkie Collins. Till I read this book, I had no clue that they were colleagues or even friends!!

The novella tells the story of the crew and passengers on the ship The Golden Mary that is sailing towards the Californian coast. There is a motley group of passengers – a man looking out to make money in the gold rush, an estranged fiancé, a mother and her child heading to meet the father. The ship is tragically struck by an ice berg and sinks. Luckily all the crew and passengers are moved safely to two life boats. The people though alive are far from safety as they float stranded on the open sea with minimum food and water between them.

Apart from the captain and the first mate, through whose eyes the story is told, an extremely important character is Golden Lucy. She is the only child on board and everyone's favorite. She presents purity and happiness when the ship was afloat and hope and spirit when survivors hung between life and death in the lifeboats.

Dickens brings out interesting aspects of human behavior under this severe living condition and creates vivid characters in such short story telling. One of the steps the survivors take to keep their spirits alive as days pass by without the sign of another ship, is to tell each other stories. 5 such stories all contributed by 5 different writers form the body of the novella.

Sam Woodfield says

Its quite an odd story this one. It's not really a full novel and not really a complete story, but simply an account of a small period in time - namely a ship wreck.

The first half of the book is written by the Captain of a ship, commissioned to travel to California during the gold rush. But when the ship hits an iceberg it becomes a tale of rescue as the passengers and crew fight for survival out at sea.

The reason the rating for this book is so low is simply because it's so short and a little incomplete but I actually really liked it. Not because its a good 'story' but because its a good account of maritime actions at the time. The Captain gives a good account of his past which shows him working up the ranks. Whilst on the ship he goes into some detail about the workings of the ship and the requirements of the crew, and after the wreck there is lots of detail about the actions of the crew. So this book acts as a great insight into the maritime world at the time. It also makes really clear the dedication required and the sense of pride in the profession.

The story ends quite quickly and so it feels very incomplete so it only really acts as an insight into the time but this was good in itself and quite enjoyable.

James says

Here we have another fine example of Dickens' writing style. In this short story it was superb, exceptionally vivid, in part, you felt like you were there on the boats with the passengers and felt for their suffering.

Over a period of time and due to the numerous books already read by Dickens, he seems to have predominantly used his large novels as a critique of society, corruption and social issues at the time. Whereupon his short(er) stories seems to have a completely different feel to them, predominantly focusing on boats, naval vessels, the sea and oceans. Perhaps this was a love affair that Dickens had and wanted to explore further in his writing.

Dylan Nordstrom says

Dylan Nordstrom

Have you ever wondered what would happen if you survived a shipwreck and continue the depths of your survival on a lifeboat? In *The Wreck of the Golden Mary* by Charles Dickens, this idea of trying to survive an atrocity is explored. While this idea is ventured into, the surmounting main idea of this story is to hold onto hope for as long as you can.

This novel is about the wreck of a boat called the *Golden Mary* that was off sailing to California Coast. Then the ship abruptly hits an iceberg, sinking the ship. Luckily, everyone is moved into lifeboats before the boat is fully submerged. Whilst on the lifeboats, passengers and crew share their past stories before it's too late to share these fragments of their lives. From death to despair the passengers tell the interesting and frightening stories of their pasts, showing the reader who each character really is and what they have gone through.

The author's use of point of view is amazing. He used several of these points of view to aid one to picture the events that occurred more clearly. The audience gets to see these experiences in each character's past through their eyes. One aspect of the book that makes me wonder is the fact of changing the point of view without directly telling us the narrator. Due to this it is in some ways difficult to follow the storyline, and throws off one's ideas of the book because they could be reading a backstory to someone that it does even apply to!

One should read this book because it is very interesting to see the different stories and points of view of the different passengers. It is also pleasant to observe and take in people's past experiences because it gives you a better feel of who that person is. Also, it is good to hear varying stories of people's past so you are not biased to how you would have dealt with the situation. I would recommend this book to someone in high school or older just based on vocabulary and complexity.

In the end, this story is great for expanding character analysis through the hardships faced during the sinking of the *Golden Mary* and the aftermath. Through the different stories of the survivors, people gain a certain opinion of these characters based on their past and this component was one of the many achievements the author had. With the pros, also come the cons consisting of confusion between story change. One should read this novel because it will definitely not disappoint and is a nail bitter to see who will survive. Would you be able to hold onto hope when stranded with strangers on a lifeboat?

Gemma Wiseman says

Very brief and very scintillating. This fast-paced narrative could be a *Canterbury Tale* on the high seas. After all, stories are told and songs sung to pass the time. This could be a parable... all that glistens is not gold, but some golds are priceless. A shipwreck allows time to magnify loose threads in characters who are cast outside the usual regime of society. And, like a *Pied Piper*, Captain Ravender encourages the passengers to find courage and hope within. So interesting that the *Golden Mary* was headed for the Californian goldfields and the child with shining fair hair is nicknamed *Golden Lucy*. So many metaphors tantalise this tale. A small treasure.

My Poetic Review: Songlines on the Winds

Filippo Giani says

Un buon racconto dell'autore inglese, anche se trovo sia inferiore ai racconti di Natale che ho letto recentemente.

Il libro parla di un naufragio, appunto, e di come un gruppo di uomini, su due scialuppe di salvataggio, cerchi di sopravvivere con le poche risorse a loro disposizione. Come sempre Dickens presenta i suoi personaggi in modo sublime, definendone con maestria i tratti psicologici e i comportamenti.

E' presente la speranza, in questo racconto, come in molti altri racconti di Dickens; una speranza che non muore tra le onde, che continua a vivere nonostante le difficoltà.

Il racconto è scritto dal punto di vista del capitano, per poi passare al punto di vista del vice capitano.

Non voglio dire troppo, altrimenti rischio seriamente di anticipare eventi che per il lettore è un piacere scoprire leggendo le pagine del racconto. Vi basti sapere che l'ebook costa 5 euro, un prezzo più che giusto per un buonissimo racconto di poche pagine.

Barbara says

Interesting and engaging but also disappointing as it seems to have no ending!

Thomas says

Dickens, Charles. The Wreck of the Golden Mary. 1856.

There is a lot we don't know about this 40-page novella about a ship that hits an iceberg off Cape Horn and leaves its crew and passengers stranded in a couple of small boats. It was first published as a Christmas supplement in Household Words as a collaborative project between Dickens and Wilkie Collins, but we don't really know much else about its genesis. How much Dickens and how much Collins is anybody's guess. It seems incomplete. Was it meant to be as we see it, or was there a frame story that got cut for space? There are two diaries, putatively written by the Captain and the First Mate. Does that mean they both survived, or are they voices from the grave? Is the story appropriate for a Christmas issue? There is certainly not much Christmas cheer in it. There is an unusual mix of realism and sentimentality—even for Dickens—but none of the characters seem to have the hallmark Dickensian eccentricity. Did I enjoy it? Sure. But it left me scratching my head.

Jason says

2.5 stars rounded up to three.

Read in this compilation: A Christmas Carol and Other Christmas Classics. This story is another victim of the travesty explained here.

I'll give a better review of this when I read the rest of this story which isn't included in the book I have, nor is

it in The Gutenberg Project file.

This seems incomplete, but I don't know what parts are missing. I think four or five short stories told by the people in the life boat were omitted, and I sure hope the ending is missing as well because it ain't much of an ending. (view spoiler).

This would've been a two star book except the captain is pretty awesome. Here's one scene as the ship is foundering, and one of the passengers, a rather selfish cad, is threatening to stir up a panic.

“Mr. Rarx,” said I to him when it came to that, “I have a loaded pistol in my pocket; and if you don’t stand out of the gangway, and keep perfectly quiet, I shall shoot you through the heart, if you have got one.” Says he, “You won’t do murder, Captain Ravender!” “No, sir,” says I, “I won’t murder forty-four people to humour you, but I’ll shoot you to save them.” After that he was quiet, and stood shivering a little way off, until I named him to go over the side.

Love it.

And then there's this quote too, which is in the first paragraph: "It has always been my opinion since I first possessed such a thing as an opinion, that the man who knows only one subject is next tiresome to the man who knows no subject. Therefore, in the course of my life I have taught myself whatever I could, and although I am not an educated man, I am able, I am thankful to say, to have an intelligent interest in most things."

I can appreciate that sentiment.

Robert Hepple says

The Wreck of the Golden Mary is a short collection of 6 connected short stories and 1 poem written by 6 different authors. Together, these formed the main part of the Christmas 1856 issue of the magazine 'Household Words', which was edited by Dickens at this time. The common theme is centred on the good ship Golden Mary, which sinks during an overnight collision with an iceberg en-route to California, forcing the crew and passengers to take to the boats. Most of the stories are those told by the survivors to each other to keep themselves occupied, whilst the wreck and its aftermath form the start and end of the book. Whilst there is a mixture of styles, it works well overall in its own Victorian melodrama kind of way. Not surprising, considering Dickens put a number of these Christmas compilations together over the years.

James says

An interesting book, but to say it is by Charles Dickens alone seems a little disingenuous. The various short stories that make up the whole of the book have no less than six authors as originators of the tales. Still, what stops this from being a four or five star review is not the subject matter (the tales tend to the grim) nor the fact that some authors receive no credit on the cover. The three star review is owed to the fact that, with such a great mix of talent, such as Wilkie Collins and Adelaide Anne Proctor to name but two, the combined elements do not seem to be as strong as their single works.

Still, Melissa Valiska Gregory and Melisa Klimaszewski provide a great introduction. In their introduction, they parallel and contrast this work with the works of Charles Dickens that it relates to by the time it was published - while even casual readers may immediately relate him to A Christmas Carol, this too was considered one of his Christmas works, though published much later. The introduction highlights classic parallels between the classic Dickensian characters and parallels those effectively, but the general tone and effect of the work is much darker and few characters, good or bad, find the redemption or opportunities that his other works grant. Themes of salvation and redemption are present, but run darker and less likely in The Wreck of the Golden Mary. Still, one greatly redeeming quality of this particular edition is the great introduction provided by Gregory and Klimaszewski. I recommend finding a copy with this introduction as it does frame the work very well.

To say that one should read The Wreck of the Golden Mary as an example of Dickens, Collins, or any of the other featured talents would be erroneous, but it does have strong themes and an interesting and much darker interpretation of themes present in the better known A Christmas Carol. The parallels are interesting, but as aforementioned, the wealth of talent behind this work made me expect more than was available. Still, it did give me much to think about and if you like other such works, then by all means, proceed.

Janice says

This is a short novella with what appears to have no ending. I'm trying to figure out if what I read is the full story or if I somehow didn't download the whole thing.

Donna says

I do like Dickens...but I had trouble with this story...and will need to reread this to figure out what I missed. I couldn't determine if they were still drifting at the conclusion!

Melodee says

This Dickens story had endearing characters and was quite suspenseful, but I was disappointed to find that it really had no ending.

Dillwynia Peter says

What an interesting short book.

What works well is, it is hard to tell the different authors apart. There are subtle differences, but it flows well.

This certainly isn't an uplifting book any anyways, although there is a happy ending of sorts. All too much is on human frailties and their outcomes. If you had had enough of a bleak winter and wanted something

uplifting, this certainly isn't the book for you.

The book has been broken up into 3 portions: the starting and setting of characters before the wreck; the wreck and the stories told by various occupants in the life boats; and the conclusion.

Much of the plot was believable; only the portion involving the small child could be viewed in the 21st century as slightly pedophilic. I didn't take it that way, having read enough 19th century literature. The gold crazy old man was also a bit over the top and more of a Dickens' caricature than a character one could believe in.

I do really need to dig up the other Christmas issue stories.
