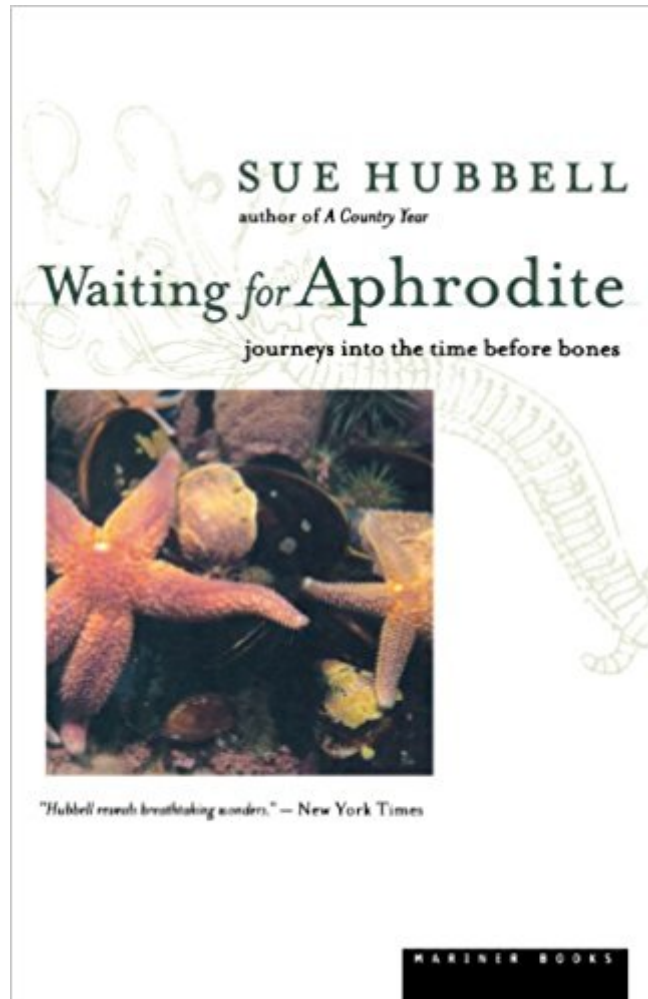


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Waiting For Aphrodite: Journeys Into The Time Before Bones



Synopsis

"We humans are a minority of giants, stumbling around in the world of little things," Sue Hubbell writes in this marvelous book. Each of these little things "has a complicated and special way of getting on in the world, different from ours and different from one another's." In *Waiting for Aphrodite* she explores the ways of sponges and sea urchins, horseshoe crabs and the sea mouse known as Aphrodite -- as well as our ways. She takes us on a journey through the mysteries of time -- geological, biological, and personal -- as she writes of the evolution of life on this planet and the evolution of her own life: her childhood next to a Michigan graveyard; the three colleges where she "learned three things"; her twenty-five years keeping bees on a farm in the Ozarks; her move to a "strange little house" in a small Maine town, "the place I wanted to grow old in." And in the tide pools and ocean waters there she discovered a whole new world, the world of little things that inspired this book.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is the third book I've enjoyed by Sue Hubbell. Her curiosity reminds me of my childhood days around my back yard creek when it seemed there was always something to be amazed at, and I took the time to be amazed. Some of the creatures she describes: well, you've always wondered about them; others: you've never heard of. In the background she is describing her sources and the characteristics of these creatures in a personal, straight forward, no axe-to-grind way. Then, she quietly slips in the best argument I've ever heard for trying not to eliminate any of our fellow

creatures, regardless of how much or how little we think we understand about their value and their relationship to humans. It could be heavy - but it isn't. It could be trivial - but it isn't.

Before reading this book I could never have foreseen myself wading through 232 pages on invertebrates. Sue Hubbell not only maps the journey, she makes it intoxicating and leavens her science with a generous smattering of life philosophy. Which could be tedious from a lesser person. Not from Hubbell, who presents the workings of a sharp intellect with such a light touch that her logic and opinions have a homespun tang. There is an unassailable rightness about many of her views, her argument for conservation for instance. But this isn't a platform for her ideals, it's a showcase for the kind of tiny animals few of us bother to notice unless they threaten us. From crickets to sea mice (the Aphrodite, or part of it, of the title) via spiders, woodlice, sea cucumbers, fireflies, horseshoe crabs, honeybees and many others, we're given just enough information to intrigue and inspire investigation into the generous "Further reading" list at the end of each chapter. It's difficult to make a book like this work. Go too deep, and you've scared-off the layman. Stay on the surface, and you're labelled a dilettante. For my money, Sue Hubbell compromises triumphantly. She puts her small animals centre stage and ensures you'll look on them with new and respectful eyes. But the real heroine of the book is Hubbell herself. Her love for her animals and for life itself blazes through the book and you close it thoroughly warmed through.

Sue Hubbell's book, "Waiting for Aphrodite: Journeys into the Time Before Bones," is a treat for anyone interested in these fascinating creatures. Her coverage of earthworms, millipedes, fireflies, sponges, horseshoe crabs and the strange mouse-like worm, Aphrodita, is a joy to an invertebrate zoologist and should be a great read for laymen who are open to the strange world of so-called creepy-crawlies. I have studied these creatures for much of my life, but could find few errors in Hubbell's chapters. She did her research well. Her life on the Ozarks reminds me of a woman I once met at a scientific conference. She also came from the Ozarks, where her family had worried about her when she was a little girl because she liked to watch salamanders in the rain and spiders spinning their webs. Some of her mountain relatives were sure she was bewitched. I am sure that Sue Hubbell is also "bewitched" by the strange world of these strange creatures- weird enough to live on the planet Mars. I know I was! Read this book if you are at all interested in the natural world around you. It will introduce you to the real masters of our planet.

I grew up in New England, on the water, so when I came across this book it particularly sparked my

attention. I've always had a great fascination with horseshoe crabs and there's a superb chapter on them in this book. There are lots of neat animals discussed in this book - sea life like sea urchins, horseshoe crabs, sea sponges etc. But also land dwellers like spiders, millipedes, crickets fireflies, etc. Like other books by Hubbel there are some technical aspects to the book but its woven in so nicely with other interesting facts, stories that its an enjoyable read. I also like that she provides additional references for further reading.

This book speaks to our responsibility to be stewards of the earth and as Hubbell states at the end - plant acorns for tomorrow. I read this book 14 years ago and give it to people who appreciate the kind of passion that is evident in the text of this book.

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