



monkey presents . . .

herman melville's

Moby-Dick

Monkey guide



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MONKEY GUIDE™

dear parents,

At Monkey Presents we have a dream. We want to create entertaining and engaging media products that are fun, funny, lyrical, educational, informative and, above all, products that recognize the intelligence and potential of all children. Is it an impossible dream? We hope not.

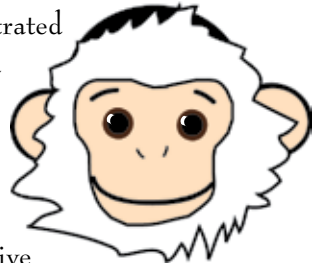
Why the classics? Well, We think that the classics are not classics by accident but enjoy their status because they provide something timeless and universal that every generation can recognize and appreciate. And, although many of the classics often deal with decidedly adult issues and themes, at the core of these issues and themes are universal stories and ideas that speak to all ages. Ideas and stories that illustrate and celebrate what life is about and what life can be.

The real hope we have here at Monkey Presents is that our products are able to present these ideas and stories in such a way as to provide children and their parents with a common familiarity and starting point for the appreciation and, possibly, the discussion of the whole wide world of ideas that the whole wide world of literature provides.

This brings us to a quick and entirely optional “how to” section concerning the use of the DVD and the included monkey guide. Through our research, we are convinced that children, especially the younger children, are perfectly capable of creating a story

without the use of the narrator option. It may not be “The Story” but that’s what is so great about it. This approach is more likely to engage both you and your child in a discussion. Children have the opportunity to make connections and ask questions.

Through the same research we noticed that parents and other adults seemed to be decidedly frustrated with the lack of clarity that the non-narrated version provides and understand the simple desire of being able to answer the questions that may and, in fact, hopefully arise.



As a result we have provided two, non-exclusive options in order to look smart or, at least, not feel dumb. The first and easiest is to employ the narrator option which offers a simple and kid-friendly description or “narration” of the story while the DVD plays. The second option is to peruse the provided Monkey Guide (also available on the DVD special features menu). The guide is a very concise but accurate description of the original work and includes a short biography of the author. The guide also attempts to explain the differences between the original and Monkey’s stage version. Ideally and, time permitting, discussion and parent-child interaction will ensue.

We hold a simple belief in the incredible capacity of children to learn what they are taught. We believe education can and should be enjoyable, interactive and filled with humor and laughter. We hope that it can be even more and provide the familiarity that often leads to the fuller enjoyment and appreciation of not only literature and the arts but life itself.

Here's to dreams.

Biography of the author



Herman Melville was born in New York City on August 1, 1819. His father ran a successful importing business that became unsuccessful and went bankrupt in 1830. Melville's father died two years later and Herman and his older brother went to work in order to support the family. After a series of various jobs he set sail on his literary career by literally setting sail on his first sea voyage at the age of 18. This first voyage would provide material for a later novel, *Redburn* published in 1849 but it was his next adventurous voyage on a whaling ship to the South Seas that provided the material for his first two novels *Typee* and *Omoo* as well as his, now, most famous of novels, *Moby-Dick*.

Sadly, although his first two novels were financially successful, *Moby-Dick* was not and Melville's luck did not improve much with his later works. By now he had a family of his own to provide for and eventually he was forced to take a job as a customs inspector for the city of New York where he worked for the next 19 years. His literary output dwindled as did his fame and when he died on September 28 1891, the New York Times referred to him as "Henry" instead of Herman, Melville.

It wasn't until 1920 when he was "rediscovered" and he and his works began to be recognized as literary triumphs. His last novel, *Billy Budd, Sailor* was finally published in 1924 after sitting in a tin can for thirty years. *Moby-Dick* is now considered by many to be the greatest of all American novels and Herman, not "Henry" Melville to be one of the greatest authors of all time.



Herman Melville's **Moby-Dick**



“Call me Ishmael”

is just about as famous as a first line of a novel can get. And it's nice to be on a first-name basis with the narrator and main character of such a highly regarded novel. We join Ishmael in Manhattan where he explains his decision to go to sea on a whaling ship. For many of us, shipping out to sea for three years might seem an extreme cure for a

touch of the blues but

Ishmael makes his case and off we go on his epic seafaring adventure.



Ishmael

is determined to set sail on a whaling ship from Nantucket but first he must get there. He travels to New Bedford, Massachusetts in order to take a boat to the island of Nantucket but he arrives too late and must spend the night in New Bedford.

Having little or no money, Ishmael passes by the brightly lit, cheerful and expensive looking places on his way to the dark and gloomy and cheap looking Spouter Inn. He is dismayed to learn that there are no beds available but the Innkeeper suggests he could share a bed with a harpooner. Ishmael feels pretty uncomfortable about this idea but the late hour and the bad weather convince him to accept the arrangement.



To his great surprise

the harpooner turns out to be a very large and scary looking “savage” named Queequeg with strange tattoos that cover his whole body. To his even greater surprise, Ishmael and Queequeg become instant and fast friends and decide to go whaling together on the same ship.



NOTE:

in monkey's version, Queequeg is a Giraffe who is very large but not very scary.

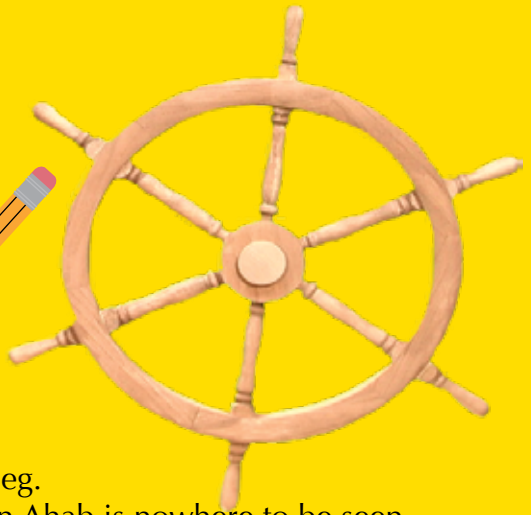


They set out the next Monday,

sail to Nantucket and start looking for a suitable ship. Queequeg determines that Ishmael should pick the ship. Ishmael soon finds the Pequod and asks about joining the crew. The owners of the ship are reluctant to sign them up because of Ishmael's inexperience and Queequeg's appearance, but they quickly change their minds when Queequeg shows them what he can do with a harpoon.



NOTE:



In the novel, it is actually two retired sea captains, Bildad and Peleg who hire Ishmael and Queequeg.

The infamous Captain Ahab is nowhere to be seen and will essentially remain in hiding until the ship reaches the southern seas sometime well into the voyage. Until this time the Pequod is managed by the first mate, Starbuck, and the second and third mates Stubb and Flask. Ishmael is concerned about sailing on a ship without seeing its captain first but Bildad and Peleg explain that Captain Ahab is still recovering from the loss of his leg due to a certain whale's sharp teeth. The whale that made off with Captain Ahab's leg is none other than the great white whale and title character Moby-Dick. Monkey substitutes the lost leg element with Moby-Dick's mischievous tendency to repeatedly spray Captain Ahab with seawater. Monkey feels that this is, admittedly, less extreme but could be equally compelling as a revenge motive.

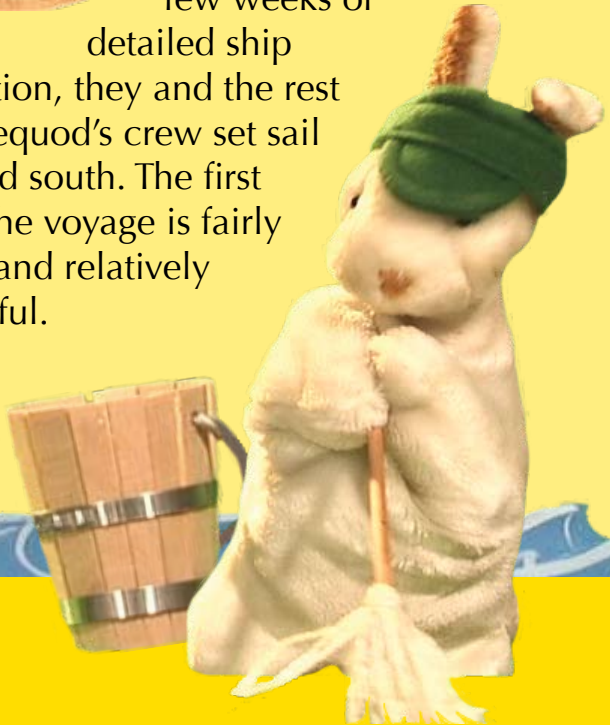


In spite of



the peculiar Captain Ahab and a few other warning signs, Ishmael and Queequeg agree to join up. After a few weeks of

detailed ship preparation, they and the rest of the Pequod's crew set sail and head south. The first part of the voyage is fairly routine and relatively uneventful.



NOTE:



One of the things that makes Melville's novel a little difficult, but ultimately more interesting and rewarding, is what essentially amounts to a series of digressions from the story proper. There is, for example, an entire chapter on Cetology, or the study of whales, which would seem more at home in a text book than a novel.

Here's our version:



sperm whale



humpback whale



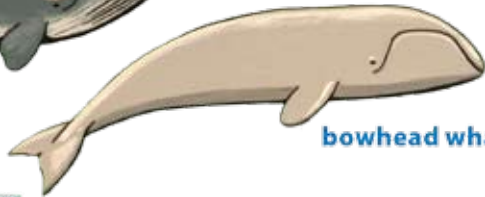
narwhal



beluga



right whale



bowhead whale



Anyway,



eventually cold gray skies give way to warm blue ones and Captain Ahab suddenly appears on deck after weeks of hiding in his cabin. They sail for a little while longer until Ahab calls the crew together and, in a dramatic speech, informs them of his intent to chase Moby-Dick around the world until he catches him. He offers an ounce of Spanish gold to the first man who spots Moby-Dick and makes the crew swear an oath to join him on his crazy quest.



The voyage continues.

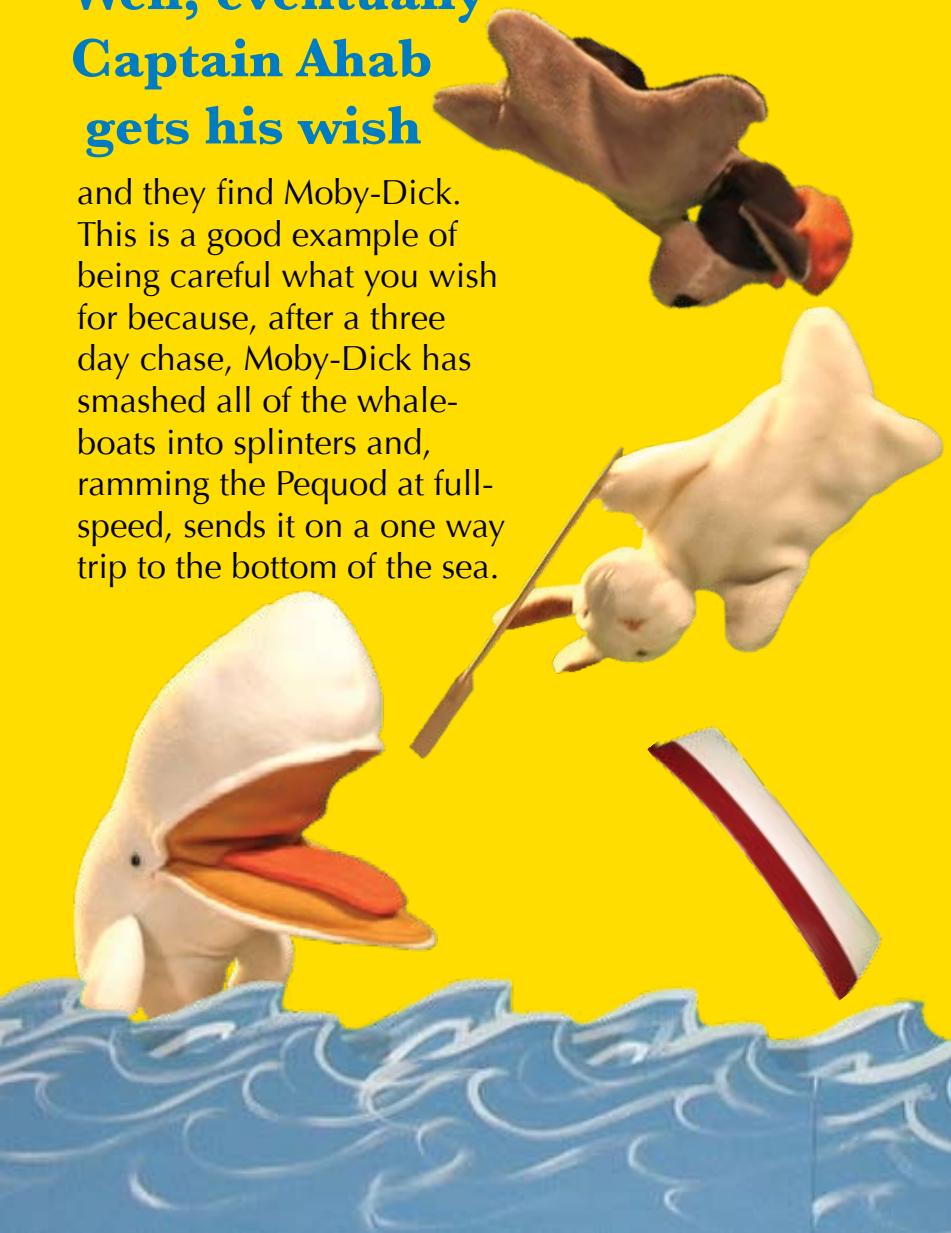


There are a few whale chases, some successful, some not. All the while Captain Ahab becomes more and more obsessed with catching Moby-Dick and when the Pequod has a few encounters with other whaling ships, Captain Ahab's only concern is to find out if they have seen Moby-Dick or not.



Well, eventually Captain Ahab gets his wish

and they find Moby-Dick.
This is a good example of
being careful what you wish
for because, after a three
day chase, Moby-Dick has
smashed all of the whale-
boats into splinters and,
ramming the Pequod at full-
speed, sends it on a one way
trip to the bottom of the sea.



NOTE:



In the novel's epilogue, we find out that Ishmael is the only survivor and is eventually rescued by one of the ships they had met before. Monkey leaves his conclusion a little more open and feels that it does not lessen the impact of Moby-Dick's victory if we imagine that the entire crew had been eventually rescued. Even Captain Ahab.



The End



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