



Fluke: Or, I Know Why the Winged Whale Sings

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After reverently lambasting the most cherished rites and credos of virtually every one of the world's major religions in his transcendently hilarious novel *Lamb*, the one and only Christopher Moore returns with a wild look at interspecies communication, adventure on the high seas, and an eons-old mystery.

Marine behavioral biologist Nate Quinn is in love -- with the salt air and sun-drenched waters off Maui ... and especially with the majestic ocean-dwelling behemoths that have been bleeping and hooting their haunting music for more than twenty million years. But just why do the humpback whales sing? That's the question that has Nate and his crew poking, charting, recording, and photographing any large marine mammal that crosses their path. Until the extraordinary day when a whale lifts its tail into the air to display a cryptic message spelled out in foot-high letters: Bite me.

No one on Nate's team has ever seen such a thing; not his longtime partner, photographer Clay Demodocus, not their saucy young research assistant, Amy. Not even spliff-puffing white-boy Rastaman, Kona (the former Preston Applebaum of New Jersey), could boast such a sighting in one of his dope-induced hallucinations. And when a roll of film returns from the lab missing the crucial tail shot -- and their research facility is summarily trashed -- Nate realizes that something very fishy indeed is going on.

This, apparently, is big, involving dangerously interested other parties -- competitive researchers, the cutthroat tourist industry, perhaps even the military. The weirdness only gets weirder when a call comes in from Nate's big-bucks benefactor saying that a whale has made contact -- by phone. And it's asking for a hot pastrami and Swiss on rye. Suddenly the answer to the question that has daunted and driven Nate throughout his adult life is within his reach. But it's waiting for him in the form of an amazing adventure beneath the waves, 623 feet down, somewhere off the coast of Chile. And it's not what anyone would think.

It must be said: Christopher Moore's *Fluke* is a whale of a novel.

Fluke: Or, I Know Why the Winged Whale Sings Details

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Author : Christopher Moore

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From Reader Review Fluke: Or, I Know Why the Winged Whale Sings for online ebook

Libby says

"Nate wouldn't have been more surprised if he'd walked in on a team of squirrels building a toaster oven." - a quote worth repeating.

I'm giving this one 5 stars because it was simply a delightful read from beginning to end. Christopher Moore tackles the scientific mystery of whale song in his own unique way. This book is wildly creative and funny while being surprisingly well researched. It appears that Mr. Moore spent a fair amount of time with biologists and whale researchers in Hawaii preparing to write this book.

In Fluke Moore takes a serious topic and blends in just the right amount of absurdity. The story is intriguing and well-paced. I loved the characters, loved the whales, laughed aloud and just had a lot of fun with this book. I especially enjoy Moore's gift for simile and visual imagery.

I'd recommend this to anyone who enjoys Douglas Adams, Terry Pratchett and/or Kurt Vonnegut – all masters of absurd humor and keen observers of humanity. Moore sits comfortably in their ranks and I'm glad someone suggested his books to me.

Omar says

I love Christopher Moore.. this is my fifth book of his, but this one fell short for me. The story is of a scientist who studies whales and their songs. He has worked many many years in the field and when he sees the words "BITE ME" on the tail of one of his whales he is determined to find out how it is even possible. Things are further complicated when the town crazy informs him that the whale he saw called her and asked her to tell him to come visit the whale and bring a pastrami on rye sandwich. There are a few memorable characters such as the Jersey boy who claims he is Hawaiian and a Rastafarian or the assistant who is smoking hot, but slightly not human. In the end it was an interesting read, slightly humorous, but not one of my favorites.

Mikah says

This is the first book I have read by Christopher Moore, and I was really surprised at how much I enjoyed it. It is about Nate Quinn, a biologist who is studying humpback whales trying to figure out the meaning of their song. Odd things start to happen, though, like finding a whale with 'Bite Me' painted on its tale and somebody breaking in and trashing his lab. While trying to figure out who would want to sabotage his research he starts to question how much anybody could even care about the work he has done for the last 25 years, and realizes that even if he finds the meaning in the song, nobody would ever believe him. Throw in a few near death experiences, a cast of the most eccentric and eclectic characters I've ever experienced, and Killer whales named Kevin, and you've got a spectacular book that was far more enjoyable than I had expected.

Lyn says

I have yet to read a book by Christopher Moore that I did not like, that failed to entertain and enlighten and to simply be a very enjoyable good read.

Fluke is no exception.

This is the story of a couple of marine biologists who have spent decades studying humpback whales and who really just want to know why they sing. From here we get taken on another Christopher Moore ride that is as hilarious and mind bending as the last.

Is he the American Neil Gaiman?

I like them both and can see the similarities both in style and theme. Fluke is a fun book with some scientific weight to it, but it never gets bogged down in too much explanation and remains to the end just another great book by Moore.

Daniela says

Christopher Moore is brilliant. He is so smart, it's insane and this book is proof of that. The fact that he can take a well-researched topic and turn it into this bizarre and magical adventure is pretty amazing. Honestly, I picked up this book so as to "get that one out of the way" as the plot didn't really interest me.

Boy, was I wrong.

The story is super bizarre but it's highly enjoyable and the characters are really well-developed (which so far seems to be a constant with this author and possibly the reason I like him so much). There are a ton of really fun moments in this book, Moore never disappoints.

It flops here and there and a few things don't make sense within the plot and that's why I'm not giving it five stars.

Also, the Conservation section at the end of the book is fantastic and I was really glad I read that. It shows not only his talent at writing but also how smart he is and how aware he is of dangerous environmental practices and the relatively easy ways in which we can help change them. I respect this man a lot, but these few pages just put him on a whole other level.

Heatherarleney says

The story starts with marine biologist Nate Quinn studying humpback whales when, all of a sudden, he sees one with "Bite me" written across its tail, which jump starts a whole series of increasingly odd events until things take a turn for the science fictional.

It's this turn that seems to bother people in other reviews I've read, but I thought it was intriguing, and Moore deserves credit for describing these otherworldly elements as quickly and effectively as he does.

Worldbuilding can easily weigh a novel down, especially when it begins over one hundred pages in. Instead I felt that, after wandering around giggling at itself for fifteen chapters, Fluke was finally going somewhere.

However, the vast majority of the story goes by with little to no real conflict and, once the danger finally presents itself, it disappears shortly afterwards doing almost no damage whatsoever. It feels like something really cool could have happened here, but we wound up with an otherwise decent yarn truncated by a clunky, poorly-tied knot. Everything is fine. Everything always was, for the most part, fine.

Full review [here](#).

Florence (Lefty) MacIntosh says

[“Suddenly, out of the water on either side of them came two huge penises, the males searching

Andrea Gatti says

Avendo letto quasi tutti i suoi libri, di Christopher Moore ormai ho due scaffali distinti:
Lo scaffale wow e lo scaffale poteva-essere-wow.

Questo libro lo colloco nello scaffale...

rullo di tamburi

Wow!

Un'idea balzana, come sempre, ma cotta a puntino.

Non so perché, ma stavo lasciando questo libro per ultimo (penultimo, alla fine, mi manca ancora *The Lust Lizard of Melancholy Cove*), m'ispirava non troppissimo, e per giunta avevo visto per sbaglio la copertina della versione inglese, dove rappresentavano il giovane Kona pedalando in una specie di balena-risciò, dandomi l'idea che ci sarebbe stato un rasta malvagio che attacca la gente da dentro a una balena con scritto BITE ME sul sedere (vabbé, pinna, non sedere).

Odio le copertine fuorvianti (e pare che anche Chris le odi, ma che gli editori l'abbiano sempre vinta).

Leggendolo invece, mi sono dovuto ricredere, è uno dei suoi lavori più ispirati, tra quelli meno famosi e spesso considerati (almeno da me) minori.

Non è ai livelli di *Lamb* e *Dirty Job* (che forse si meritano uno scaffale a parte), ma mi ha fatto morire dal ridere e ha dei personaggi davvero azzeccati. Anzi, pensandoci bene direi che tutti i personaggi sono ben riusciti e credibili.

Il difetto che gli trovo, e che purtroppo riscontro in molti dei suoi libri, è che il finale quasi sempre non è all'altezza del libro. Non c'è mai una grande minaccia, né uno scontro, né niente di particolarmente avvincente, bensì una risoluzione piuttosto lineare degli eventi e un happy ending a effetto. Purtroppo in *Fluke* si nota in particolar modo, l'ultimo 10% del libro perde un po'. Ma almeno è solo un 10%, e tutto quanto lo precede è invece di ottima fattura.

Peccato soprattutto perché me l'ero immaginato un bel finale coi fiocchi e infatti, mentre adocchiavo con

timore la percentuale di completamento, pensavo: "Ahi ahi ahi, mica c'è spazio per tutto quello che vorrei che accadesse".

Megan says

This is the second Christopher Moore book I've read, but it was certainly enough to get a handle on his typical plot line: Random guy gets involved in a strange situation he can't understand that relates to some type of odd deity, he falls for a very attractive girl who is involved in the weirdness, after very silly plot twists the couple find a way to "ride off into the sunset" together. While this type of explanation would usually put me off reading more of his books, his writing is done so well and the stories so inventive and hilarious that I can't help but enjoy them.

This book is about hump back whale researchers living in Hawaii, and while I'm no marine biologist the facts all seemed very well researched. A group of researchers are involved in figuring out why the hump backs sing and what they may be saying to each other, which throws the head researcher into a crazy adventure he could never have imagined. The hot girl is a research student working with the team, but she turns out to be much more. The plot is just so ridiculous you can't help but feel entertained.

If you're looking for something smart and funny, I would definitely recommend you give this a read.

Kogiopsis says

I've been putting off reading *Fluke*. It was recommended to me by one of my uncles, who meant well but whose method of recommendation was to spoil almost every major plot point - and who then sent me a copy as a high school graduation gift. Knowing a little something about Christopher Moore's brand of humor, I didn't make it a priority, the end result of which is that more than five years went by between when he sent it to me and when I finally opened it. And... while I regret putting it off for that long, because that was rude to my uncle, I wasn't wrong in my expectations of how I'd like the book.

Well... mostly.

As I was in the thick of it, I was almost unbearably frustrated with this book. Moore's humor tends towards the absurd, with a light dusting of satire, and while I can recognize all the parts that are supposed to be wryly funny, it doesn't work on me. At the same time, though, *Fluke* had a surprisingly mysterious plot, and I found myself *wanting* to read it, even though reading it wasn't all that enjoyable, just to figure out what the hell was going on.

And... then I got to the end, and I read Moore's notes and acknowledgements, and I realized that I couldn't be angry at this book, or even all that frustrated.

The thing is that *Fluke* is **meticulously and accurately researched**. To my knowledge, almost all of the basic biology and behavior information presented here is legitimate, and the name drops of scientists who aren't characters on the page are too. (It was a bit of a shock to see Bruce Mate, who I've met, mentioned offhandedly here.) Moore's description of Japanese whaling is on point, though 13 years out of date now for obvious reasons. He writes in his notes about spending two field seasons with a humpback research team in

Hawaii, which tells me that researching this book took at least two years, probably more - that's impressive for something which, I admit, I kind of expected to be dashed off and dismissive.

He also chose to end this book with a heartfelt plea for readers to care about cetacean conservation, and suggestions about organizations to support. That, and all his notes and acknowledgements, are stunningly classy and well-written, and here - in the last seven pages of the book - I found myself actually enjoying Moore's humor.

I did get hung up from time to time, though, on a few rather predictable things. The middle-aged male main character's love interest is his 20-something research assistant (view spoiler) and his ex wife divorced him to suddenly become a lesbian... and now does research with her partner, who is a caricature of feminist stereotypes and painful to read, though her pagetime is mercifully brief. A lot of the humor is sex-based, which I didn't mind until the instances where it was *rape*-based, and no, that's just not ever gonna be funny to me. And I mean... I expected to have these issues, and a whole lot more than that; but knowing it's coming doesn't make it any more pleasant.

I don't think Moore's fiction is for me, but... at the end of the day, I'm left with a hearty respect for him as an author and an artist. And if he ever writes nonfiction in the tone of his author's notes here, I'm in.

(Postscript: at the time that Moore wrote this, I suspect the term 'meme' didn't have the same meaning in internet parlance that it does today, and it did originate in science, but... the fact remains that this book has the sentence "Humpback whale songs are memes" in it and, in 2016, that is unintentionally one of the best jokes of the book.)

Amanda says

Soooo, it took me about 43 years to read this book. And upon thinking for a while and discussing it with Christina for a while I've come to the conclusion that my opinion is based on a two-fold rubric. (Can rubrics have folds?)

Anyway...

Point 1. Character Development.

The character development in this book sucked balls. And not in the good way, either.

Point 2. Plot.

The plot was fuckin' awesome. Except for the fact that it didn't start until a third of the way into the book. But whatev. It's still a clever story filled with science! (I love science!!!)

Let's discuss the above two points in more depth, shall we? As far as character development goes, I'm really disappointed. I mean, really. Amy is supposed to be some quirky gal whose personal slang consists of "mook," "jeepers," and other silly stuff. But she didn't develop that characteristic until we'd met her a half a dozen times. Another example, and I'll try to spare you details, occurs @ the end of the book. There's a reunion. And it should be romantic and touching, but it's not. It's just quick and flat. Why even bother? Pissed me off.

Alrighty, plot... Underwater city and additional theories of evolution--genius! Carbon based passenger vessels navigated neurologically--double genius! Loved it. Kick ass. Cool. And then they saved the world. No surprises there.

That's all I have to say, really. The book was ok, not great. I'll probably read another Christopher Moore, but only because Christina (et al) really love him, so I figure it's worth giving him a second chance.

Marvin says

After completing *Fluke*, I started to envision this fantasy scenario on how the novel came to be...

Book Publisher: Thank you for coming in today, Mr. Moore. I wanted to discuss the manuscript you sent us.

Christopher Moore: Yes, of course. *The Song Cycles and Migratory Habits of Whales*. Did you like it?

BP: Well, liking it isn't really the point. It's about whales.

CM: And?

BP. No. I mean...It's really about whales. It's non fiction. Unfunny non-fiction.

CM: But that's my point! Everybody expects me to be funny all the time. I'm so funny people do not realize how much research I do on my topics. I have a serious side. I want to inform, to research, to make a serious contribution to society!

BP. But...your contract specifies a novel... a funny novel. I'm not sure people are ready for Christopher Moore the oceanographer. Isn't there some way you can change it. Put in a plot? Make it funny? Perhaps add a Rastafarian wanna-be and a crazy lady millionaire?

CM: I'll see what I can do.

Three weeks later:

BP: I just read your new draft. I'm glad you changed the title. I must say it is really funny.

CM: So what did you like about it?

BP: I loved the Rastafarian wanna-be. And I loved the sci-fi elements. That's a little different than your previous works. I have to hand it to you. I not only laughed a lot but I learned a lot about whales. Your research really is impressive.

CM: Thank you.

BP: And I loved that gotcha moment at the beginning where the marine biologist sees "Bite Me" written on the tail of the whale.

CM: I'm glad, because you were my inspiration for that part.

BP. Why, Than...Oh.

CM: Now, lets talk about my new manuscript that I sent you recently. *A Concise History of European Impressionist Artists and Their Models*

BP: Uh...Yeah...I wanted to talk to you about that...

Mauoijenn ~ *Mouthy Jenn* ~ says

Good book.

Some laugh or loud moments.

Not one of his best though.

Armand says

People swear by this guy, in a devotional sort of way. I was excited to try one of his novels, and frankly, I'm usually a sucker for otherwise human stories with some elements of the unexplained (see Tom Robbins, "Magnolia", or Lost). Moore's "Fluke" started out as no exception. I was engaged by the characters, laughed out loud a few times, and was hooked into these mysterious events and the promise of something larger. The insertion of scientific fact (mostly marine biology and humpback whales) and mysterious Defense Department goings-on only increased my interest. That same blend of factoids/anecdotes into somewhat bizarre fiction has caused me to tear through a few Chuck Palahniuk novels, and that's the sort of pace with which "Fluke" flies by. So, it can't be all bad. The story just lost me when it started explaining too much. I think I like my mysteries unresolved, or at least not so neat. Not to geek out too much, but I had this same feeling during the second season of Lost. I felt disappointed when too much was attributed to some psychology experiment and everyone stopped being afraid of going in the jungle. Here, there's a different explanation. And even though the second half of the book was entirely original, with its own absorbing twists and turns, it felt like a different book; like something I hadn't signed up for. All of the new developments started feeling less like originality and more like a cop out. The character development dropped off, replaced with fantasy/sci-fi explanations that I just didn't care for. It's still a funny, mostly engaging read, but I finished "Fluke" with that feeling that is never a sign of a book gone well: I didn't want more. In fact, I wish there had been less.

Jenniet Galvan says

I like reading books by Christopher Moore because they make me laugh out loud! And I like to laugh out loud. I also like them because they are generally pretty irreverent and I like irreverent. For a short time I thought I was going to be a scientist and majored in Biology so the whole science angle was appealing to me

and who doesn't like whales? Not to mention I have an irrepressible fascination with anything to do with the sea, making this book an automatic winner unless I was just bored out of my mind. I didn't even mind that it didn't have vampires in it. Actually with all of the vampire literature out there it was nice to find something that was interesting that DIDN'T have to do with vampires.

It was a nice mystery, science-fiction adventure for me. I got to go to Hawaii and hang out with some behavioral scientists, studying whales and then go to an underwater city filled with human-cetaceous mutants, not to mention the dictator with a messiah complex. It was a pretty nice little jaunt under the sea and I enjoyed it.

What I didn't like was the continual use of "I think something and then I say it" such as "Nate was suddenly cold, and when he opened eyes, he was pretty sure that his head was going to explode. 'I'm pretty sure my head is going to explode,' he said.". Once was okay and cute, but over and over just got on my nerves. It's a good thing I like stories about whales, even if they are written to propagandize. The political message wasn't all that bad and I do think saving whales is a good thing, I just don't like to be preached at as I was in the author's notes. It's okay, I still like Moore and this was a pretty good book and it made me laugh.

Yael says

So far, I haven't met a book by Christopher Moore that I've disliked. Or even merely had a lukewarm feeling for. *Fluke* is no exception. I mean, how can you *not* like a writer who produces such lines as "A centipede the size of a Pontiac had once lived in the bottom-right corner of the trunk but had long since moved on once he realized that no one was ever going to bother him, so he could stand up on his hind hundred feet, hiss like a pissed cat, and deliver a deadly bite to a naked foot"?

Moore writes about things he cares about -- and there are hundreds of them, from people to whales to fruit bats to island paradises to conservation issues to the inevitable jerks who make life so interesting, and on and on and on. In *Fluke* he gives us whales and their lives, and those who study them. But rather than the predictably over-emotional, politically charged, and buzzword rhetoric that makes up 98% of Green hyperbola on the subject, Moore gives us real people studying real whales -- and the real catastrophes and downsides frequently accompanying such studies.

Why do humpback whales sing? Marine biologist Nate Quinn and his crew poke, chart, record, and photograph huge, wet, marine mammals trying to find answers to that question. And then, one day, a whale lifts his tail into the air to display a cryptic message on his flukes: *Bite me*.

The problem is that only Nate saw that message. He's beginning to wonder if Hawaii's hot sun has baked his brains a little too thoroughly. Neither his longtime partner, Clay Demodocus, nor their young research assistant, Amy, not even their other assistant, addlepat, pot-smoking, white-boy Rastafarian Kona (a.k.a. Preston Applebaum) saw it. But later, when a roll of film comes back from the film lab with the crucial frame missing, the one that shows those flukes and the message on them, and his research facility is trashed, Nate begins to think there's more to this than a mere hallucination.

What can you say about this novel? Witty, irreverent, puzzling, fascinating, and surprising, *Fluke* is Moore at the top of his form -- and a great incentive to track down and read everything he's ever written.

Steve says

5 Oaks

Do you like mysteries?

Do you like to laugh?

Have you ever wondered why whales sing?

Did you ever wish you lived in Hawaii?

Did you ever wish you could see one of those white-boy poser Rastafarians get a bit of a stomping?...Hey now, don't be a hater...

Moore evokes beach people and the islands in this fun and fast moving tale. It's filled with his usual wit and wacky, but lovable characters, and leavened with a bit of a message (but, not preachy).

This is a book that will draw you in and leave you wanting more (no pun intended). Even though it's a mystery, it's just as good on the second reading.

David says

I liked Lamb so much that I immediately purchased another Christopher Moore novel to start reading. I will admit that this one was quite a bit more bizarre, but I enjoyed it just as much. There was a lot of interesting facts about whales and biology thrown in so seamlessly that before you realized it, you had learned something. Furthermore, there were many parts of this story that were laugh-out-loud funny and, like Lamb, I found it hard to put it down once I started. I found Christopher Moore to be capable creating multidimensional characters that you can actually empathize with as the story progresses. I definitely recommend this book if you're a fan of Moore's other stories.

DJ Harris says

Christopher Moore does it again! *Fluke: Or, I Know Why the Winged Whale Sings* by Christopher Moore is a very enjoyable read! I have enjoyed every Christopher Moore book that I've read. I HIGHLY RECOMMEND this book.

Preeti says

Why do humpback whales sing?

This is the basic theme behind the story contained in this book. I picked it up because whales are one of my favorite animals, and I have always loved listening to their singing. Also, I hadn't read a funny book in a while, and needed a break from the 'serious' stuff.

I have to say it: It's a whale of a tale!

The book starts out fairly normal, but then, takes a turn into the land of the zany. Really. You will have no idea what hit you. And that, truly, is the best part.

It's a pretty fast-paced read, and the humor is great! I especially loved the subtle humor and the innuendo. Always fun.

Author's Note (from the official site):

What do most people know about whales beyond that fact that they're big and wet? Not much, right? Well, having been a scuba diver for a long time, and lived next to the ocean for some twenty-five years, I thought, I really should learn more about these big wet things that keep swimming by. So I started learning about whales, and more important, the people whose business it is to learn about whales.

Something happens when you spend any amount of time on the ocean with people who have a less than conservative view of how one should make his living: you begin to feel that adventure is its own reward. You begin to measure experience, rather than sustenance, as the goal; and you begin to get a feeling for those adventurers you left behind in your childhood: those salty rascallions sprung from the imaginations of Jack London and Jules Verne and Robert Louis Stevenson -- even the twisted eccentrics of Joseph Conrad and the ancient undersea beings of H.P. Lovecraft. (And you begin, too, to wish you'd brought along some Dramamine.) As a writer, you get it, the same way that you got it when you were a kid, and there's not much you can do but share the adventures.

So I got it, and I'm passing it on to you, that "fear recalled in comfort" that is called the adventure story.

Have fun.

Sincerely,
Christopher Moore

My Note: Save the whales! Don't allow whaling!
