



E.W. Hornung

DEAD MEN TELL NO TALES

• PERENNIAL PRESS •

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You mean when Ready asked him if we were out of our course? I must say I thought it was a silly question to put. It was the same the other evening about the cargo. If the skipper says we're in ballast why not believe him? Why repeat steerage gossip, about mysterious cargoes, at the cuddy table? Captains are always touchy about that sort of thing. I wasn't surprised at his letting out...<

Dead Men Tell No Tales Details

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From Reader Review Dead Men Tell No Tales for online ebook

Robert says

Okay. It is exactly what you expect from the period and the genre, no more and no less.

Add another 1/2 star for coining or using a most excellent phrase in the title.

Miram Gamal says

I'm just happy they ended up together, though, in the writer's words, I fall in love with Rattray more than with Cole.

Francis Cahill says

Ok for its time and genre. Couldn't make out the very end. Did he end up with her or not? There is a contradiction in the last two lines.

Marts (Thinker) says

This classic begins with the whole sea tragedy after an ocean love episode then slips into the survival then rescue adventure, and becomes a tad bit confusing until the mystery eventually plays out.

Daniel says

E.W. Hornung's "Dead Men Tell No Tales" is not a bad book, but its relatively slight plot is overwhelmed by its overwrought language -- the type often found in books from the Victorian era. In the Sherlock Holmes stories by Arthur Conan Doyle (who happened to be Hornung's brother-in-law), that type of writing helps transport the reader back in time; in Hornung's book, though, it leads the reader to wonder what Hornung is making such a fuss about. The story and characters are simply not interesting enough to justify the weight of the writing.

It doesn't help that much of "Dead Men"'s plot is driven by the narrator's obsession with Eva Denison. Because Cole, the narrator, spends so many of the book's early pages recounting his constant arguments with Eva and disparaging her character, it's hard to see what aside from her looks attracts Cole to her. A squabbling, mismatched couple may work fine in a half-hour sitcom, but it's harder to take in a 260-page book. Cole's affection for Frank Rattray is similarly hard to understand, and seems almost completely driven by Cole finding Rattray a handsome man. It's hard to stick with a narrator so lacking in depth.

"Dead Men" also suffers from an over-reliance on cliches. Granted, the book's age makes many of the cliches

so dated that they almost feel fresh again, but readers at the time Hornung was writing must have been annoyed by such expressions as "In for a penny, in for a pound" and "the devil take his own" cropping up so often.

Still, Hornung knew how to keep a story moving along, making up for some of the faults in his writing. I'm still looking forward to reading his Raffles stories, for which he is best known. It was perhaps a mistake to read this one first, and I only did so because it was written before the Raffles stories. It's not surprising, though, that this book is so little discussed or read today.

Joey Brockert says

Mr. Cole takes a boat to Australia during the gold rush. He finds little gold, so he goes back home. As it happens, he gets on the same boat he came out on, the 'Lady German.' Whereupon he meets Eva Denison. He does not immediately fall in love, but he does eventually. She is being escorted back to England by her step-father, Jorges Santos.

The boat is not just taking some folks back to England, but has a secret cargo, and, as it happens, catches fire and is lost at sea. Mr. Cole, it appears, is the only survivor of this tragedy. There are some hints of the coming events, but none that explain the full extent of what is occurring.

The story explains Mr. Coles survival and his life in London, where Mr. Cole is feted and praised as the survivor to distraction. Etc.,etc., the events happen and everything turns out for good because others have evidence and wit to realize what is happening, so save the day.

This not a swashbuckling tale, or detective fiction, but it could be one or the other to my mind. It was inetesting to hear.

Kailey (BooksforMKs) says

A marvelous adventure story with plenty of twists and turns! The writing is great, and the plot moves quickly with plenty of hair-raising danger. Hornung is a master at painting lovable scoundrels and villains that you love to the point where you actually want them to succeed in their crimes and escape the police! Excellent characters balanced on the sides of good and evil!

I was disappointed in the portrayal of the one female character though. She was just a perfect porcelain doll with no color or life for most of the book.

Ellen says

Fluffy fluff. Fun but not much too it. The end has a bit of a surprise.

Aušrin? says

?sigijau elektronin? knyg? skaitykl? ir reik?jo j? kažkaip išbandyti – paeksperimentuoti. Taip atsitiktinai paspaudžiau ant „Dead Men Tell No Tales“ failo. Padidinau šrift?, sumažinau paraštes, pakeitin?jau

apšvietim?. O kad jau prad?jo skai?iuoti statistik? šiai knygai, nusprendžiau j? pa?i? pirm? ir skaityti elektroniniu formatu. Skaitydama vis labiau džiaugiausi savo pirkiniu ir vis labiau vargau su knyga. Geriau neprad?siu liaupsinti skaitykli?, o pereisiu tiesiai prie to, kas mane vargino knygoje.

Angl? kalba. Ne, ne d?l to, kad aš angliškai prastai suprantu (yra sakan?i?, kad atvirkš?iai – mano angl? kalba labai gera). Tiesiog ši angl? kalba buvo labai ne?prasta. Vis tik knyga parašyta XIX amžiaus pabaigoje ir tuo metu rašybos taisykl?s buvo visai kitokios. Ir kalbos stilius kitoks. Tod?l buvo sunku priprasti ir perprasti tekst?.

J?rininkyst?. Kažkada bandžiau paskaityti Žiulio Verno roman? „Penkiolikos met? kapitonas“. Nepabaigiau. Nepatiko visas tas techniškas laiv? ir j?rinink? gyvenimo vaizdavimas ir nusprendžiau, kad tai knyga berniukams. Pra?jo štieki met?, o ši tema vis dar nepatinka. („Karib? j?ros piratai“ nesiskaito, juk ten piratai.) O dabar pabandykite ?sivaizduoti, kad angliškai pirm? kart? skaitote apie laivo sandar?. Pus?s žodži? reikšm?s net ne?sivaizdavau, o kita pus? primin? kitus žodžius, kurie tokiamo kontekste nenaudojami.

Ta?iau XIX amžiuje b?ti j?rininku buvo pats didžiausias gyvenimo nuotykis. Pavojingas, bet labai viliojantis. O dar ir pelningas. Akivaizdu, kad berniukai svajojo tapti j?rininkais ir paaug?, vien? ar kit? paskat? vedini, steng?si tapti laivo ?gulos dalimi. Kelion?s ir pažinimo džiaugsmas dar ir dabar traukia žmones. O tie, kurie negali sau leisti keliauti arba bijo išš?ki?, imasi skaityti kit? išgyventas ir aprašytas istorijas.

Prisipažinsiu, net skaitydama knyg? sunkiai gal?jau prisiminti, kas joje vyksta. Matyt kaltas patirties tr?umas toki? tekstu? skaityme. Dar ir d?mesio nesutelkimas (važiuojant traukiniu dar reikia ir savo stotel? nepravažiuoti, ne tik pask?sti knygoje). Per daug nenusivyliau, puikiai tiko skaityklei išbandyti.

R.L. says

I'm surprised that the ratings are so low and that the reviews tend towards the negative for this book.

I thought it was a very engaging story and revealed quite a bit about English mores and manners at around the turn of the (20th) century.

There's a hard-boiled plot that starts with a disaster at sea. There's stolen gold and gun-play. There's suspense, there's a good guy, some really bad guys, and at least two complex characters who contain a modern amount of both good and bad. One of whom is a dame. Wait, I don't think that word came into fashion until a couple of decades after this book was written. But, still, it seems to fit. :)

What's not to like?

The only caveat is: the n-word is used several times in the book, so if it offends you, better go on to something else.

Recommended, especially for people who enjoy fiction that was fashionable in its day.

Kimbolimbo says

The title of this book is way more interesting than the actual book. I love saying it with a graveling voice and no inflection at all (maybe I mean monotone). There were moments though in this book where the tempo would pick up and something exciting would happen, but for the most part it was rather dull. The first 10 chapters were quite particularly dull and the then things got a bit more energetic and the whole point of the story started to emerge. But still it dragged here and there and ended a bit stronger than the rest of the story seemed to suggest.

????? ?????? says

It was an ok read. Not brilliant but not too bad. i'd be looking into other works of the author.

Don Voorhees says

Librivox

Eliza says

When I read this book, it was on an old 1930's copy, to which, I think, only added to the old story. The book has a beautiful language to it, and each word delicately paints the picture of every moment from his departure on the ship, to the very terrible moment his plans of a smooth voyage take a turn for the horrible. I had to read and reread the way he describes what he saw happening here, only because I was so taken aback at the details.

Every moment in this book is plagued by some unexpected event, and held my attention through every mysterious moment up until the very surprising end.

Zsak says

Not a bad story. I did enjoy it more than the Raffles tales but that's just me.
