



The Fantastic Undersea Life of Jacques Cousteau

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Jacques Cousteau was the world's ambassador of the oceans. His popular TV series brought whales, otters, and dolphins right into people's living rooms. Now, in this exciting picturebook biography, Dan Yaccarino introduces young readers to the man behind the snorkel.

From the first moment he got a glimpse of what lived under the ocean's waves, Cousteau was hooked. And so he set sail aboard the Calypso to see the sea. He and his team of scientists invented diving equipment and waterproof cameras. They made films and television shows and wrote books so they could share what they learned. The oceans were a vast unexplored world, and Cousteau became our guide. And when he saw that pollution was taking its toll on the seas, Cousteau became our guide in how to protect the oceans as well."

The Fantastic Undersea Life of Jacques Cousteau Details

Date : Published March 24th 2009 by Alfred A. Knopf Books for Young Readers

ISBN : 9780375855733

Author : Dan Yaccarino

Format : Hardcover 40 pages

Genre : Biography, Childrens, Picture Books, Nonfiction, Science

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From Reader Review The Fantastic Undersea Life of Jacques Cousteau for online ebook

William says

Title: The Fantastic Undersea Life of Jacques Cousteau

Author/Illustrator: Dan Yaccarino

Genre: Biography

Theme: Exploration, Perseverance, Passion

Opening Line/sentence: "Jacques Cousteau loved the sea. He spent his whole life exploring it"

Brief Book Summary: The book focuses on Jacques Cousteau's time spent filming the seas and traveling the world. It begins with his sick childhood, where he discovers his love of the sea, and moves quickly into his adult life. It includes a focus on some of the inventions he made, and is heavy on pictures, and whimsical illustrations of the sea.

Professional Recommendation/Review #1:

Dian Wiig

National Science Teachers Association

<http://www.clcd.com.ezaccess.librarie...>

This light and colorful book will delight young and old readers alike. The story of Jacques Cousteau is well researched and written for both lower and upper elementary students. Short paragraphs of clear text illustrated by double-page diagrams make the book appropriate for an introductory read aloud as well. The stylized pictures will not confuse younger readers; instead, they enhance the story and visual experience. Interspersed throughout the book are Cousteauisms--quotes that elaborate the story in the character's own words. It's easy to imagine an older mentor asking young readers what they think Cousteau meant by quotes like: "It fascinated me to do something that seemed impossible." I found this book enchanting. It illustrates the career of a scientist who probably never wore a lab coat. The timeline of facts and selected sources for further study at the end will help teachers extend this introductory experience for students. Because the Earth's oceans are such a rich area of research, reading about them is a great way to get young readers excited about exploration.

Professional Recommendation/Review #2:

kirkus

<https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-re...>

This second early biography of Cousteau in a year echoes Jennifer Berne's *Manfish: A Story of Jacques Cousteau* (2008), illustrated by Eric Puybaret, in offering visuals that are more fanciful than informational, but also complements it with a focus less on the early life of the explorer and eco-activist than on his later inventions and achievements. In full-bleed scenes that are often segmented and kaleidoscopic, Yaccarino sets his hook-nosed subject amid shoals of Impressionistic fish and other marine images, rendered in multiple layers of thinly applied, imaginatively colored paint. His customarily sharp, geometric lines take on the wavy translucence of undersea shapes with a little bit of help from the airbrush. Along with tracing Cousteau's undersea career from his first, life-changing, pair of goggles and the later aqualung to his minisub *Sea Flea*, the author pays tribute to his revolutionary film and TV work, and his later efforts to call attention to the effects of pollution. Cousteau's enduring fascination with the sea comes through clearly, and can't help sparking similar feelings in readers.

Response to Two Professional Reviews:

I agree with the reviews that the book was a marvelous read because of its focus on Cousteau's love for the sea and the groundbreaking work he did with it. The illustrations added to the enjoyable feeling that reader gets as they read about this sick boy who loved the sea and went on to dedicate his live the becoming a pioneer of the oceans.

Evaluation of Literacy Elements: The book is full of inspiration and imagianion. The adventures of Jacques Costeau, and the focus on his achievements is very inspiration in depicting a person who spent their whole live doing what they loved. The imagination is from the vibrant and fun illustrations that includes exaggerated body shapes and layered drawings.

Consideration of Instructional Application:

The story can be used for most elementary grades. It is simply written, but does a great job depicting the character, and includes motivational messages that are applicable. The illustrations make it fun to read aloud, and it can be a good introductory lesson to biographies.

The Reading Countess says

This was a new biography that my librarian allowed me to preview before she put it on the shelves. I'm glad she did, since I really liked it and read it aloud to my students. Most of them had never heard of this great man, and it saddened me. They were fascinated that he invented so many of the tools of underwater sea exploration that we now take for granted. I used this book to talk about life lessons applied to our own lives (we call this the SO-WHAT in our class).

Mrs. Ruigrok says

I learned a lot about Jacques Cousteau reading this book. About his early life, some of his discoveries and his quest to protect the ocean. Beautiful illustrations. A great book!

Jo Oehrlein says

A Jacques Cousteau quote on every page in a circle.

Some issues with contrast between the background and the text in places.

A nice bibliography of the ocean explorer that influenced so many people.

Viviane Elbee says

A short & sweet biography of Jacques Cousteau with lovely illustrations.

Donalyn says

A marvelous introduction to Jacques Cousteau's life and work-- in particular his many inventions that made sea exploration possible. Stunning illustrations.

Oak Lawn Public Library - Youth Services says

Title: The Fantastic Undersea Life of Jacques Cousteau

Author: Dan Yaccarino

Pages: 32

Lexile level: AD840L

Recommendations & Comments: Jacques Cousteau gained strength from the ocean. First by building up his muscles swimming, then by learning how many unexplored wonders were in the seas. As he worked to understand more about the ocean's great depths and life, he helped to invent several types of equipment we know today, including SCUBA. The book explores his inventions as well as how he used them both to educate the world about oceans and to work for their protection. The language is simple and easy to understand, accompanied by stylized drawings popping with color and quotes from Cousteau himself. It's a good introduction to subjects that may inspire further exploration.

For more information about Cousteau, consider Scuba Man by Carmen Bredeson or Who Was Jacques Cousteau?

5 out of 5 stars

Reviewed By: Mr. Tom

Lili Martin says

This book was amazing. It had awesome pics in it and it's really easy to read because it only takes one day. In such a short book it can tell you a lot about him. Here's a fact, Jacques got in a car accident but never gave up his under water life. He swam, explored the under world, and designed a new snorkeling suite. Wow is he good. That's good for someone who had a hard child life.

Mischenko says

The Fantastic Undersea Life of Jacques Cousteau by Dan Yaccarino is a children's book about a man who loved the sea and wanted to share all its loveliness with the world.

The book starts out in his childhood and progresses through his life of underwater adventures. The book also discusses his ideas and inventions for viewing and staying below water longer by use of an aqua lung.

"When one man, for whatever reason, has the opportunity to lead an extraordinary life, he has no right to keep it to himself."

Jacques-Yves Cousteau

The illustrations are beautiful, colorful, and keep children's interest. The story is simple and easy to follow. I particularly enjoyed the list of important events in his life and selected sources for further study.

5*****

Deb (Readerbuzz) Nance says

My Thoughts:

The text of this book wowed me. I could not stop reading to see what would happen to Cousteau. I liked its simplicity and its clearness. I liked how accessible the text was, even for the youngest of readers.

The illustrations were fun and cartoonish. I didn't like the colors the Yaccarino used for the water at first, every color except ocean blue, I think, but the colors grew on me, and I grew to love them. I was very surprised how much the children liked this book and how much they were interested in this man's life.

The book also included a table of Cousteau's life and sources for further study.

A Sample:

"The fish off the coast of Africa were friendly and curious and did not swim away. Cousteau was the first human being they had ever seen."

Children's Comments:

Alexis, 6, said, "I liked how he went down in the ocean."

Vanessa, 6, said, "I liked how he made a camera all by himself."

Jony, 6, said, "I liked how he saw the seahorse."

Melanie, 6, said, "I liked when he went down in the ocean."

Tabitha, 7, said, "I liked how he was on tv."

Joey, 6, said, "I liked how he got sick and had to go under the water."

Children's Ratings: 5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5

Laurie Dunlap says

Great book for children as both an introduction to the amazing oceanographer and to reading biographies!

Megan Reed says

Category/Genre: Picture Book/Narrative Nonfiction

Copyright Date: 2012

Estimate of age level of interest: Grades K - 3

Estimate of reading level: Grade 4

Brief description:

This full color picture book shares the biography of Jacques Cousteau. It begins with his love of the ocean as a boy and follows his life as he develops into a famous photographer and researcher.

Two characteristics of picture books/narrative nonfiction that appear in this book:

1. One characteristic of good picture books is the effective use of perspective in the illustration. This book uses perspective to reinforce the narrative. For example, to give a sense of the vastness of the ocean a diver is shown as a small creature peering in the face of a sprawling humpback whale.
2. Another characteristic of picture books that appear in this book is the use of space on the page. When the text is recalling the young life of Jacques Cousteau, the images seem to mirror his emerging sense of the world as they take up less of the page. In contrast, the illustrations that show him at the peak of his career as an ocean explorer, there is little open space as the ocean spills across a full two-page spread.

In what ways and how well does the book as a whole serve its intended audience?:

The marriage of colorful stylized imagery and simple, yet informative text reach out effectively to the intended audience. As the scale and perspective of images ebb and flow with the narration, select quotations and accurate facts from Cousteau's life lend authority to this nonfiction text for children in the lower grades of elementary school.

Awards: N/A

Published reviews from professional sources:

Booklist, 2009

Horn Book Magazine, 2009

School Library Journal, 2009

Science and Children (National Science Teachers' Association), 2010

Ann says

This is another great book with insights into the life of Jacques Cousteau! Previously I had read *Manfish: A Story of Jacques Cousteau* which I also thoroughly enjoyed! I think my sister put it best when she said that "Manfish" gives more information on Cousteau's younger life, and this book gives more information on his young adult/early adult years. Personally, I enjoyed the illustrations in "Manfish" a little more (a tad more realistic) but that is purely personal and I thought these illustrations fit the story really well.

Unfortunately, I didn't have time to read the extra back matter in this book, but it looked pretty informative for those wishing a deeper look into Cousteau's life.

Carly says

"The Fantastic Undersea Life of Jacques Cousteau" by Dan Yaccarino, published by Dragonfly Books;

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1. Awards: No awards.
 2. Appropriate grade level: K-3rd grade
 3. Summary: This book tells the story Jacques Cousteau's life. Jacques Cousteau spent his life discovering and filming undersea life.
 4. Review: I really enjoyed learning about Jacques Cousteau through reading this book. The style of illustration is very interesting to look at. The author does a great job at summarizing his life into an easy-to-understand format.
 5. 2-3 possible in-class uses:
 - Have students create a character chart of Jacques Cousteau
 - Have students research different organizations for ocean protection
-

Kathryn says

An enjoyable and informative glimpse into the life of Jacques Cousteau, particularly his inventions for exploring the fantastic world beneath the waves. I especially appreciated the quotes scattered throughout the book so we could hear things in Cousteau's own words.

If one is seeking picture book biographies of Cousteau, this one will inevitably be compared to *Manfish: A Story of Jacques Cousteau* and I think both are worthy tributes to the subject. The illustrations in "Fantastic Undersea" are a little more cartoonish than those in "Manfish" Also, "Manfish" focuses a little more on the filmmaking side of Cousteau's life and also his earliest days with filmmaking and inventing as a child--but "Fantastic" explains more about his later life. However, both will inspire an appreciation of the sea and of Cousteau's remarkable contributions to sensitive and awe-inspiring exploration of this vast and "fantastic" world that so few had ever seen to prior to his adventures and sharing them with the world through his filmmaking.
