



# Gone Whalin'

*Conor Lastowka*

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Cormac McIlhenney is a college student with one minor problem: every other day, he's been waking up on a whaling ship in the nineteenth century. Which really wouldn't be that big of a deal if his roommate back in the present wasn't such a dick.

While Cormac attempts to make the most of his newfound world of harpoons, rum, and erotic scrimshaw, his roommate Vance is determined to exploit the situation for maximum profit. His unlikely partner? The corrupt, shillelagh-toting dean of their college.

Can Cormac survive in a time that is not his own? Can he turn around the fortunes of the most inept whaling ship on the seven seas? And exactly what the hell are Vance and the dean up to in his bedroom on the days he goes back in time?

Gone Whalin' is a hilarious novel full of pirates, wharf rats, stadium seating couches, cults, dogs wearing sunglasses, journalism scandals, sea shanties, and enormous whale genitals. Beat that, Moby Dick.

## Gone Whalin' Details

Date : Published November 4th 2013 by CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform

ISBN : 9781492966852

Author : Conor Lastowka

Format : Paperback 638 pages

Genre : Humor, Comedy, Science Fiction, Time Travel, Fiction

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## From Reader Review Gone Whalin' for online ebook

### Blow Pop says

Content warnings: Whale deaths, drug use, drug abuse, alcohol use, alcohol abuse, threats of genital mutilation by bear trap, loss of a finger, death by harpoon, death by chemicals, questionable ethics, exploitation

Firstly, I need to disclose that I received this book for free from a Rifftrax promotion (well probably don't need to but going to anyway).

Anyway, this book was a complete ride. From beginning to end. Like it started out kind of slow but slowly building momentum in how Cormac wound up in the position he was in. And at first Dean Frampton Q. Bickerstaff really confused me with his presence in the story. But as it gained steam and the plot really started going it made more sense.

And it's a pretty great concept. That every other time you go to sleep you wind up in a different time period (but continuously the same time period every time). Oh and that epilogue! I hope there is a follow up book to this because that would be awesome. I WOULD like to know exactly WHAT set off his sudden going into the different time period and how it was determined what time period he went to.

I also like the concept of pirating that we think of as being wrong and something completely different. Complete with inept captains and everything.

And how the author managed to merge two different time periods fairly seamlessly (the 1800s and 2000s). It didn't feel completely off that he was writing the two time periods. It was highly enjoyable (despite the time it took me to actually read it because I was only sporadically reading when I was tired and trying to fall asleep) and I'll probably wind up reading it again in the not so distant future.

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### Andrew says

I am familiar with Conor Lastowka's work on Rifftrax as well as the many humorous posts he makes on Twitter. So while I knew he could fire off some funny one-liners (contained within a 140 character limit), I was curious to see if his wit could be sustained for a 600+ page novel that encompasses two centuries, two very different settings and over half a dozen main characters. Happily, this was in fact the case. Short riffs turned into longer passages and recurring jokes. Clever turns of phrase become more developed narratives. And the entire six hundred and thirty-eight pages were a delight and a joy to sail through.

I usually try to give some sort of a plot summary in a review, but in this case I wouldn't like the pleasant madness of *Gone Whalin'* unfolding storyline to be spoiled. It's enough to know that the protagonist is an average, slightly-stoned/drunk college kid, Cormac McIlhenney, who inexplicably wakes up on alternate days in the belly of a 19th century whaling ship, leaving his unconscious body resting in the present day.

The parts of the book that were so appealing to me were the strange dual little universes that Lastowka creates. I loved the university setting with its joyfully corrupt dean, its spineless board, its population of stoners, minor drug dealers, painfully slacking students and opportunistic cult members. The section where

Cormac, his roommate and the college dean visited a local dive bar ended up being where I first learned how to use my Kindle's highlight function, because several of the passages were wonderfully and perversely funny, and needed to be remembered.

The other half of the book -- the adventures on-board the whaling ship -- is equally entertaining and enjoyable. That universe also has a fun cast of characters, who -- like the fellows in the present day -- are presented almost as over-the-top caricatures, but never as lazy or dull cliches.

There's something that reminded me of Douglas Adams about the book. I appreciated the way Lastowka initially presents an absurd premise but then sticks with it and drags every last possible drop of humor from it. His prose also had faint reminders of Adams, although with far more emphasis on whale penises than the Hitchhiker's author ever attempted.

*Gone Whalin'* is Conor Lastowka's first novel, but it certainly has the self-assurance of a work from a more mature writer. It has a casual and confident style which made it easy to jump in and out of. I'm looking forward to Lastowka's next novel. And if they ever film the movie version of *Gone Whalin'*, I pray that Karl Welzein is available to play Captain Anson.

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### **Tricia says**

I really enjoyed *Gone Whalin'* and it made me laugh a lot. That being said, I would venture a guess however that it would not be funny to everyone. 640 pages full of a bunch of morally corrupt, fairly stupid, severely alcoholic, selfish characters could be too much for some people, however I had no problem with it. The idea of the "antihero" seems so popular these days that I think I am just becoming immune to it. I would recommend this to anyone who is truly looking to escape into a completely implausible and ridiculous story with sporadic "cool" dogs and shillelagh beatings.

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### **Danny Reid says**

The book does a great job constantly topping its own strangeness. Peters out in the last quarter, with an especially underwhelming ending to boot. There are some great moments, but damn is it long.

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### **Sean Timm says**

Absurdist comedy in the vein of Douglas Adams' "Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy." Written by a TJ alum.

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### **Sugar Dodge says**

I purchased this novel because I happen to know that it's writer, Conor Lastowka, is a very funny person. How do I know this? Let's say that I am an enthusiast of RiffTrax commentaries. For those of you who don't know, RiffTrax is the online incarnation of Mystery Science Theater 3000, starring the team of the final three seasons, Mike Nelson, Kevin Murphy and Bill Corbett. Now, MST3K, especially in its last three seasons, is

incredibly funny. But I have to say that I think RiffTrax is a lot better, and one of the reasons is that they have at least two writers who are writing jokes that my generation (born in the 80s, grew up in the 90s) will appreciate and laugh at. Whenever I hear jokes that reference 8-bit Nintendo games or certain Saturday morning cartoons, I know that they had to have been written by either Lastowka or his writing partner, Sean. So that long, rambling paragraph explains WHY I bought the book.

Now, whether or not the book is actually funny and/or entertaining is a totally different thing. Just because somebody can write RiffTrax jokes doesn't necessarily mean that their humor will translate well into prose. I took this into consideration as I started reading the Kindle version yesterday (to get a head start on it while I wait for the paperback version to reach me,) and I gotta say that I forgot about any such consideration before I even finished the first chapter (or day.) Lastowka makes the funniest jokes I have read in prose novels in all of 2013. I don't want to give them all away, but this was the joke that pretty much locked the whole book for me.

"How does one measure something like "percentage of mobility loss on your right side" anyways? It sure looked like less than 90 percent every time Cormac saw him wheel by."

So yeah. If you're in it for the LOLs, which I definitely am, there are more than enough. It's rare when a book claiming to be a laugh-riot actually turns out to be a laugh-riot. Gone Whalin' actually delivers what it promises. So all aboard and argh, matey! I'm first in line for this and whatever comes after. Thumbs up and so on.

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### **Hayley says**

Hmm, not sure what to say about this book really. It was very long and quite possibly the most pointless book I've ever read.

Not to say I didn't enjoy it. Some parts were quite funny ad it's easier to get into once you understand that this book reads more like an extremely long cartoon/comic book rather than a solid novel. The majority of the book makes absolutely no sense. The characters are really quite horrible people who get themselves into completely absurd scenarios while simultaneously ingesting unholy quantities of drugs and alcohol. If this book had any semblance of realism, they would all be dead or in critical condition after the first few pages. Which is why I advised to think of it as a cartoon.

The parts where the character goes back in time were my favourite part but you still have to suspend disbelief to prevent yourself from quitting the book entirely. The whole thing reads like a frat-boy story night. Some jokes are funny, others are not, most of them are the kinds that 13 year old boys would enjoy the most (dick jokes, poop jokes etc.). While others are just plain offensive or in bad taste.

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### **Ben De Bono says**

One of the funniest books I've ever read. Despite being as long as it is, it never drags and the humor never stops

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### **Mike says**

Ehhh; there are hilarious moments in this book, and juuuuuuust enough that I kept reading, but not enough that I'm going to tell you to read it.

I listened to the author rip on Ready Player One in a podcast (dedicated to ripping on RP1), and wanted to see if he was a better author. The answer, I think, is that he's a crappy writer in entirely different ways.

This is a story about people you don't care about, doing amazingly stupid things, that you don't care about. Characters are introduced, even given some 1st person time, and then relegated to running jokes like: 'how is she still breathing.'

It clearly loves the insanity of things like Hitchhikers Guide, but didn't catch that endless jokes need to also have a bit of characters that we care about (love or hate) to keep readers engaged.

Good enough that I'd pick up something else by the author to see if he's gotten better.

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### **Alex says**

Never could really get into this book. I couldn't really connect with any of the characters, which seems to be what usually draws one into a good book. I received it as a Goodreads FirstReads giveaway and was glad to give it a chance, but the humor was a bit lackluster and the plot was topsy-turvy to say the least. Overall there may have been a laugh or two, but not really worth the long read. Also, not to beat a dead horse, but put away the thesaurus and word-of-the-day calendar long enough to get a better editor to tweak some of the grammar/spelling (I know some was intentional, but some was just bad form).

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### **Conor Lastowka says**

This is my book! Here's a blog I wrote about writing it. I hope you enjoy it!  
[https://www.goodreads.com/author\\_blog...](https://www.goodreads.com/author_blog...)

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### **Brandi says**

How the author came up with some of the storylines is beyond me. After the first 20 pages I said to myself "why are you reading this?" but I kept reading because it just kept getting crazier and crazier. Glad I downloaded this book from Amazon, I will tell people that if they are looking for a crazy adventure story (stadium couches, dogs with glasses, pirates, earwhacking, FQ, liquor and drugs) that you never thought could happen this would be the book.

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## **E.C. Marcon says**

Absolutely bonkers and a little too long, but tons of fun.

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## **Tom says**

I bought this being a fan of the author (rifftrax and his wiki - mocking books) but I just didn't get into the humor. A lot of it is based around wacky stoners causing chaos everywhere and descriptions of their slapstick humor, such as the room collapsing after they decorate it, setting a mouse free which gives people rabies, falling over after they smoke too much, etc. Very Beavis and Butt-head-ish. Might be funny in a sitcom but loses something in prose. It would be funny if your friends did it but not funny enough to be in a novel.

I've been thinking a lot about why I can't get into this when I like comedy stuff like Discworld and Mogworld, and I think you have to genuinely believe in and care about the characters first before you start laughing at their wacky plights, and this didn't go far enough in that.

For example I'm a big fan of the kindle-released Whatley Tupper/Mr Sturbulok comedy sci fi series, and I was expecting this to be like those. In them it was all about the characters and how weird but likable they were.

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## **C. Neagle says**

This is a fun book by one of the writers of Rifftrax and other MST3K goodness. It's big, but reads easy and although the laughs may not be at Hitchhiker's Guide levels, there are still plenty of them to be had as our slacker protagonist travels back in time every other day to have adventures on the poorly commanded whaling boat Levyathon. There are a few parts where you might (hopefully) be disturbed morally and ethically, but the book pulls through these sections admirably (well, at least it pulls through. Well, at least it harpoons them).

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