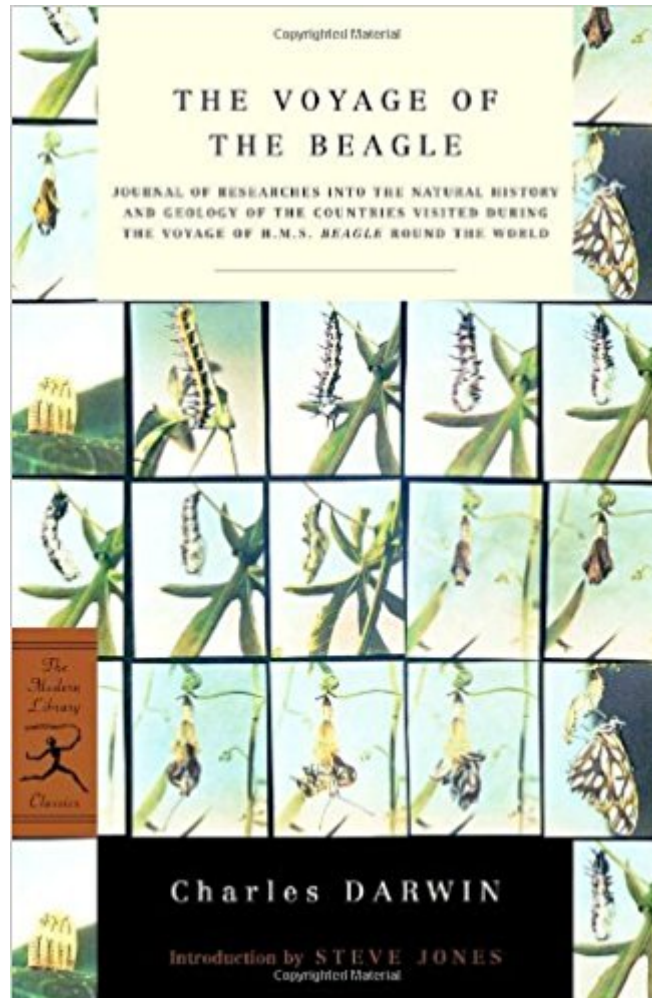




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The Voyage Of The Beagle



Synopsis

In 1831, Charles Darwin embarked on an expedition that, in his own words, determined my whole career. The Voyage of the Beagle chronicles his five-year journey around the world and especially the coastal waters of South America as a naturalist on the H.M.S. Beagle. While traveling through these unexplored countries collecting specimens, Darwin began to formulate the theories of evolution and natural selection realized in his master work, The Origin of Species. Travel memoir and scientific primer alike, The Voyage of the Beagle is a lively and accessible introduction to the mind of one of history's most influential thinkers.

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Customer Reviews

In 1831, Charles Darwin embarked on an expedition that, in his own words, determined my whole career. The Voyage of the Beagle chronicles his five-year journey around the world and especially the coastal waters of South America as a naturalist on the H.M.S. Beagle. While traveling through these unexplored countries collecting specimens, Darwin began to formulate the theories of evolution and natural selection realized in his master work, The Origin of Species. Travel memoir and scientific primer alike, The Voyage of the Beagle is a lively and accessible introduction to the mind of one of history's most influential thinkers.

Steve Jones is professor of genetics at University College, London. He is the author of Darwin's Ghost and The Language of Genes, among other books. He lives in London.

I was surprised at how easy this is to read! I was particularly interested in Tierra del Fuego and the Falkland Islands, having just returned from a trip to that area. Also, I am reading another book about the area, "The Uttermost Part of the Earth", written by a man born there in the mid 1800s, son of a missionary. It has been interesting, reading the books together, because both authors share many experiences, but with often differing opinions. Darwin's descriptions of the geography and the wildlife are wonderful. My one complaint (and it's a big one) is that this is supposed to be the "Illustrated Edition" and there is not one illustration in the e-book. Still, I have really enjoyed the book, and encourage others to try it.

When I bought this, I missed the part about it being an abridged version. I gave it away and ordered the real thing

I learned a lot about Darwin in this book that I simply didn't know beforehand. The most important is what an exceptional writer he was. If he had never published his Origin of Species and become famous by it, this book would still be a classic, if not of science, than certainly of literature. His prose, while necessarily more pedestrian, reminds me more than anything of the prose of another famous naturalist, Thoreau (who actually quotes the "Naturalist Darwin" in Walden from this book regarding the natives of Tierra Del Fuego). The "scientific detail" cited by another reviewer did not bog down the prose at all, a remarkable feat....a talent also found in Thoreau. The famed passage on The Galapagos was indeed interesting. But the most scientifically intriguing passages, I found, had to do with barrier reefs and atolls and how they come to be...I almost said "evolve"....But perhaps that would be premature for this book. In any event, I've never read a scientific account so riveting and fascinating as Darwin's on this subject given herein. But, as I say, I learned quite a bit about Darwin as a young man, ready for adventure, risks, and brimming with curiosity. He is almost as much a poet as scientist in some passages, quoting Shelley at one point, and he fortifies his narrative with a poignancy absent in most scientific accounts. This stylistic flavour is evident in many passages, but I'll just proffer one from the end of the narrative: "In my walk I stopped again and again to gaze upon these beauties, and endeavoured to fix in my mind and for ever, an impression which at the time I knew sooner or later must fail. The form of the orange-tree, the cocoa-nut, the palm, the mango, the tree-fern, the banana, will remain clear and separate; but the thousand beauties which unite these into one perfect scene must fade away: yet they will leave, like a tale heard in childhood, a picture full of indistinct, but most beautiful figures." (P.444, in my edition) Whether as poetic or scientific, this work is virtuosic and unsurpassed in its seamless

melding of the two. I'll leave the reader to decide which s/he enjoys the most.

This wonderful book is produced with beautiful and appropriate illustrations to accompany Darwin's text. The cover is sumptuous and the book is very large and heavy. It arrived in England amazingly quickly from its American seller. Nothing like this would appear to be available from an English seller so I am amazed at how well the the market place works

I was glad to find that the Kindle version contained both illustrations and footnotes, just as the bound book does. The tale, itself, makes one want to hie to a travel agency and book passage following the exact route of the Beagle. Darwin's ability to draw you into his fascination with the natural world is astounding, detailed, marvelous. It's beautiful. While I'll always prefer bound books, I have come to love the Kindle versions of books. If nothing else, it's a somewhat less expensive way of finding out whether or not you want to pay full price for the bound book.

Although this journal is nearly 200 years old, it continues to be one of the most important pieces of world literature. I was particularly interested in Darwin's exploration of the Andes Mountains. He takes us with him as he observes the fossil deposits on the mountain pass between Chile and Argentina. He speculates about how former seas were uplifted thousands of feet above sea level. In our era in which various groups debunk Darwin and much of modern science, it is marvelous to see how in the 1830s humble Darwin stretched his knowledge and imagination to understand the dramatic history of our planet.

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