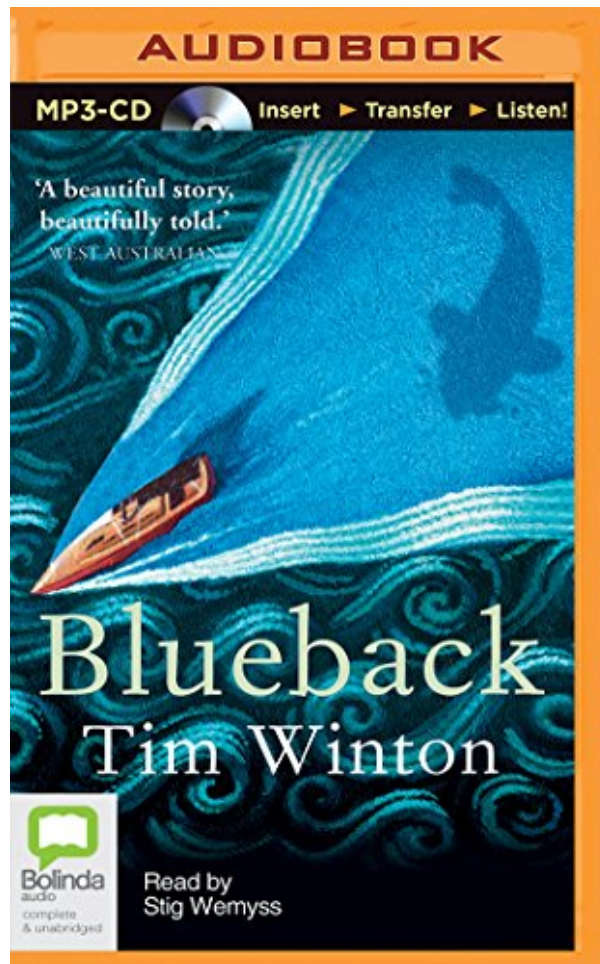


BLUEBACK BY TIM WINTON



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From School Library Journal

Grade 7 Up—Ever since he can remember, Abel Jackson has loved the sea. As the story opens, Abel and his widowed mother are living in Longboat Bay, a remote area of Australia. They make their living by diving for abalones, careful to take only what is needed from the sea. The story spans 27 years. At the age of 10, Abel plays and works hard with his mother. A giant, somewhat mystical blue grouper is their constant underwater companion. Both mother and son are fiercely protective of the sea and the surrounding habitat. As the story progresses, they confront a greedy over-fishing poacher and unscrupulous land developers. Abel grows up, goes away to university, and becomes a marine biologist in an attempt to learn even more about the secrets of the sea. He marries another marine biologist, becomes a father, and eventually returns home to take care of his aging mother. The cycle begins anew as Abel's daughter meets Blueback. Stig Wemyss's lively voice and Australian accent adds to the authenticity of Tom Winton's story (Scribner, 1998) and keeps it moving along. The strong message threaded throughout the story is the need to protect and preserve the sea, its resources, and the surrounding habitat.—Mary Oluonye, Shaker Heights Public Library, OH
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About the Author

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mother, who live on a beautiful bay threatened by polluters and greedy fishermen. "Blueback" is the gigantic grouper who becomes Abel's lifelong friend and guide to underwater life. For a title character, he is one silly, uninvolved creation. Wemyss is a gentle companion, but he's a long way from being able to compensate for the sins of the author. M.O. (c)AudioFile, Portland, Maine

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BLUEBACK BY TIM WINTON PDF

Abel Jackson loves to dive. He's a natural in the water. He can't remember a time when he couldn't use a mask and snorkel to glide down into the clear deep.

Life is tough out at Longboat Bay. Every day the boy helps his mother earn their living from the sea and the land. It's hard work but Abel has the bush and the sky and the bay to himself. Until the day he meets Blueback, the fish that changes his life.

Blueback is an achingly beautiful tale about the beauty to be found in a life led simply but meaningfully in tune with nature and the environment. It's the story of Abel and his lifelong friend.

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- Formats: Audiobook, MP3 Audio, Unabridged
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 6.75" h x .50" w x 5.25" l,
- Running time: 1 Hours
- Binding: MP3 CD

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a spiritual journey

By frustrated mystic

The book "Blueback" by Tim Winton (1997) is an older reader novel, which narrates the story of Abel. The story begins when Abel is ten years old and ends when he is a grown man with a wife and a child of his own. The story explores universal human themes like love for family, passion, growing older and belonging; topics that readers about the age of ten could relate to in quite profound ways. At the beginning of *Blueback* ten year old Abel's world consists of the sea-diving in particular, and his mother, Dora. As he is diving he encounters a 'strange' fish, Blueback:

At the corner of his eye he saw a blue shadow that blocked the sun. He whirled around to see a huge mouth and an eye the size of a golfball coming at him. The mouth opened. He saw massive pegs of teeth as it came on in a terrible rush. Abel screamed in his snorkel..."

Blueback's 'strangeness' is a type of metaphor for Abel's burgeoning adolescence. He is ten and so therefore on the verge of that time in life where as the reader becomes aware, he meets with personal conflict and dilemmas as he begins to form his own views and values, discovering who he is and who he wants to be.

Indeed Winton uses metaphors of nature in a profound way throughout *Blueback* to demonstrate change in Abel's life. For example, as Abel grows older he "wants to know what the sea is about" yet as the reader discovers the 'sea' Abel is about to discover is that of life, for just as the sea is a mystery waiting to be lived so is his life at his young inquisitive age:

"It was a mystery. And the more he thought about it the more the whole sea seemed to be a puzzle. Abel wanted to figure it out."

Abel leaves his home, becomes a biologist and travels through the world, gaining honours and achievements, yet in a 'spiritual' sense he never leaves his childhood home at Robber's Head. It remains for him a source of belonging and love in the changing flux of his life.

Indeed, so important is the sea and Blueback for Abel that the fish is given human qualities. When for

example there is a problem with the ocean, Winton places the humanness of the animal in contrast with the greed of the reefstripper "Costello" who loves the sea only as something of a giant supermarket, fit just for human consumption.

Through Abel then, Winton seems to be saying that although human beings need to use nature for survival it is more than an economic resource. As the wheel of Abel's life turns he meets the inevitable fact of death as his mother passes away, yet death is not final in Winton's story; Abel's love of the sea is renewed in the form of his three year old child who meets the giant fish, Blueback, just as he did as a boy, and so the cycle of love and wonder in nature is renewed in her.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

A Beautiful Fable

By Foster Corbin

Abel Jackson, who lives with his widowed mother on the coast of Western Australia, has always been in love with the sea. He and his mother dive for abalone to make a living, but they are always careful not to abuse nature in any way. From the age of ten Abel is friends with a huge groper, "as fat as an opera singer," whom he names Blueback. Years later after he has become a successful marine biologist "married to another marine biologist," he returns to the place where he grew up to care for his aging mother, described as not your average mother for she too loves the sea and its inhabitants and simply outlasts the developers intent on building a resort where she lives, complete with a hotel, golf course, swimming pool, a marina with the accompanying "rich tourists," "international entrepreneurs" and whalewatchers. All Abel's life he is intent on learning the "language of the sea."

Mr. Winton calls this extended short story "a contemporary fable" in which he says that we violate nature at our own peril. We can learn from the sea and its inhabitants by watching and listening. And greed is an awful thing.

This little volume is a great book for children-- and their parents.

6 of 7 people found the following review helpful.

superb

By kylee_morii@hotmail.com

Brilliant, touching, superb. Highly recommend to anyone who's human. Life changing.

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