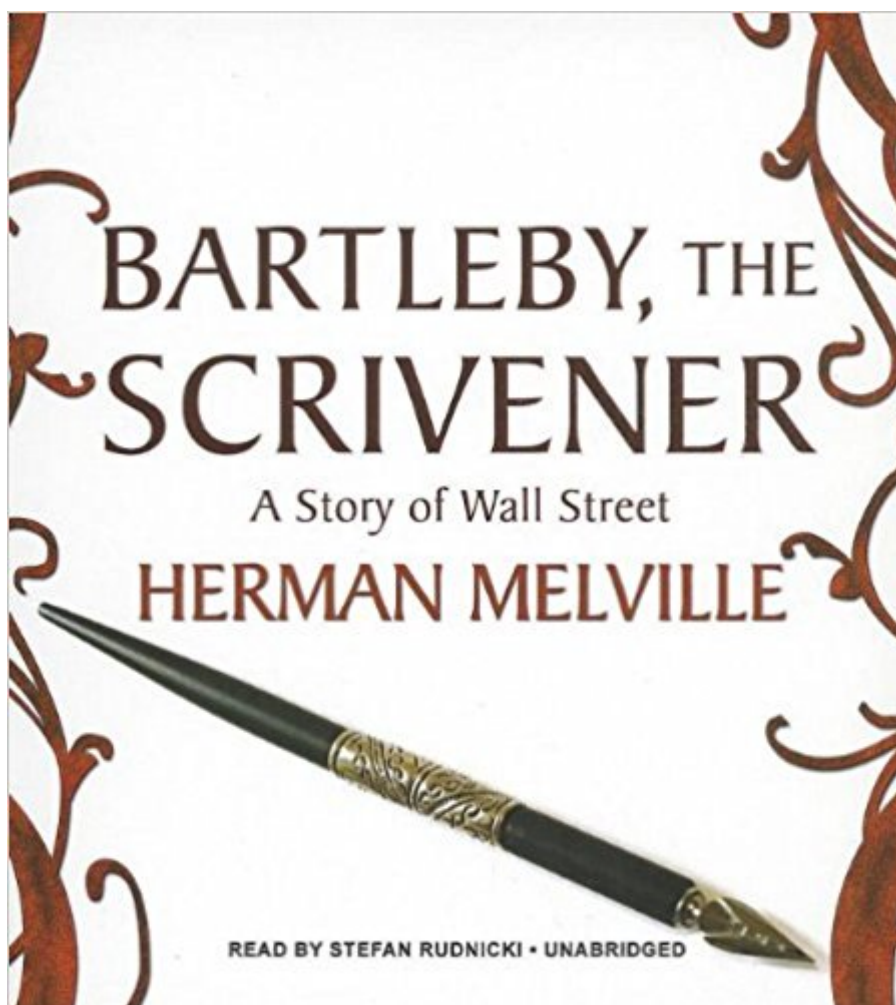


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Bartleby, The Scrivener: A Story Of Wall Street (Piazza Tales)



Synopsis

Herman Melville's tale of corporate discontent, *Bartleby, the Scrivener*, tells the story of a quiet, hardworking legal copyist who works in an office in the Wall Street area of New York City. The business where he works handles the official financial paperwork of wealthy men. One day, Bartleby's employer requests he proofread one of the documents he has copied. Bartleby declines the assignment with the inscrutable "I would prefer not," the first of what will become many refusals. The utterance of this remark sets off a confounding set of actions and behavior, making the unsettling character of Bartleby one of Melville's most enigmatic and unforgettable creations.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"I wanted them all, even those I'd already read." [•Ron Rosenbaum, The New York Observer](#)
"Small wonders." [•Time Out London](#) "[F]irst-rate [•Astutely selected and attractively packaged](#)
[•Indisputably great works.](#)" [•Adam Begley, The New York Observer](#)
"I've always been haunted by Bartleby, the proto-slacker. But it's the handsomely minimalist cover of the Melville House edition that gets me here, one of many in the small publisher's fine 'Art of the Novella' series." [•The New Yorker](#) "The Art of the Novella series is sort of an anti-Kindle. What these singular, distinctive titles celebrate is book-ness. They're slim enough to be portable but showy enough to be conspicuously consumed [•tiny little objects that demand to be loved for the commodities they are.](#)" [•KQED \(NPR San Francisco\)](#) "Some like it short, and if you're one of them, Melville House, an independent publisher

based in Brooklyn, has a line of books for you... elegant-looking paperback editions ...a good read in a small package." --The Wall Street Journal --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Herman Melville (1819-1891) was born in New York. Family hardships forced him to leave school for various occupations, including shipping as a cabin boy to Liverpool in 1839--a voyage that sparked his love for the sea. A shrewd social critic and philosopher in his fiction, he is considered an outstanding writer of the sea and a great stylist who mastered both realistic narrative and a rich, rhythmical prose.

This review is for the free Kindle edition of this novella. The novella is available for purchase in several book formats, some of which contain excellent critical essays on this important American author and his work. This Kindle edition contains only the text of the novella, but it is free and that's great. "Bartleby the Scrivener" is a very accessible short novella by the author of "Moby Dick." It tells the story of a strange young man named Bartleby who shows up one morning at a New York law firm and is employed as a copyist (scrivener.) In those days (mid-nineteenth century), legal work was horrendously tedious for the clerks since huge briefs and depositions had to be copied by hand by men who did nothing all day but write a clear hand (and try not to leave ink blots on the paper,) and then check their work by reading it aloud back to each other. This is one of my favorite novellas (really a long short story). Wittily narrated by the harassed lawyer who owns the law firm, it describes the characters of those copyists who are employed there, and tells of the strange Bartleby who just decides to stop doing any work one day, telling his exasperated employer that he "prefers not to." The story is a wonderful mixture of high comedy, pathos and fascinating commentary on the human condition. I re-read it at least once a year, and I always enjoy it and get something fresh from Melville's wise insights and his wonderful wit. Highly recommended.

I am a true lover and collector of classic literature, but somehow this is my first opportunity to read Melville. Bartleby is an odd little story about an odd scavenger that stays with you long after the pages have all been turned.

This is my favorite short story. I read it at least 3 times per year. Growing up in New York and Melville writing this story taking place in New York is really great. I like to walk around Wall and Pearl streets and the sea port and think about the people like the characters in the story. What were their lives like back then, what were the sounds and smells.

For those of us who enjoy a well written story "Bartleby" meets our expectations. This is beautifully written short story that is interesting in the complexity of its characters. Melville exposes the human condition with all its mysterious intrigue and creates a provocative page-turner that will keep you reading well into the night and keep you thinking long after its finished.

I would prefer not to. Those were the only words spoken by Bartleby throughout this book, so it was hard to gain any insight into his personality. Was he insane, depressed, or just rebelling against the monotony of copy work? This is left up to the reader's imagination. A very strange and sad book.

Very interesting story, although I don't understand the deeper meaning and have to check dictionary for meaning for many of the words (there's lots of old words and I am not a native speaker of English), but the story still attracted me to finish me to stay till late at night just to finish reading it in one go

Who was Bartleby? Why did he exist? This narrative makes me wonder. His treatment by the narrator is astounding as well. Would I react the same?

I had not known that Melville had written so powerfully, yet humorously, about autism spectrum disorder. He didn't know that name, but it is clear that his Bartleby suffered from autism, in an era which didn't understand it and had no way to help him. Poignant and thoughtful.

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