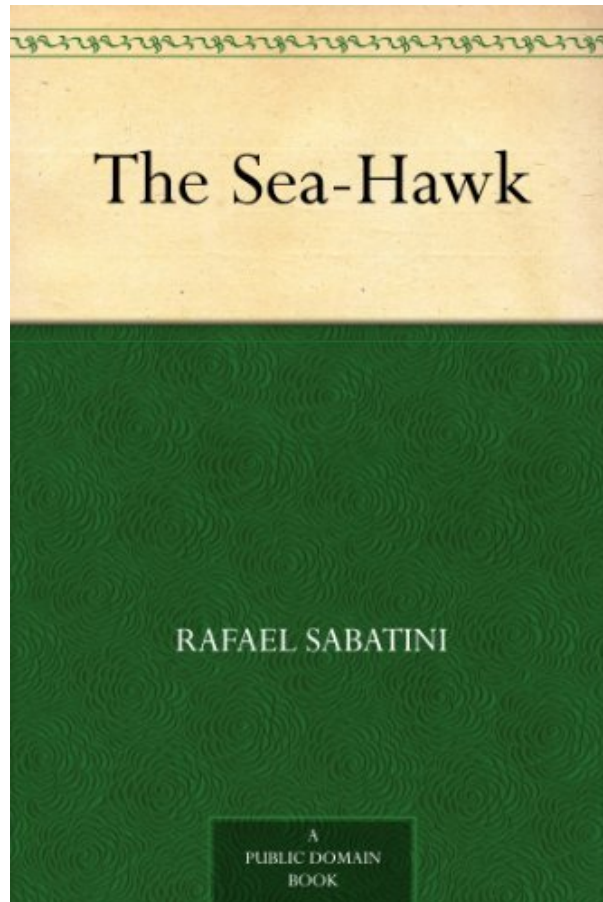
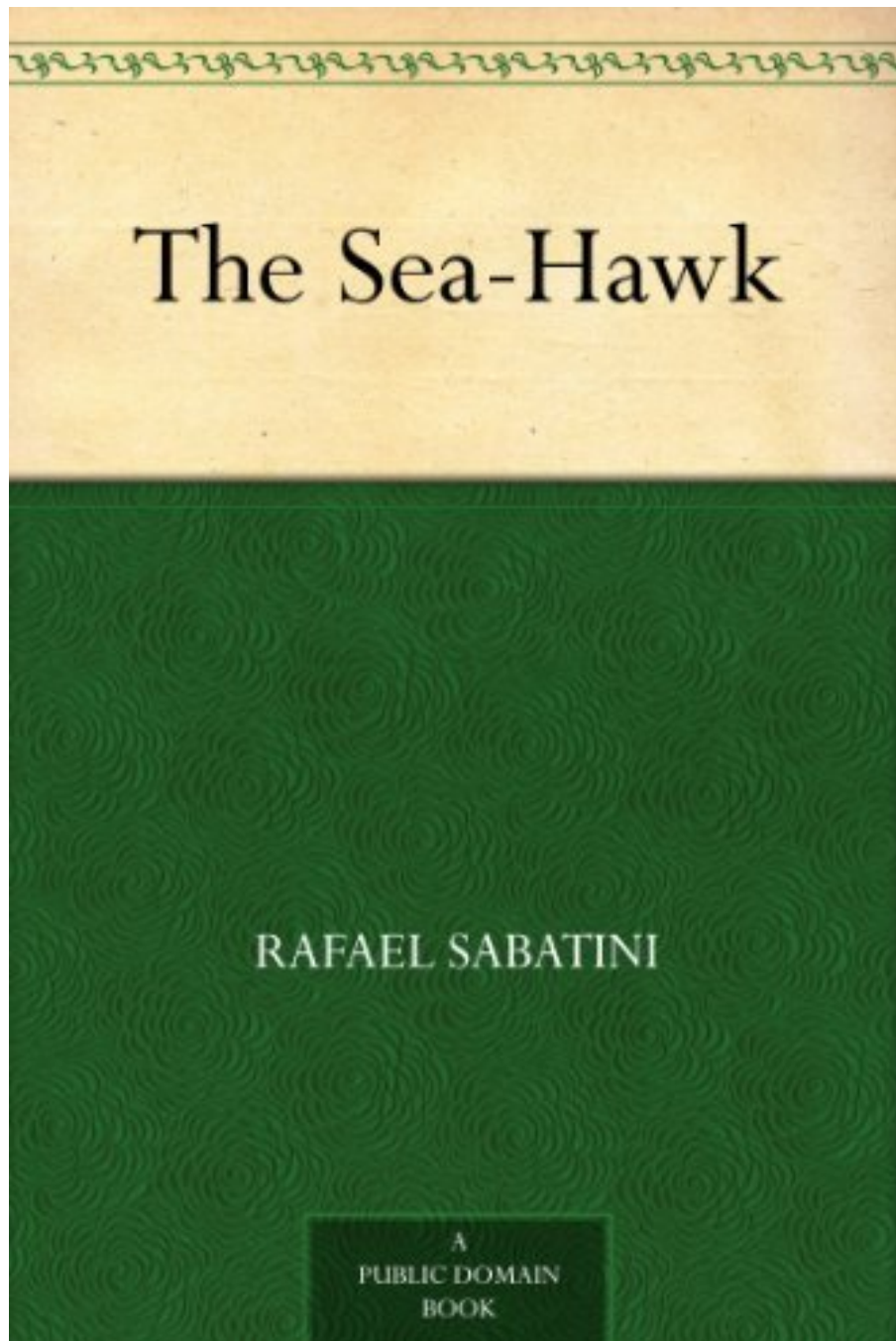


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0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Pretty God read

By Kindle Customer

In the same vein as Captain Blood. Enjoyed the book.

Would read another book by this author. Would urge others to read.

11 of 11 people found the following review helpful.

Extraordinary Drama

By T. Szymanowski

My first encounter with Rafael Sabatini was not The Sea-Hawk, but rather Captain Blood. This was a recommendation by a scholarly friend who appreciates the opportunity to read the classics on his Kindle for free. Having made short work of Captain Blood (and thoroughly enjoying it), I decided to read The Sea-Hawk, which I enjoyed even more.

This 1915 novel is an incredibly adventurous tale set in the sixteenth century. It recounts the story of an English gentleman, Sir Oliver Tressilian, who is a Cornish knight. Sir Oliver serves as the protagonist in a rich story of love, deceit and vengeance. The drama unfolds as two of the people he loves the most--his betrothed, Rosamund Godolphin; and his half-brother, Lionel Tressilian--demonstrate both unfaithfulness and treachery when dealing with the untimely death of Rosamund's brother. The betrayal of Sir Oliver's brother, Lionel, results in Sir Oliver being sold into slavery in Spain where he spends six grueling months as a slave, thus suffering through lack of food, exposure to the elements, and constant scourging as an oarsman on a Spanish vessel. During these dark days he vows revenge against both his brother and Spain who so ruthlessly conducts immoral acts in the name of the Christian Church. Through a dramatic turn of events, Sir Oliver finds himself liberated from his slavery and leading a plundering life as a corsair in the service of Islam.

The book is written in the English prose of the era, an experience not dissimilar to reading the King James Bible. One might be tempted to pass on this book because of the writing style, however I would caution against casually discounting it for that reason. Admittedly, it is not necessarily an easy read like so much pop fiction being published these days, but it is well worth the effort. One will likely find, as I did, a certain beauty and attraction to such noble prose, including an appreciation for the dignity, eloquence, and genteel nature of the language of that day. A previous reviewer commented, thankfully, about the benefit of the dictionary function of his Kindle when reading this book. No doubt, there are words and phrases that are

archaic to our modern language. However, taking the time to look them up not only enhances one's understanding of the language, but it also provides valuable lessons into Europe's fascinating past.

The book is high drama at its very best. Sabatini is not only a brilliant story teller, but his keen insight into human nature (both male and female), offers philosophical musings about many things common to mankind: love for others, love for self, honor, respect, courage, cowardice, etc. Never is there a lull in the plot, and always are there twists of fate, cunning, deceit and power that keep the reader intrigued and guessing. Most enjoyable was the tense building of emotion and theatrics while utilizing understated descriptive language. For example, the author is incredibly skilled at describing an exceedingly fierce battle without defaulting to hyperbolic language. In this way, the reader 'feels' the tension rather than merely reading it. Even up to the final discourse between characters in the last chapter, the reader is kept wondering if the forces of truth and justice would prevail in the face of evil.

Surely it is risky (and even unfair) to compare characters from one book to another. However, for the sake of giving a feel to the curious looker who might consider reading *The Sea-Hawk*, I would mildly compare Sir Oliver Tressilian to Jean Valjean of *Les Miserables*. Similarly, they both faced life challenges that forced them to suffer as outcasts, thereby spending much of their time wrestling with thoughts that oscillated between evil (vengeance, retribution, self-loathing) and good (love, loyalty, truth).

I highlighted more quotes in this book than any other that I have read in recent days. Here are some of the more noteworthy quotations:

-When all is said, a man's final judgment of his fellows must be based upon his knowledge of himself; and Lionel, knowing himself incapable of any such sacrifice for Sir Oliver, could not believe Sir Oliver capable of persisting in such a sacrifice as future events might impose.

-"Hell," he said, "was surely made for Christians, which may be why they seek to make earth like it."

-"Woman, thy tongue is like the clapper of a bell with the devil swinging from the rope."

-Adversity had taught him to prize benefits however slight and to confront perils however overwhelming.

-"Words are not things; judgments are not facts. You say that he is so, and so and so. But when I ask you upon what facts you judge him, your only answer is that you think him to be what you say he is. Your thoughts may be honest, Sir John, but your logic is contemptible."

-Words may be but a mask upon our thoughts; deeds are ever the expression of them.

-"As her beauty wanes so her presumption waxes," he growled.

Calling this book a classic is no understatement. The reader is enriched upon completion, will likely find him/herself more thoughtful and sympathetic, and will be satisfied in knowing that they have read a book crafted in great skill.

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful.

Sabatini is a master of adventure and intrigue, as demonstrated once again with *The Sea-Hawk*

By Gary Hoggatt

I first came to Rafael Sabatini through his excellent 1922 pirate novel *Captain Blood*, and then read his fine 1921 swashbuckling tale, *Scaramouche*. Continuing this journey through Sabatini's novels, I've just

completed his 1915 pirate intrigue, *The Sea-Hawk*. *The Sea-Hawk* doesn't disappoint, living up exceedingly well to the high standards of Sabatini's other novels. It's got everything - adventure, drama, romance, and exotic locales. There are some elements that echo Sabatini's other stories, but they're used with a new spin and combined in different ways, so it still seems fresh, and the setting helps with that a great deal as well.

Our hero, Sir Oliver Tressilian, lives in England in the late 16th century under the cloud of his deceased father's bad reputation. Like Peter Blood, the titular Captain Blood, he is victim of a great injustice, finds himself enslaved, gains freedom, and becomes a pirate, all while having a complicated relationship with a woman whose political background is a challenge. However, his injustice is of a much more personal nature, and his saga of piracy, love, and redemption doesn't take place in the Caribbean, as Blood's does, but along the Barbary Coast, where Sir Oliver becomes known as Sakr-el-Bahr, the Hawk of the Sea, a feared corsair and major political power in Algiers.

The setting and the political intrigue are what really stand out for me with *The Sea-Hawk*. There are countless tales about piracy in the Caribbean, but the Barbary Coast pirates are often forgotten, despite their effectiveness. Seeing Sir Oliver plunged into the Muslim world of Algiers is fascinating. This is Sabatini at his historical fiction finest. He really immerses you in the culture, the religion, and both the glamour and unpleasant realities of the time and place. It's not just window dressing, either, as important facets of the religion and culture play crucial roles in the plot. There's also some excellent political scheming, as Sakr-el-Bahr is a favorite of the Basha of Algiers, and his conniving wife and jealous son try every trick in the book to turn them against each other. Oh, and the romance? Yeah, that gets caught up in all of this as well.

I listened to Tantor's 2001 production of *The Sea-Hawk*, read by John Bolen. The audio quality was a bit rough, but I believe that's likely a result of the library's e-audio book over-compression, as I haven't noticed it with other Tantor productions. As for Bolen himself, he does excellent work with character voices, but his general narration is oddly a bit flat. Overall, he's perfectly capable. I did find myself wishing that Simon Vance (who also records as Robert Whitfield) had recorded *The Sea-Hawk*, though, as I've enjoyed his narration on Sabatini's *Captain Blood* and *Scaramouche* immensely. The unabridged recording runs approximately eleven hours.

I highly recommend *The Sea-Hawk*. Fans of Sabatini's other work will immediately take to it, as will fans of pirate fiction, historical fiction, political intrigue or stories that take place in exotic locations. *The Sea-Hawk* has helped cement Sabatini's place as one of my favorite authors.

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