



I Met the Walrus: How One Day with John Lennon Changed My Life Forever

Jerry Levitan

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Imagine you're the world's biggest Beatles fan and you've just snuck into John Lennon's hotel room. But instead of being thrown out, inexplicably you're invited to spend the day with your idol. That's exactly what happened to fourteen-year-old Jerry Levitan in 1969. After hearing John was in Toronto for a "bed in," Jerry tracked him down at the King Edward Hotel and convinced the world's biggest rock star to sit down for an exclusive forty-minute interview. John talked candidly about war, politics, the scandalous *Two Virgins* album, and the supposed subliminal messages in his music.

Now, forty years later, it's all here: Jerry's once-in-a-lifetime adventure, illustrated by acclaimed artist James Braithwaite and featuring never before seen photographs of John and Yoko. Also included in the book is Jerry's memorabilia from that day—notes from John and Yoko, the secret code to contact him, drawings, John's doodles, and much more. Complete with an audio and video DVD of the interview that inspired the Academy Award-nominated film of the same name, *I Met the Walrus* is an immortalized one-on-one moment with John—a must-have for Lennon fans around the world, as well as anyone who has ever dreamed of meeting a hero.

I Met the Walrus: How One Day with John Lennon Changed My Life Forever Details

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Author : Jerry Levitan

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Ryan says

I went into this thinking it was a book about the Beatles, and that's not really true - it's more a book about Jerry Levitan that discusses the role the Beatles played in his life, and how one experience can become the defining moment of a person's childhood. True to that, the book's presented as a multi-media scrapbook, with the text being supplemented by photos from the time and a DVD, as well as some funky drawings and font choices. It's a very well put together book.

The main body of the book is taken up with young Jerry's interview with John Lennon, and how as a fourteen-year-old he managed to bluff his way into Lennon's hotel room to conduct the interview. That's an amazing story in itself, before you even worry about the content of the interview, which is pure Lennon - it's naive yet jaded, hopeful and energetic yet tinged with the sadness of realism.

Also enjoyable, for me at least, was the fact that the entire thing's set in Toronto - hearing Jerry recount taking the TTC to Sam's to buy records, and things like that, give it a personal touch that I felt made it easier to connect to.

One quibble I had, though? The title. Everybody knows the walrus was Paul.

Peacegal says

3.5 stars -- Levitan's enthusiasm for his subject matter is contagious. Join him in starstruck wonder while, as a young teenager, he manages to be granted an exclusive interview with the biggest stars on the planet--John Lennon and Yoko Ono.

While the writing is at times amateurish, it is so refreshing to read a music memoir that isn't tainted by cynicism or ill-will or attempts to "out-hip" the reader. Instead, the author simply brings readers into the fold; "An incredibly lucky and amazing thing happened to me, and I want to share it with you."

Roane Swindon says

It is difficult not to feel the excitement, innocence, and drive to change the world that Mr Levitan experienced before and during his interview with his idol, John Lennon. This autobiography will make you feel young again and perhaps inspire you to work on that revolution you wanted to be a part of when you were still young. Read my full review on my blog.

Brianna says

Interviewer: What's it like being a Beatle?

George Harrison: What's it like *not* being a Beatle?

Judging by the limited reviews of this book, it's a story only a Lennon fan would love (although I can't stop being a Lennon fan long enough to test that theory). But it shouldn't be.

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The author was 14 years old in 1969, the year John and Yoko (it was one word) came to his home town of Montreal to meet the press. Jerry calls upon his resourcefulness and youthful faith (in his quest and in his hero) to gain the name of Lennon's hotel, a press badge, and an audience with the man himself.

John Lennon responds the way we, his adorers, know he will. He is amused and he is amusing. John treats the boy's questions seriously (all of them -- the insightful, the mundane, and even the self-indulging on the part of the interviewer -- who is, I remind you, a 14-year-old boy). He is, most of all, appreciative and generous.

In short, reading this book was a way to spend more time with John Lennon, something all us fans desperately crave.

But, it was also time spent learning how innocence and ingenuity can make your dreams come true. And doesn't that strike a chord with everyone? Or shouldn't it?

Isha Sharma says

I loved this book! It was very informative and seeing everything from Jerry Levitan's perspective was very interesting and made me feel like I was living in that era. I'm a big Beatles fan so I would highly recommend this book to any other Beatles or Lennon fan. The book also comes with an awesome DVD, which was fun to go through. 4/5 stars

Julie_ian_curtis says

should be called ' i interviewed John when i was a kid'

Melissa Chalhoub says

I don't know. It's enjoyable in the way of walking through memory lane, remembering your favourite Beatles songs and stories.

I went through a Beatles phase myself, don't think I'll ever get out of it actually, I was that friend who'd put the Beatles on and tell anyone around about the story behind each song and each recording session. I still take it personally when someone doesn't enjoy the Beatles, but really it's only music and the Beatles were only people after all. So now I just enjoy the songs.

But reading this book, I couldn't forget that I'm in the head of a very self-centered teenager, thinking they're some kind of chosen prophet because he "understood" John. That somehow he's superior or special, because he's got good music taste, and I truly dislike music snobs. First half of the book was about Jerry's experience discovering the Beatles, and the second was about his story sneaking into John and Yoko's hotel room, and getting an interview. It could've worked as an article, it's a nice story, but I'm pretty sure that guy has been talking about that day for the past 50 years, retelling it to anyone he sees, cause he was chosen by John and that makes him special. And all I kept thinking was "get over it already".

Lisa says

Short book about a teenage boy living in Toronto, Canada who managed to get an interview with John Lennon and Yoko Ono while they were doing their "bed-in" in Toronto shortly after their marriage. Seems to have been written for those with limited knowledge of the Beatles. The author is one of the few I've read who is enthusiastic about Lennon/Ono's experimental albums such as "Two Virgins" and "Life with the Lions", and claims "Revolution #9" is his favorite piece on the Beatles' White Album. Fun.

#1 of 120 books pledged to read/review in 2016

Lisa Bennett says

I had read a review of I Met the Walrus on Amazon where the reviewer had expressed genuine regret at not having purchased the hard copy of this book; which comes with fun illustrations as well as a DVD containing the actual audio recording of the interview that the author (then 14 years old) conducted with John and Yoko. Thus I made up my mind to skip the Kindle version and go straight for the hardcover version, which was definitely the correct choice.

As a lifelong Beatles fan with my own stories of trying to get close to my heroes, I found this book an utter delight and very relatable. It offers a truly unique perspective of John Lennon that most of us have only dreamt of experiencing, and being able to actually hear a recording of the interview whilst reading along put a huge smile on my face. This book is a light and easy read that will not bring any new historical revelations to Beatles fans, but is still quite special in its own way.

Michael says

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?? ????" highly recommended for Beatles fans!

Luxvivens says

What a wonderful little book! I've been a fan of the Beatles, especially John Lennon, ever since I was little, so it's a bit of a surprise that I did not read this book until now. It's a great story both for Beatles fans or fans of John Lennon and just fans of people in general. Such a heart-warming story of a long-gone era in which it took hardcore fandom to be on top of the news concerning your star and you could pretend to be someone from the press by simply faking a phone call.

Gord says

This is a great telling of a series of events that profoundly affected one man's thinking and direction in life and what he did with the fruits of that meeting.

I greatly enjoyed the story and while the hero worship does wear a bit thin at times, all I have to do is imagine myself in the same situation to understand.

The book comes with a DVD copy of the Oscar-nominated short film that Levitan and two collaborators made from the Super-8 footage that he shot of John and Yoko. Wonderful stuff.

Marthe Bijman says

This is one of those books that you can reread and delve into again and again, since it is most beautifully designed, illustrated, produced and written. It is the memoir of musician, actor, film producer and lawyer Jerry Levitan, who, when he was a nerdy fourteen year-old, conned his way into an interview with John Lennon and Yoko Ono, an experience which changed his life. Levitan had been a fanatical Beatles admirer, and he could not let the opportunity pass to see Lennon face to face when he and Ono visited Montreal in 1969. So, with plenty of chutzpah and zero self-doubt he conned his way into the press briefing, and then got Lennon to agree to a private interview of some twenty minutes. The resulting media frenzy was as extreme as the amazement and disbelief of his family and friends. Years later, Levitan made an award winning film about his moment with The Walrus (Lennon). The book comes with a CD containing the audio of the interview (Lennon softly-spoken with a Liverpudlian accent), black and white footage with no sound (courtesy of Levitan's sister whose movie camera he had borrowed) and close-up photos (Lennon and Ono, both barefoot, dressed in white with long black hair). Even if you are not a Lennon fan, it is worth reading as a time capsule of Beatle-mania in the sixties. If you are, this is a must-have.

Ardi says

Aesthetically great book! The illustrations were great. Really admired Jerry's persistence of meeting Lennon. The interview was quite alright, but it felt great listening to the audio while reading the book. The experience was different than normal. Actually hearing Lennon's voice was thrilling. Wished I was born in that era just to experience a bit of Beatlemania, yknow. But, his love for the man went on for years, using it for his creativity and making an Academy Award nominated film. Since, a Film student myself, I think I could use

that inspiration to my craft one of these years. Mm, someday.

Crosby says

I wanted to read at least one book over the holidays but have little time so when my daughter Cami gave me this for Christmas, I thought it was the ideal book since it quite short and about a subject I have been interested in for 40 plus years--popular music. It served to re-kindle some of the feelings I remember having back in the 60's and also was a nice reminder that sometimes it happens that those who say you can't do something end up seeing you pass them by just because you want it bad enough. Levitan was (and is) over the edge devoted to Lennon but passion for something is seldom a trait for which one should have to apologize--he certainly doesn't and he doesn't need to. The book is written by him to celebrate his hero and it's obvious that's all that matters to him. This is barely a book in some ways and very much so in other ways--and therefore, for me, not something I choose to finalize with a rating.
