



The Encantadas Or Enchanted Isles: Short Story

Herman Melville

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The ten “sketches” comprising *The Encantadas, or Enchanted Isles* are based largely on author Herman Melville’s experience in the Galápagos Islands, combined with the recorded history of the islands, local folklore, and sailors’ stories.

The earlier sketches present a daunting description of the islands and their fauna. Belying their tropical location, there is nothing of paradise in these volcanic remnants—home to large numbers of lizards, snakes, and giant spiders—and the Galápagos Islands are isolated, desolate, and uninhabitable. However, they are not without their idiosyncratic charm for Melville, and the later sketches tell the stories of some of those inhabitants—buccaneers, the “dog-king” of Charles’s Island, the “Chola widow,” and Oberlus, the hermit.

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