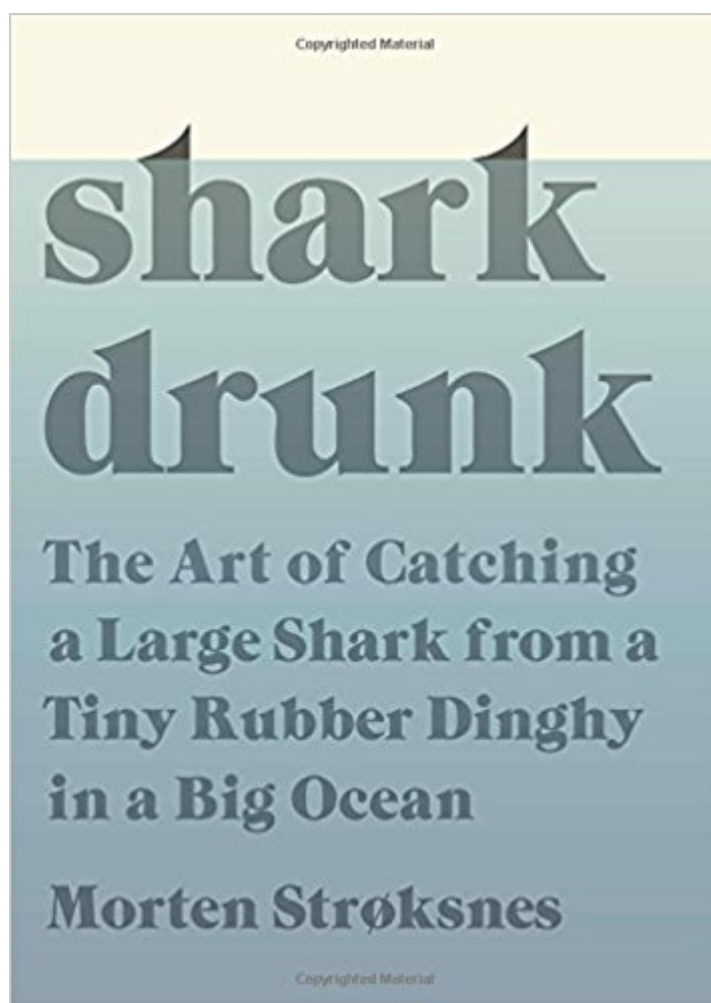


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# Shark Drunk: The Art Of Catching A Large Shark From A Tiny Rubber Dinghy In A Big Ocean



## Synopsis

A salty story of friendship, adventure, and the explosive life that teems beneath the ocean. The Lofoten archipelago, just North of the Arctic Circle, is a place of unsurpassed beauty—the skyline spikes with dramatic peaks; the radiant greens and purples of the Northern Lights follow summers where the sun never sets. It's a place of small villages, where the art of fishing, though evolving, is still practiced in traditional ways. Beneath the great depths surrounding these islands lurks the infamous Greenland shark. At twenty-four feet in length and weighing more than a ton, it is truly a beast to behold. But the shark is not known just for its size: Its meat contains a toxin that, when consumed, has been known to make people drunk and hallucinatory. *Shark Drunk* is the true story of two friends, the author and the eccentric artist Hugo Aasjord, as they embark on a wild pursuit of the famed creature—all from a tiny rubber boat. Together they tackle existential questions and encounter the world's most powerful maelstrom as they attempt to understand the ocean from every possible angle, drawing on poetry, science, history, ecology, mythology, and their own—sometimes intoxicated—observations, meanwhile pursuing the elusive Greenland shark. By turns thrilling, wise, and hilarious, *Shark Drunk* is a celebration of adventure, marine life, and, above all, friendship. Winner of the Norwegian Brage Prize 2015, Winner of the Norwegian Critics' Prize for Literature 2015, Winner of the Norwegian Reine Ord Prize at Lofoten International Literature Festival 2016.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Strömsnes beautifully describes the midnight sun, majestic fjords and moody stretches

of sea [and] brings a little-known world to life. A homage to the sea and a call to arms to protect the ecosystem that humans treat so abysmally yet rely on so much. The Economist “Melville, Ahab and Hemingway, Old Man spring to mind. . . . Rich and fascinating. . . . Morten Strømsnes’s clever trick is to remind us for one last time that the catching of the big fish is the least important part of the story. The Wall Street Journal “Utterly engrossing | A triumph | A work of meditation and wonder with a horizon as wide and open as the far Nordic coastlines that [Strømsnes] so beautifully evokes. The Spectator (London) “Strømsnes follows his capacious curiosity. The end result reads a bit as if Geoff Dyer had written Jaws. The New York Times “Its beauty, undemanding science and soothing, musing qualities have made [Shark Drunk] a bestseller in Norway and beyond. In vexed times, gently informative escapism is a winner for publishers and a refuge for readers. Strømsnes nails the appeal. The Guardian “Strømsnes’s erudition, salty humor, and unfussy prose yield a fresh, engrossing natural history. Publishers Weekly “Outrly cool . . . [A] chromatic, investigative work . . . There is [a] wonderful radiance [to] these two gents out chasing their curiosity [and] that romantic mingling of terror and beauty, the sublime. San Francisco Chronicle “Accomplished Norwegian historian, journalist, and photographer Strømsnes invites readers into the fantastical ocean environment of his quest to capture a Greenland shark. . . . Readers will happily devour this smorgasbord of delights. Kirkus “Move over, Ishmael. Move over, Jonah. Move over, Izaak Walton and Norman Maclean. Make room for a fish tale, wry and fantastical, weird and melancholy, that must now take its rightful place among our classic existential stories about the denizens of the deep. Hampton Sides, author of In the Kingdom of Ice “The Greenland shark is the bait, but the point is not to catch the fish. Shark Drunk is a phantasmagoric journey, both ultra-vivid and laconic, through the history and natural history of a remarkable region, its teeming seas and tough, resourceful locals. Strømsnes weaves his tale from a dense wool of close observation, fishing yarns, erudition lightly worn, and a helpless, consuming love of the ocean. William Finnegan, author of Barbarian Days “A beautifully crafted, slyly funny meditation on friendship, nature, history, literature, and most of all, the sea. That, and a gripping adventure tale about a hunt for a flesh-eating, razor-skinned sea monster. I don’t know how Strømsnes makes it work, but he does, brilliantly. Mitchell Zuckoff, author of 13 Hours “Gorgeously written and thoroughly

addictive. With the open-minded inquisitiveness of Charles Darwin and the obsession of Captain Ahab, Morten Strømsnes heads out to sea, chasing a monster of the deep known as the Greenland shark. Every page feels like a cabinet of curiosities, filled with head-scratching surprises, nuggets of wisdom, and wondrous insights.

• Michael Finkel, author of *The Stranger in the Woods* "Some great quests defy any logical explanation but by virtue of their whimsical turns lead to unexpected wonder and enlightenment. This is one such quest • it transports us with humor and insight to forbidding coasts and unexplored depths.

• Peter Stark, author of *Astoria* "An epic fishing trip reels in fascinating sea lore in this briny eco-adventure. . . . The author ponders everything related to the ocean, including bizarre luminous squids of the inky depths, frolicking orca pods and sperm whales, ancient disquisitions on maritime monsters, flinty islanders who live off the sea, and the close, testy relationships between fishing friends. Strømsnes's erudition, salty humor, and unfussy prose yield a fresh, engrossing natural history.

• Publishers Weekly (Starred Review) "Accomplished Norwegian historian, journalist, and photographer Strømsnes invites readers into the fantastical ocean environment of his quest to capture a Greenland shark. . . . readers will happily devour this smorgasbord of delights.

• Kirkus

MORTEN STRØMSNES is a Norwegian journalist and writer. He has published eight critically acclaimed books of literary reportage and contributed to several others. Translated by Tiina Nunnally.

This was a great read. Perhaps there is something "lost in translation," because the style of the writing seems rather labored, and almost clumsy, but the story itself is absolutely fascinating. You learn about a part of the world you don't hear much about, and a fish that I had never heard of, and along the way, this is really a story more about what motivates people to do what other people might think is crazy. Ultimately, you realize that whether they catch the shark or not, and if they catch it what they do with it (I won't spoil the ending), has become kind of irrelevant to the way of life that you've read about. Not many books out there are like this one. You may find yourself thinking about Faulkner's "The Bear" or similar stories. I sure did.

Shark Drunk: The Art of Catching a Large Shark from a Tiny Rubber Dinghy in a Big Ocean was quite the pleasant surprise. I thought 8+ hours of audiobook was a bit long to listen about someone

catching a shark but this endeavor is only the background music to what ended up being a plethora of perspective and education about the sea and all the life that inhabits it. I've stated on other reviews that the ocean is my favorite place to be in the entire world and it is worth saying it again. I loved all of the information Morten A. Strandsnes generously provided in this book. But because this book appears to be marketed and sold as a shark fishing adventure so to speak, I did still want some resolution. Ongoing attempts at scouting out the elusive Greenland shark were scattered throughout this book, but it wasn't until the final five minutes via audio that any progress was made. No, I didn't want to read 8+ hours of shark fishing stories but I also was a bit surprised that the climax was left until the very, very end. No matter, *Shark Drunk: The Art of Catching a Large Shark from a Tiny Rubber Dinghy in a Big Ocean* was a captivating book of science, history, ecology, mythology, culture, and friendship, and I'm glad I read it. A pleasant surprise indeed. Check it out! My favorite quote: "When the waves slam against the rocks, they shatter and turn to spray. Water molecules dance around on the world's oceans, dissolving, evaporating, cooling, and combining in new ways. The drops that strike my face have been in the Gulf of Mexico, in the Bay of Biscay, through the Bering Strait, and around the Cape of Good Hope many times. Maybe over the eons they've actually been in all the oceans, both big and small. In the form of rain they have washed over dry land; there they have been lapped up thousands of times by animals, people, and plants, only to evaporate, transpire, or run back out to sea, again and again. Over billions of years the water molecules have been everywhere on earth."

The Lofoten Islands in Norway is the beautiful setting for this book. Best friends Morten Strandsnes, (author) and Hugo Aasjord, an artist, have decided that they need to try and catch a Greenland shark, which can be up to 26 feet long and weigh a ton, from a small inflatable dinghy. I don't know if I would have picked out this book if it wasn't offered to me as I am not really interested in fishing and am a bit scared of the ocean, but I am so glad that I read it. It is really a fascinating read. The story is not only about the author and Hugo's long time friendship and their joint quest to catch this shark, but it became a wonderful history lesson in just about everything. The author did a lot of research for this book and the facts, myths and legends intermingled with their recollections and stories of their youth, give us quite a feel for what goes on around them as they silently wait in their small boat for a sign of the shark. I love the facts that he gives us, about sea life, ecology, biology, astronomy etc. plus the legends of the wonderful folklore of the area. He gives us a feeling of the different time periods, authors, artist, you name it he covers it. I wish I had had a class in school that was so readable and interesting to follow. I love Morten and Hugo's honest and

relatable friendship, both easy and intense and their shared interest in the sea. I may have a bit more respect for the sea, but still have maybe a bit more fear for what I cannot see beneath the water, at least now I know a bit more of the fascinating life that goes on down below. I want to thank NetGalley and Knopf Publishing group for the ARC of this book.

`Shark Drunk` is an outdoor travel memoir by a Norwegian author that won some awards in 2015. Translations are now appearing in Spanish, German and English. It uses modern techniques of creative non-fiction with the mystery element being the elusive Greenland shark which the author is attempting to catch in the Fjords of Norway, specifically the Lofoten region which is remote and traditional. Along the way we learn about the history, fauna and culture of Lofoten with plenty of place names to follow on Google Maps. It's generous, occasionally artistic, occasionally funny, appealing to anyone who reads outdoor literature wanting to "sail about a little and see the watery part of the world". The English title `Shark Drunk` makes it sound campy and the light-green cover is as in-artistic as it gets, but ignore those potential faults they give the wrong impression. The Norwegian title is "Havboka" which means "Sea Book" or "Book of the Sea" which is a better title, and the Norwegian book cover art is awesome. This is a good book and glad to have discovered it.

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