



## Justice in the World of Killer Whales

**Michael L. Kryder**

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*This action-packed man-versus-nature story delivers an emotional punch.*

*Justice in the World of Killer Whales* by Michael L. Kryder is an action-packed story of rogue animals seeking revenge against humans. This bloody tale explores the brutality of killer whales as they ravage the California coast. The violence starts immediately and doesn't let up; politics and romance are added to the mix until the book is brimming with conflict.

The story centers on a small pod of killer whales led by "Mom," who, after being separated from one of her sons by human beings, vows revenge. Mom and her pod begin elaborately planned attacks on humans at beaches, and they also free other orcas being captured. On the human side are Mark Tillsdale and Tom Higgins, leading members of the Orca Brigade, a task force established to combat the whale attacks. The book follows both the human and orca characters' actions and thoughts. At times it's difficult to pin down the protagonists, since both sides have strong, relatable reasons for their decisions. The whales escalate the violence, but the humans began the cycle.

Marine biologist Mark Tillsdale is the most fleshed-out human character. The narration is third person omniscient, but the most focus is given to Mark. Eventually, Tom begins to gain depth as well. The two men strike up a close friendship. This is something the book tells rather than shows, mentioning the relationship shortly before Tom act as best man in Mark's wedding. In addition, both Mark and Tom have love interests who are involved in the conflict as accredited marine biologists, but whose sole narrative function is for detailed erotic scenes.

The static characters go through very little development. Because of the sparse, almost journalistic style of the prose, there is little opportunity for sympathetic growth. The character who undergoes the most dramatic shift and garners the most sympathy is Karmac, an adult killer whale rescued from Ocean World by Mom and her pod. The details used in describing Karmac's first foray into the wild ocean deliver a surprising emotional punch. On the whole, exploration of the orcas as sentient and emotionally cognizant creatures is the most captivating aspect of the book.

Fast-paced, short chapters jump from scene to scene, sometimes with very little setup. Although there is a clear focus on action over character, the constant bloodbaths at the beaches become redundant. The book takes facts about killer whales, their treatment, and the validity of the story to heart. Numerous times, chapters feature heavy exposition regarding the design and capabilities of aquatic transportation or weaponry. There are references to websites that provide information about killer whales and killer whale attacks, and even a long transcript from the documentary *Blackfish*. These excerpts certainly add a level of depth to the story; however, their inclusion breaks up the already jagged pacing of the book.

*Justice in the World of Killer Whales* will appeal to people interested in man-versus-nature stories that are mainly focused on action and violence. Despite its content, this book would be a perfect beach read for someone looking for something quick and entertaining.

SHANA CREANEY

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