



## The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket (The Art of the Novella)

*Edgar Allan Poe*

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When Edgar Allan Poe's only novella was first published in 1838, the reviews were slow in coming and dismissive when they arrived. The book's failure left Poe in such dire financial straits that he even accepted a job at one of the magazines that had panned it. But *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* has since become one of his most influential works: Baudelaire translated it, Paul Theroux read it out loud to Jorge Luis Borges, Jules Verne wrote a sequel to it, H. P. Lovecraft drew on it in creating his own tales of the Antarctic . . .

Ostensibly, it's a classic adventure story about a young boy who runs away to sea and encounters all the classic scenarios: mutinies, storms, shipwrecks, ravenous sharks, hostile natives. And Poe drew on many contemporary accounts of exploration in the South Seas to give his story a sense of verisimilitude.

But there are far deeper currents at work in the book than mere adventure: elements of the supernatural as they near the South Pole, evocations of the protagonists' experiences at sea that rival Poe's best tales of horror, and a disturbing ending that continues to stir debate.

*From the Trade Paperback edition.*

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