



The Mockery Bird

Gerald Durrell

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En el más remoto confín del mar, sobre la línea imaginaria donde se encuentran y se confunden las aguas del océano Índico con las del Pacífico, se encuentra la isla de Zenkali, un lugar fresco y agradable, y tan lejano que se podría suponer que ni influye en el mundo exterior ni se deja influir por él. No obstante, en cierta ocasión, y durante dos meses de su historia, Zenkali despertó la admiración de todo el mundo civilizado y de gran parte del que aún no lo estaba, representado éste por periodistas, comentaristas de televisión y otra gente del mismo calibre...

The Mockery Bird Details

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Author : Gerald Durrell

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From Reader Review The Mockery Bird for online ebook

Ian Smith says

One of those few novels where the cover design so completely captures the spirit of the book. A tropical island of vibrant colour and cartoon characters, with a whiff of romance, and the outlandish beauty of creation. In fact, you could probably get away with purchasing the cover alone and you'd have a pretty comprehensive understanding of this delightful read, as the blurb on the inside cover rather unnecessarily provides the complete plot!

It's standard Durrell - impossibly larger than life characters, engaging storyline, rich descriptive language of food and nature, humourous dialogue, and politically incorrect (somewhat paternalistic) caricatures. But all wrapped up in a passion for the preservation of the natural world, and a childlike wonder in the beauty, complexity and interdependence of the world we live in. A lovely read.

Elizabeth Mallory says

Loved it! Despite the time it was written, it does a good job going head-to-head with the colonial mindset (though there are some problematic things here and there) as well as against the colonial takeover of nature for our own uses. It's a delightful, funny mystery that weaves in environmentalism and the necessity of each species to its habitat.

Daniela says

Jak si tak vzpomínám, snažila jsem se tuto knihu ?íst už kdysi d?ív, ale asi pro ni nebyl ten správný ?as. Ten nastal až nyní a musím ?íct, že jsem si ji skute?n? užívala. Kéž by bylo na sv?t? co nejmén? lidí jako je Looja a co nejvíce jako Foxglove, Hannibal, Králík a Audrey. P.S. Bez Droom? by to nejspíš taky nešlo.

Irene Lazlo says

Debo confesar que al principio me cortó un poco el rollo el hecho de que este libro no estuviera contando en primera persona ninguna peripecia de Gerald Durrell. Los primeros capítulos estaba esperando que apareciera el naturalista de un momento a otro hasta que me dí cuenta de que era ficción. Es una buena novela de aventuras y me gusta el mensaje de proteger la naturaleza (tanto fauna como flora) y el argumento resulta realista. Lo que más me ha gustado, como siempre con este autor, son los personajes. Son todos muy distintos y bien coloridos y llenos de personalidad. La perspicacia de Durrell al describir a las personas es fantástica. En general, un libro recomendable para el verano si te gustan las aventuras.

Mitch says

If you like Gerald Durrell, you'll love this. I've read a lot by him and didn't even know he'd written a novel...so was delighted to find one existed.

As usual, Gerald combines very quirky characters with his love of animals and ecology. His sense of humor shines through and makes this an enjoyable read. It doesn't take itself too seriously. I recommended it to friends and three people have read it since...and all loved it!

Paola says

Non é un capolavoro intendiamoci, ma come Durrell sa trasmettere con la sua scrittura il grande amore e rispetto che ha (aveva, morto nel 1995) per il mondo vegetale ed animale in pochi lo sanno fare. Sarebbe bello che tanti progetti di scempi e distruzioni perpetrati dalla nostra specie alle spese di tutte le altre avessero un finale come in questo libro, ma purtroppo la realtà é un'altra. Noi, specie homo sapiens, questo mondo non ce lo meritiamo, no proprio no. Ma arriverà quel giorno che imploderemo e resteranno, uniche forme di vita, insetti e batteri che festeggeranno, e brindando, con quello che brindano insetti e batteri, diranno: "e anche questi son passati, adesso al lavoro ché c'abbiam da ricostruire tutto quanto! evviva!"

Robert says

I'm quite a Gerald Durrell fan, having read all his books. When one is a prolific writer - he wrote one book a year purely just to make money - you expect quality to dip and a Durrell does have a handful of weak books. The Mockery Bird is his second work of fiction and not one of his best.

The story is a cautionary tale about the delicate environment. The mockery bird's droppings help sustain a species of moth and a specific plant and it's up to an environmentalist to stop the bird from being destroyed.

The message is clear but the reader has to wade through cliched situations, characters and dialogue in order to understand that eco-systems can't be destroyed. Approach this book with caution.

Vojta Kabelka says

At first sight a picturesque satire depicting a tropical paradise on the island of Zenkali. But after a few pages, a reader starts to dive into deeper and ageless issues our mankind has always faced -- intrigues, power, self-profit etc. These catches of our society are even more painful for a reader when present in such a sacred thing as nature and its protection.

Although this book concerns important and serious matter; it's still funny, witted and full of beautiful descriptions that are easily visualised in a reader's head.

resultarle de utilidad, desde el soplado de cristal hasta la construcción de granadas de mano; Mr. Damien, el encargado del periódico local, que se imprime con tantos fallos y erratas que es más un chiste que un medio de comunicación; el siniestro y manipulador Looja; o el doctor Fellugona, que cuida del último y solitario árbol ombú que queda en la isla. A todos ellos, y a muchos más, conocerá Peter, el protagonista, cuando lo envíen a Zenkali como ayudante del gobernador. Pero es un momento muy delicado: de pronto, a alguien se le ha ocurrido la idea de construir un aeropuerto que cambiará para siempre la vida de Zenkali y sus habitantes... ¿será para bien, o para mal? ¿Hasta qué punto alterará la nueva construcción el futuro de la isla? Sólo el pájaro burlón, una especie autóctona de Zenkali, que fue adorada por una tribu nativa en tiempos pasados y que los colonizadores cazaron hasta extinguirla, tiene la respuesta.... ---> Sigue leyendo esta y otras reseñas en <http://www.eltemplodelasmilpuertas.com>

Iona Stewart says

At first I was disappointed by this book since it was not written in the "I" form like most of Durrell's books, and it was not as laugh-aloud funny as most of them.

But when I got into it, I began to appreciate it better. It is the story of Peter Foxglove, who is sent out as an assistant political advisor to the island of Zenkali, The colourful King of Zelkali is called "Kingy", and the cast of the book is composed of various other eccentric and amusing characters, including a female Reverend who is not exactly meek and mild.

There are two opposing tribes on the island called the Ginkas and the Fangouas. The God of the Fangouas was a curious bird termed the Mockery Bird, which had been eaten to extinction by the French. (The French are notoriously fond of their food.)

At the same time as the Mockery Bird became extinct, a peculiar tree, called the Ombu tree produced a fruit that formed an important part of the Mockery Bird's diet: These trees also vanished except for one old tree.

There is a "baddy" in the book too, the evil Looja, and a disgusting unkempt scientist, Droom.

The British Government is planning to turn the island into an important military installation, and this will involve building a dam and an airfield.

Peter gets together with a sympathetic girl called Audrey and together they make an amazing discovery involving the Mockery Birds and Ombu trees.

This turned out to be quite an entertaining and enjoyable story with a moral associated with wildlife preservation, which was one of Durrell's areas of expertise.

I should warn you that some of the words used by Durrell are not today *comme il faut*, or politically correct.

The book is actually quite good, just not hilarious like many of Durrell's previous writings.

Jan says

The four star rating doesn't necessarily reflect the quality of the book, more of the enjoyment I got reading it.

I have read several of Gerald Durrell's books, and have enjoyed them all. All but this one have been real accounts of his time in foreign lands in the 40's and 50's collecting animals for his zoo. So that was what I was expecting when I opened this book.

Instead, this is a work of fiction. Written in 1981, but with the feeling of the 1950's, it is set in a fictional island, Zenkali, where the Indian and Pacific oceans meet. It is placed currently administered by Britain, but at the point of achieving self government. It is ruled by King Tamalawala III, known as "Kingy" by his people. Two tribes on the island worship different gods, one the dolphin, and the other the Mockery Bird, now extinct since the previous French rulers had hunted it for food. The island is populated by some of the most eccentric and hilarious characters you could imagine. The British Governor and his wife, the reverend of the local church, the various political characters.

The plot revolves around the arrival of Peter Foxglove to be the assistant of Hannibal Oliphant, Kingy's Political Advisor. With self-government about to happen, the island had done a deal to build an airstrip to allow British troops to be based there, and would need to flood a valley to build a hydro-electric dam to provide a reliable electric supply. Shortly after Peter's arrival, he visits the valley that will be flooded, and finds 15 pairs of Mockery birds.

Pandemonium ensues - with environmentalists, journalists, religious leaders, politicians etc from all over the world all thrown for a loop. When the birds are connected to the lifecycle of the trees that make up the entire economy of the island, how can the airstrip and dam project go ahead?

This was a laugh out loud funny book for me in several places. The characters absolutely made the book. While the story was a little out there in places, Durrell comments at the end that all of these made up creatures and their lifecycles are based on even stranger true occurrences from nature.

Zai Bálint says

one of those few books I can reread once every month
