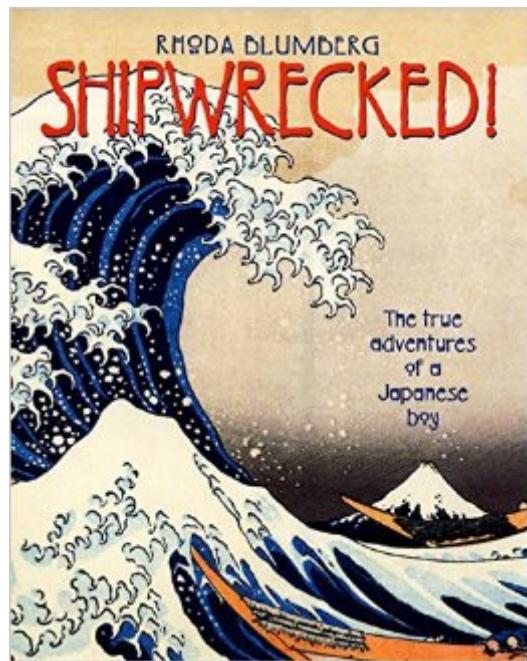


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Shipwrecked!: The True Adventures Of A Japanese Boy



Synopsis

Any person who leaves the country to go to another and later returns will be put to death. This was the law in Japan in the early 1800s. When fourteen-year-old Manjiro, working on a fishing boat to help support his family, was shipwrecked three hundred miles away from his homeland, he was heartbroken to think that he would never again be able to go home. So when an American whaling boat rescued him, Manjiro decided to do what no other Japanese person had ever done: He went to America, where he received an education and took part in events that eventually made him a hero in the Land of the Rising Sun.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars See all reviews (25 customer reviews)

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Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 5 and up

Customer Reviews

Rhoda Blumberg does a fantastic job of telling the story of fourteen-year-old Manjiro's life. He was rescued with a bunch of shipwrecked fishermen. In those days Japan did not allow foreigners into Japan. Japanese who had left Japan were not allowed back in. Manjiro was rescued by an American whaling ship, taken to Hawaii, and then to New England by the ship owner. What happened to him then sounds so fantastic, it is hard to believe it is all true. The author uses Manjiro's drawings and authentic photographs of the time. It is amazing to think how much difference Commodore Perry's visit to Japan made in the lives of the people. This book is sure to catch the fancy of the young

biography readers.

This is a GREAT story--it would be edge-of-the-seat exciting if it were just that--but being based in fact makes it doubly compelling. Also, a great book for boys who otherwise might not be avid readers. Tell them it's quite an adventure story. That they will learn some history and of differing cultures can remain your own little secret.

This is a slender book written for young readers. But it is a fascinating story of a real-life adventure by a plucky and intelligent boy. Manjiro's father died when he was nine. To support his mother and an invalid brother he became a fisherman. A storm blew their boat to an uninhabited island about 300 miles from Japan and left the shipwrecked. After more than a year an American whaling ship rescued them. Two of the cast aways stayed in Hawaii for some years. Manjiro continued to America and became a foster child of the captain. He learned to speak English, to read it and write it, and he was also a talented artist. He eventually decided to return to Japan, even though Japanese law forbid the return of any Japanese who left. Manjiro was arrested upon his return and interrogated many times. Fortunately the Daimyo who had custody was quite intelligent and recommended sparing Manjiro. Soon after this Commodore Matthew Perry arrived. Because Manjiro spoke English and had visited America, he became an adviser to the Shogunate. Since a peasant fisherman was too low caste for this role, Manjiro was promoted to Samurai status, which was highly unusual. Manjiro aided Japan in building modern ships and recommended adopting western technology. His final career was a professor of nautical engineering - the first in Japan.

Presenting both historical context and insight into Japanese society as well as the actual story of Manjiro this is a gripping and short page turner. Accompanied by some beautiful illustrations and pictures, some of which are Manjiro's, the story of Manjiro's abandonment and eventual emigration to the US is succinct and entertaining. While too superficial to be recommended for adults this is an excellent book and deals with pressing themes, such as multiculturalism, isolationism, and the past role of America in foreign affairs.

A remarkable story that is well told. I bought this book, and her other book about Commodore Perry, for my grandsons. As kids, they wonder about such things as alien invasions and abducted by aliens, typical sci-fi stuff of young boys. This story is a true story of a young boy who is rescued, as opposed to abducted, by an alien culture and what he records about the experience. The story pairs

perfectly with the Blumberg book about Commodore Perry. As she states in the opening chapter of that book, the American ships were viewed as alien invaders. I guess they were, in a sense. This story of the poor Japanese boy, Manjiro, is the perfect counterpoint. He is rescued by an alien vessel and transported to a far-away culture as foreign to his own as anyone could imagine. The Americans treat him well, for the most part, educating him and allowing him to support himself by his own work. He returns to Japan and... I won't spoil an amazing story that ends well.

I purchased this used and it was well worthwhile. Unfortunately, I bought it for my 8 year old son, he didn't like it so much but my 10 year old daughter did. Maybe the boy will come around. It's one of our school's 3rd grade reading selections this year; while a different author's extended version is in use in their 6th grade class. "Shipwrecked" is a true tale of young Manjiro shipwrecked on a remote isle with 4 Japanese fishermen after a storm. Several but not all of the survivors are picked up by a whaling vessel and taken to America. Manjiro takes a difficult tragic experience and becomes a fascinating young man showing resilience and a desire to learn--great lessons. As he ages, he becomes important in international relations between Japan and the USA. If you can wrap this read in a lesson about perseverance and adaptability you'll find it even more appealing. If you are squeamish about whaling, oh well--you can work in why we don't do that anymore. Told elsewhere in greater or lesser detail, this book is fine reading to your children at bedtime, especially if of mixed parentage (there's a little Japanese and American in all of us). Will take a few nights. For your 8-11 year old it's an hour or two read. About right for the 8-12 year olds. One thing that makes the book shine is the inclusion of many of Manjiro's ink drawings. My older child readily appreciated his talent. Nicely done.

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