



Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson

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In February 1676, during King Philip's War, the frontier village of Lancaster, Massachusetts, was attacked by a party of Nipmuck Indians and completely destroyed. As relief from Concord approached, the attackers withdrew, taking with them 24 captives, including Mrs. Mary Rowlandson and her three children.

For almost three months the little family was forced to live with their captors and endure exposure to a New England winter. The youngest child, who had been injured during the attack, failed to survive. Eventually ransom was paid and the family released.

Mrs. Rowlandson's account of her experience was published in 1682. It became a "best-seller" of its day and created a new literary genre, the captivity narrative. Such accounts were in part responsible for the mistrust and hatred of the Indians that plagued the country for centuries. It is also the first publication in English by a woman in the New World.

Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson Details

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Author : Mary Rowlandson

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From Reader Review Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson for online ebook

Mel Foster says

I actually read it on Gutenberg(thank you David Widger and helpers). Great little book, and valuable in many ways. It gives insight into both the Puritan and the native world view and culture.

Never do you see Mary shake her fist at the unfairness of life. I can't help but think that her world view and perspective are healthier and more profitable for a fulfilling life than that of most of us today.

I had to chuckle at the passage about her being delivered from the habit of smoking a pipe. First, for the narrator I had come to know, smoking a pipe was quite incongruous to the image I had developed. But more importantly, her argument against smoking was not about wasting money, or health, but wasting TIME.

Wow! What would she say about today's social media and gadgets?

Jerrica says

I hate Puritans.

Evelyn says

I can't imagine living through such a nightmare. This book is the record of Mary Rowlandson's capture and captivity by some Native Americans in the year 1676. Her husband, three children and several friends and relatives from her town were also taken, though they were all separated and she only saw some of the others from time to time.

She records the daily circumstances of her captivity in a very frank manner and describes how her faith in the Lord helped her to bear up under her afflictions. Her captors were a rather interesting people. Some of them were very nice and kind to her, and others were horribly cruel. I thought it was interesting that though some of them mistreated her terribly, she makes it clear that "yet not one of them ever offered me the least abuse of unchastity to me, in word or action." Rowlandson ends her record by saying, "Before I knew what affliction meant, I was ready sometimes to wish for it...For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth...but now I see the Lord had his time to scourge and chasten me."

On a side note, I think it is important to read historical memoirs such as this in the context of the time in which it was written. Don't judge Rowlandson by the rather strict guidelines on tolerance and political correctness that we have today or you'll miss the point of this book.

Ceola Daly says

2.75

I read this for my American Genres class and haven't yet studied it, but after reading it I think there will be a lot to unpack so I'm excited!

Robin says

Mary Rowlandson was a European captive of Native Americans who kidnapped her and her children and held them hostage. She survived plenty of atrocities, including slavery, witnessing people's murders, and holding her son as he died in her arms. This is her testimony in book form and apparently, in *Ye Olde Puritan Tymes* it sold like hotcakes, because even 350 years ago, nothing sold readers on a book quite like kidnapping and torture: hence, the American captivity narrative (ah, our great American enduring racist legacies!).

I dunno, what do I say about this? It's difficult to read and even more difficult to review. Mary prays her way through hell and back, just like any dutiful Puritan woman would, but despite all of that, I still finished the book thinking that she was kind of an annoying asshole.

Sarah says

Wait - this woman essentially goes through hell and back, and she manages to hang onto her *knitting* the whole time? I'm calling shenanigans.

Jimmy says

Written about 1675, this is probably the most famous of the captivity narratives. It's a slog to read with the long paragraphs, Biblical quotes, and archaic language. I understand the Biblical info was added later by others. As always, the particulars of the truth of the narrative is somewhat in doubt.

Then there are the occasional lines like this one: "That night they bade me go out of the wigwam again. My mistress's papoose was sick, and it died that night, and there was one benefit in it—that there was more room."

Chelsea Rae says

I read this in my freshman year of college -- about 6 years ago, which is kind of crazy to think about. I remember really liking it then, and that hasn't changed. Rowlandson's narrative, however much of it is hers, is incredibly flat; she uses the same even tone to describe the murder of her children and the process of broiling broth. I'm really interested in hunger through the book, both Rowlandson's own and the way native people are consistently figured as ravenous and gaping. Paired with: Mauss's *The Gift* (discussion re: economies of debt, non-Marxist economic systems, conceptualizations of reciprocity and obligation), Alexie's "Captivity," & Erdrich's "Captivity."

Patricia says

This short historical narrative was an interesting read, both historically and spiritually. Mary Rowlandson was captured by Indians in the 1600's and held captive for eleven weeks until she was ransomed. Stripped of all comforts, and losing sight of all human help, she was able to endure her captivity only through her strong faith in God. Instead of dwelling on the hardships she faced daily, she continually traced the goodness of God in keeping her safe from even further harm.

"Yet I see, when God calls a person to anything, and through never so many difficulties, yet He is fully able to carry them through and make them see, and say they have been gainers thereby. And I hope I can say in some measure, as David did, 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted.'"

"Now the heathen begins to think all is their own, and the poor Christians' hopes to fail (as to man) and now their eyes are more to God, and their hearts sigh heaven-ward; and say in good earnest, 'Help Lord, or we perish.' When the Lord had brought His people to this, that they saw no help in anything but Himself..."

Unity says

Interesting. I've read this twice and I still can't sit through the entirety. Mind you this is roughly thirty pages and it still takes me a couple of takes to really understand and close read this. Rowlandson shows moments of terrible cruelty and yet she also shows empathy on both her behalf as well as her captors' behalf.

Mya says

I enjoyed this book. How fascinating it was to traveled back into time?

Paras2 says

honestly, I only read 5 "removes" and I wasn't much interested to follow. although there were horrifying and brutal scenes that thinking about them makes me shiver. the thought of a massacre and burning and blood. the scene where her child dies and the fate of her 2 other children is drearful. The thing that really vexed me was the Puritan ideas all over the text. I'm not anti-religion per se, but puritanism REALLY rubs me the wrong way. I actually get angry at some comparisons. like hell no you're not like that prophet, keep your shit together woman and stop your nonsense -__-

all in all, captivity texts may give a good insight, though severely biased, into native Americans and the colonizers life style and affairs.

Tina says

Two stars only for the unintentional comic value. Ah, only a Puritan could write this. You wouldn't think a 50 page piece could be that redundant, but oh, how it is. She basically talks about the food she eats and how

much she loves god and how evil the Native Americans are, even though they don't treat her that badly. But there's lots of hilarious moments that are all like: THERE'S NO WAY THE INDIANS COULD SURVIVE ON THEIR OWN THIS MUST BE YOUR WILL GOD THANK YOU SO MUCH and then the best part is when she talks about stealing a piece of meat from a fellow captive, a little English KID, and she doesn't even try to justify it. Yes, I laughed, but I would never have read this racist junk if it weren't required for the exam.

Collier Brown says

The Lancaster slaughter which opens the narrative horrifies me still, as it was intended. But there's only so many times you can say, "knocked in the head," without unloading your reader's laughbox. I tried not to smile, I really did. Alas...

The "removes" Rowlandson uses to mark the episodes of her journey signify more than wanderlust or nomadic jimmy leg. Each clash and execution, each day without food or drink, each hour away from the comfortable naivety in which Rowlandson, until her captivity, had existed disturbs the fragile balance of her white, Protestant worldview and her own intuitive empathy. Perhaps the strongest tension throughout Rowlandson's narrative bestrides the momentary tenderness she feels toward those Indians who help her (acts of "human" benevolence opposed to the inferior image of the Indian she so desperately needs to believe in order for her world to make sense) and the escalation of her own zealotry the further removed she becomes (a defensive response to her own doubts about what she thinks she knows regarding these strong and proud Others).

Yes, we could talk ad infinitum about this narrative's revelation of the colonizer mind. But we remove ourselves from the HEART of the matter by politically contextualizing the hell out of what, essentially, is an internal catastrophe. Rowlandson's encounter with the "savage" reveals something far more savage within herself. So savage, in fact, that she cannot face it and removes herself from the empathetic realm altogether. Rowlandson hovers above this text, detached from herself, no longer human. She becomes, rather, an endless series of biblical verses--the opposite, in some ways, of the dusty, carpenter Christ she supplicates. Jesus, after all, rejected the testament of removal and suffered unto death for the sake of empathy.

Pamela Mikita says

A short direct account of her eleven weeks as an Indian captive. Sound s truly horrifying the attack she witnessed, the separation and loss of one of her children and the harsh treatment from her captors.
