Max Cabanes , Michel Piquemal

Mermaids' Song [La Chanson des Sirènes]

France (1998)

TAGS: Hippocampi Sirens





We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
Title of the work	Mermaids' Song [La Chanson des Sirènes]
Country of the First Edition	France
Country/countries of popularity	France
Original Language	French
First Edition Date	1998
First Edition Details	Michel Piquemal, ill. Max Cabanes, *La Chanson des Sirènes*. Toulouse: Éditions Milan, 1998, 24 pp.
ISBN	2841134121
Available Onllne	The text of the story is available in PDF format on Michel Piquemal website (accessed: August 3, 2018).
Awards	1999 – Prix Jeunesse Mousse du Salon du livre maritime in Concarneau, see livremer.org (accessed: August 3, 2018)
Genre	Fantasy fiction, Fiction, Illustrated works, Short stories
Target Audience	Children (7–12 year old)
Author of the Entry	Elżbieta Olechowska, University of Warsaw, elzbieta.olechowska@gmail.com
Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Lisa Maurice, Bar-Ilan University, lisa.maurice@biu.ac.il

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

Creators



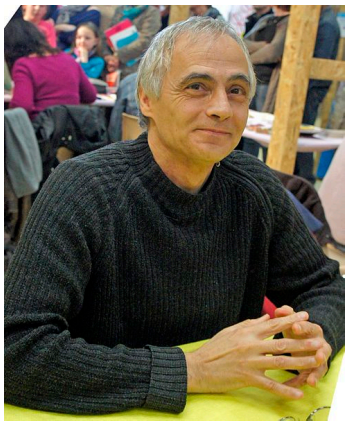
Max Cabanes, photographed by Georges Seguin (Okki) on April 10, 2010, the file is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike (accessed: May 28, 2018).

Max Cabanes , b. 1947
(Illustrator)

Born September 22, 1947 in in Béziers (Hérault, France). A well known French illustrator of books and periodicals as well as author of comic books, awarded many French specialized prizes for *Bande Déssinée*.

La Chanson des Sirènes is the only Michel Piquemal's book illustrated by Max Cabanes.

Bio prepared by Elżbieta Olechowska, University of Warsaw, elzbieta.olechowska@gmail.com



Portrait (accessed: May 28, 2018): *Michel Piquemal au 7e salon du livre de jeunesse à Cormontreuil*, March 2012, photo by Garitan, licenced under Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0, f

Michel Piquemal , b. 1954
(Author)

Born on December 17, 1954 in Béziers (Hérault, France). He studied literature, comparative literature, and education; worked until 1988 as a primary school teacher. Authored over two hundred books for children and YA, writes texts for comic books, song lyrics, television scripts, articles in children's periodicals. One of his favourite themes is philosophy, another... the American Indians. He produces an average of six books per year. He tried many different genres, including detective stories, theatre, heroic fantasy.

In 1989, he won the grand prize for a book for youth awarded by the French Ministry of Youth & Sports for his novel *Le Jobard*. He created a collection *Carnets de sagesse* published at Éditions Albin Michel to which he contributed himself several volumes.

La Chanson des Sirènes won the Prix Jeunesse Mousse du Salon du livre maritime in Concarneau in 1999 (see here, accessed: June 3,

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2018).

Michel Piquemal's Works Inspired by Antiquity – bolded titles refer to texts included in the survey.

Piquemal, Michel. *Petite anthologie de la Mythologie*. Toulouse: Éditions Sédrap, 1996. Collection *Genres Littéraires au Collège*.

Piquemal, Michel. ***La chanson des sirènes***. Album pour les 7- 12 ans, illustré par Max Cabanes. Toulouse: Éditions Milan, 1998. Gd Prix salon livre Concarneau 1999.

Piquemal, Michel. ***Les Philo-Fables***. *60 Fables accompagnées de questions, de repères et de mots-clés; dès 9 ans*. Paris : Éditions Albin Michel, 2003.
Translation : Chinese, Spanish, Korean, Greek, Hebrew, Brasilian Portuguese, Italian, Serbian,Polish
Sound version: Montreal: Éditions Stanké, s.d.

Piquemal, Michel. ***Petites & grandes fables de Sophios***. Paris: Éditions Albin Michel, 2004.
Translation: Chinese, German, Japanese, Italian Sound version: Montreal: Éditions Stanké, s.d.

Piquemal, Michel. ***Récits fabuleux de la mythologie: amours, ruses et jalousies***, Paris: Éditions Albin Michel, 2006. Vol.1 .
Translations: Chinese, Italian
Sound version: Montreal: Éditions Stanké, s.d.

Piquemal, Michel. ***Récits fabuleux de la mythologie: les héros et les monstres*** **[Fabulous Mythological Tales : Heroes and Monsters]**. Paris: Éditions Albin Michel, octobre 2006. Vol. 2.

Translation : Chinese
Sound version: Paris: Éditions Albin Michel, s.d.

Piquemal, Michel. ***Les Philo-Fables***, Paris: Livre de Poche, mai 2010. Vol. 1-2 for adult reader.

Piquemal, Michel et Daniel Royo. ***Le secret de Marcus Caïus Victor***, *roman historique pour les 8/12 ans au coeur de la Gaule narbonnaise*. Illustrations de Gwendal Lazzara. Toulouse: Éditions Sédrap, novembre 2011

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Piquemal, Michel. *Récits fabuleux de la mythologie*. Illustrations by Séverin Millet. Paris: Éditions Albin Michel, 07.12.2012.

Sources:

Michel Piquemal's official website (accessed: June 3, 2018).

Full bibliography of books by Michel Piquemal is posted here (accessed: June 3, 2018).

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Additional information

Summary

A large family with children is vacationing at the seashore. One of the boys manages with his younger brother and cousins to catch a sea-horse. The brother promises the sea-horse that he would set him free and in spite of being scared of his older brother, he does release the creature back to the sea. The brother is furious and turns all the other boys against him. They refuse to play with him. The boy, bored and unhappy, starts reading Jules Verne's *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*. During the night, a gigantic Hippocamp (sea horse) comes to take him to Nautilus and Captain Nemo who asks the boy what he would like to receive as gift for his courageous behaviour. The boy asks Nemo to teach him how to sing, as it is his great dream. Nemo sends him to the Mermaids who teach him the Sirens' Song and are beautiful and charming to him. After the music lesson, the Hippocamp takes him back to the family hut. When he wakes up the next morning, he begins to sing beautifully the Mermaids' song at the seashore. All his family, including his older brother are enchanted by his voice and the song and nobody is cross with him any longer. A novel interpretation of Mermaids as 'domesticated' creatures, beautiful women appreciating recognition of their beauty and their magical singing; willing to teach their song to "good" humans, i. e. those who respect nature. These mermaids' song enchants by its wonderful music and does not cause harm.

Analysis

A summer sea-shore vacation story–diary of a contemporary boy who has mysterious encounters with mythical creatures of the sea he knows from a secondary literary source, Jules Verne's *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*. The story has strong ecological overtones and glorifies values such as keeping promises and respecting nature, its creatures and forces. The author uses also the motif of rendering assistance to a magical animal in distress and the gift offered by the animal grateful for the rescue, cf. the story of the fisherman and the golden fish and of many fairy-tales where timely magical rewards are given for help provided by the main character.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs,

Hippocampi Sirens

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Characters, and Concepts	
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Animals Good deeds Joy of reading Learning Other literary figures, texts and writers Relationships Respect Siblings Values
Further Reading	Mekouar, Myriam, «Quand la littérature ne prend pas l'enfant pour une bille ! – interview avec Michel Piquemal», "La Pause Philo," 9 July 2020. (accessed October 26, 2020) Nières-Chevrel, Isabelle, *Introduction à la littérature de jeunesse*, Paris: Didier Jeunesse, 2009. Prince, Nathalie and Sylvie Servoise, *Les personnages mythique dans la littérature de jeunesse*, Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2015.
Addenda	Piquemal_La chanson des sirenes_texte.pdf *La Chanson des Sirènes* is the only Michel Piquemal's book illustrated by Max Cabanes. The Author's Official Site: Michelpiquemal.com (accessed: November 22, 2022).

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