

**Teacher's Guide  
for  
"WHALE TALES AND MERMAIDS"**

**program created and performed  
by Lynn Ruehlmann  
Storyteller**

**(757)625-6742**

**E-Mail: [ruehlmann@erols.com](mailto:ruehlmann@erols.com)**

**Web Site: [www.cascadingstories.com](http://www.cascadingstories.com)**

Teacher's Guide for  
**"Whale Tales and Mermaids"**  
by Lynn Ruehlmann

**About the show**

The story of Eugenie Clark and 10-year old Terry McCall can be found in her autobiography, **The Lady and the Shark**, 1969.

The story about Dionysus and the Pirates is part of Greek and Roman mythology. Dionysus is the Roman name for Bacchus. There are many instances in mythology where dolphins interact with humans and gods, including the story of Arion, below.

Rudyard Kipling wrote the **Just So Stories** in 1902 in which "How the Whale Got His Throat" appears. He also wrote **The Jungle Book**.

There are several versions of "Long John and the Mermaid." It was first published in **The Narrow Land, Folk Chronicles of Old Cape Cod** by Elizabeth Reynard, c. 1934. It was retold by Georgess McHargue in 1973 in the picture book, **The Mermaid and the Whale** and by Ruth Manning-Sanders in 1967 in "Long John and the Mermaid" in her **Book of Mermaids**.

There are many wonderful web sites about whales. A couple of particularly good ones are:

<http://dkd.net/whales>

<http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/go/Whales>

**About Storyteller Lynn Ruehlmann**

*Lynn has been a professional storyteller since 1990. She has taught storytelling at Old Dominion University, won a Folio Award for Best Actress in a Comedy, and Artist of the Year from Young Audiences of Virginia.*

*Her recording of "Spy! The Story of Civil War Spy Elizabeth Van Lew" won two national awards.*

Teacher's Guide for "Whale Tales and Mermaids"  
Lynn Ruehlmann, Storyteller

**Whale Words!**

Match the numbers to the letters:

- \_\_\_ 1. Comb-like plates in some whale's mouths which strain the food from the water.
- \_\_\_ 2. When a whale leaps out of the water.
- \_\_\_ 3. When a whale dives down deep.
- \_\_\_ 4. When a whale swims fast while leaping in and out of the water.
- \_\_\_ 5. The air a whale blows out when it comes to the water's surface.
- \_\_\_ 6. When a whale stands up in the water with its head in the air, so it can see above the water.
- \_\_\_ 7. When a whale slaps the water with its tail.
- \_\_\_ 8. Whale's tail.
- \_\_\_ 9. Whale.
- \_\_\_ 10. Group of whales living together.

- A. Sounding
- B. Porpoising
- C. Lobtailing
- D. Fluke
- E. Pod
- F. Cetacean
- G. Breach
- H. Baleen
- I. Spout
- J. Spyhopping



Key: 1.H; 2.G; 3.A; 4.B; 5.I; 6.J; 7.C; 8.D; 9.F; 10.E

## Teacher's Guide for "Whale Tales and Mermaids"

Lynn Ruehlmann, Storyteller

### ARION, A Greek Myth

Arion was a famous musician who lived in ancient Greece. He lived at the king's court in Corinth. One year he decided to compete in the music contest being held in Sicily. His fame turned out to be well-earned for he won the contest with his beautiful playing on his lyre (a stringed instrument like a very small harp).

He proudly sailed for home with his prize of gold. But the sailors on the ship knew about his prize, and they plotted to kill him so they could keep the gold. They snuck up on him, about to kill him. Arion, however, was clever as well as talented, and he pleaded with them to allow him to sing and play his lyre one more time before they killed him. They consented—who wouldn't want to take the chance to hear the prize-winner play!

As he played, Arion strolled to the side of the ship and looked out to sea. As he had hoped, he saw dolphins swimming toward him, drawn by the music. So as soon as he finished the song, Arion leaped into the sea, where the dolphins picked him up and swam him to land and safety.

Later, the town erected a statue of brass of Arion being carried by dolphins. We also see the event painted on Greek pottery.

#### Activities

1. Look up examples of Greek pottery and have your students create their own drawings of this story.
2. Have the students put together a skit of this story. Depending on how much of the story is to be presented, the scenes and characters could be:
  - Scene I. In Corinth: A narrator, Arion, the king of Corinth  
your students can decide how the king might feel about Arion competing
  - Scene II. At the music contest: Arion, other musicians, the judge, the spectators
  - Scene III. On the ship home: Arion, sailors who want to kill Arion, the dolphins
3. Build a diorama of this story.
4. Collect some of the things you know about whales: the different kinds (sperm, finback, dolphin, porpoise, beaked, humpback, gray, beluga, orca, blue), how old they are, how big they grow, what they eat, etc. Then make up a poem or a song that uses these facts.

EVALUATION FOR PROGRAM BY  
Lynn Ruehlmann, Storyteller  
e-mail: [ruehlmann@erols.com](mailto:ruehlmann@erols.com)  
website: [www.cascadingstories.com](http://www.cascadingstories.com)

*Lynn Ruehlmann came to your school recently. Could you please take an minute to fill out this evaluation and return it to her at 621 New Hampshire Avenue Norfolk, Virginia 23508*

*Or e-mail: [ruehlmann@erols.com](mailto:ruehlmann@erols.com)*

*Thanks so much for your help!*

\* \* \* \* \*

What program or workshop did you attend?

What did you or your students like best about the program and/or workshop?  
Why?

Was there anything you or your students would have wanted changed?

Are there any particular stories or kinds of stories that you would like to hear in the future?

What material or skills would you like covered in the future in a workshop?

Do you have any other comments?

---

Optional signature

*Thank you again for your help and opinions. They are so important and appreciated!*