



The Complete Adventures of Curious George

by Margret and H. A. Rey

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The Enduring Popularity of Curious George

Who isn't smitten by Curious George? Whether you're seventy, forty seven or four years old, the inquisitive little fellow who always seems to get into one scrape after another has, in all likelihood, captured your heart.

Perhaps his popularity lies in the predictability of his unpredictability. You know that the second the man with the yellow hat leaves the house, warning George to be careful, that George is going to get into trouble.

And when George starts getting into trouble, he only digs himself deeper. In *Curious George Rides a Bike*, he not only makes boats out of all the newspapers he was supposed to deliver, he also ruins his new bike and creates havoc at the circus when the ostrich swallows his bugle.

But, in the end, George untangles himself and saves the day: He rescues the baby bear that has escaped from the circus and is applauded for his heroics. Similarly, in *Curious George Goes to the Hospital*, his antics cause a terrible mess and disrupt the mayor's visit. But his mischievousness also causes sad little Betsy to dissolve into laughter and enjoy herself for the first time at the hospital.

Curious George puts a smile on your face, just like he did with Betsy. He appeals to the desire of both the young and the young-at-heart to break the rules just a little and, well, satisfy curiosity. As Margret Rey observed, "George can do what kids can't do. He can paint a room from the inside. He can hang from a kite in the sky. He can let the animals out of their pens on the farm. He can do all these naughty things that kids would like to do."

One cannot give enough credit to the Reys. H. A.'s delightful illustrations and Margret's clear and precise turn of phrase may appear effortless, but that's only after they spent a year laboring over each book to achieve that perfect look and tone. Instead of relying on

marketing surveys for book ideas, H.A. and Margret Rey looked to the child within themselves that they never seemed to have lost. "I know what I liked as a child," H.A. once said, "and I don't do any book that I, as a child, wouldn't have liked."

Still Curious After All These Years

"This is George. He lived in Africa. He was a good little monkey and always very curious." With these words, H. A. and Margret Rey introduced the world to Curious George in 1941 and secured a place for him in the hearts of millions. He's been the world's most popular monkey for sixty years, and he shows no signs of slowing down. Houghton Mifflin is pleased to be releasing a special 60th anniversary edition of *The Complete Adventures of Curious George*, as well as two new Curious George books—*Curious George Goes to a Costume Party* and *Curious George in the Big City* (both illustrated in the style of H. A. Rey by Martha Weston).

First, *The Complete Adventures of Curious George 60th Anniversary edition* celebrates George's birthday by pairing his best-loved adventures with several exciting new pieces about him. The inclusion of an introduction by critic Leonard Marcus, a retrospective note by publisher Anita Silvey, and a cataloged history of the Reys by curator Dee Jones makes this collection a fun and fascinating portrait of a classic character and his unique creators.

Curious George Goes to a Costume Party is a wacky Halloween adventure involving creepy noises, a trunkful of costumes, and one little monkey jumping on the bed. Only Curious George could turn the search for a perfect Halloween costume into so much fun!

Then, holiday shopping will never be the same after Curious George takes a crack at it in *Curious George in the Big City*. When George is accidentally separated from the man with the yellow hat, he winds up on a whirlwind tour of the big city (which looks suspiciously like New York).

Hans Augusto (1898–1977) and Margret (1906–1996) Rey were married in 1935. After many years of traveling, the Reys made Cambridge, Massachusetts, their home and community. Throughout their lives the Reys created many lively titles together, but it is their incorrigible little monkey, Curious George, who has become an American icon, selling millions of books and capturing the hearts of readers everywhere.

A Brief History of the World's Favorite Monkey

Curious George Flees the Nazis

H(ans) A(ugusto) Rey was born on September 16, 1898, in Hamburg, Germany. He grew up there near the world-famous Hagenbeck Zoo, and developed a lifelong love for both animals and drawing. Margarete Elisabeth Waldstein (who would be known to most of the world as Margret Rey) was also born in Hamburg on May 16, 1906. The two met briefly when Margret was a young girl, before she left Hamburg to study art. They were reunited in 1935 in Rio de Janeiro, where Hans was selling bathtubs as part of a family business and where Margret had gone to escape the political climate in Germany. Margret convinced Hans to leave the family business, and soon they were working together on a

variety of projects.

Hans and Margret were married in Brazil on August 16, 1935, but they moved to Paris after falling in love with the city during their European honeymoon. It was there that Hans published his first children's book, after a French publisher saw his newspaper cartoons of a giraffe and asked him to expand upon them. *Ragi et les 9 singes* (*Cecily G. and the Nine Monkeys* in English) was the result, and marked the debut of a mischievous monkey named Curious George.

After *Ragi et les 9 singes* was published, the Reys decided that Curious George deserved a book of his own, so they began work on a manuscript that featured the lovable and exceedingly curious little monkey. But the late 1930's and early 40s were a tumultuous time in Europe, and before the new manuscript could be published, the Reys—both German Jews—found themselves in a horrible situation. Hitler and his Nazi party were tearing through Europe, and they were poised to take control of the city. Knowing that they must escape before the Nazis took power, Hans cobbled together two bicycles out of spare parts. Early in the morning of June 14, 1940, the Reys set off on their bicycles. They brought very little with them on their pre-dawn flight . . . only warm coats, a bit of food, and five manuscripts, one of which was *Curious George*. The Nazis entered Paris just hours later, but the Reys were already on their way. They rode their makeshift bicycles for four long days until reaching the French-Spanish border, where they sold them for train fare to Lisbon. From there they made their way to Brazil and on to New York City, where they began a whole new life as children's book authors.

Curious George was published by Houghton Mifflin in 1941, and for sixty years he has been capturing the hearts and minds of readers throughout the world. All the Curious George books, including the seven original stories by Margret and Hans, have sold over 25 million copies. So popular that his original story has never been out of print, George has become one of the most beloved and most recognizable characters from children's literature. His adventures have been translated into many languages, including Japanese, French, Afrikaans, Portuguese, Swedish, German, Chinese, Danish, and Norwegian.

Curious George Takes Manhattan

And Sets His Sights on the Rest of the Nation

Curious George, the world's favorite mischief-maker, has never been one to shy away from adventure. Now, in celebration of his 60th anniversary, he's set to travel the country as part of a new exhibit, *Celebrating 60 Years of Curious George: The Art of Margret and H. A. Rey*. This exciting exhibit of original artwork and memorabilia— sponsored by Houghton Mifflin Publishers and drawn from the de Grummond Children's Literature Collection in Mississippi—will debut at the Children's Museum of Manhattan on October 3, 2001. In 2002, the exhibit will travel to Los Angeles and then make its way to several other cities.

Celebrating 60 Years of Curious George: The Art of Margret and H. A. Rey contains many fascinating and unique items from the creators of Curious George. The timeless appeal of H.A.'s familiar images takes center stage in the many sketches, preliminary drawings and full-color illustrations that are included. Visitors can view dummy pages and original artwork from all their favorite Curious George books, as well as from other beloved Rey

titles. Margret's many talents are evident in the variety of items she produced—Curious George knitted socks, a needlepoint portrait of her husband, a beautiful woodcut. The works included in the exhibit span the Reys' entire lifetime, from a painting done by H.A. at age eight to samples of the New Year's cards they designed every year.

Houghton Mifflin Publishers is pleased to offer children's literature fans this rare glimpse into the lives of Curious George's creators. When the de Grummond collection was founded at the University of Southern Mississippi in 1966, the Reys were among its earliest contributors. More materials were added over the years and in 1996, with the death of Margret, the remaining literary estate was given to the de Grummond Collection. It was in this collection that the manuscript for *Whiteblack the Penguin Sees the World* (2000) was found in October of 1999.

Celebrating 60 Years of Curious George: The Art of Margret and H. A. Rey will be at the Children's Museum of Manhattan from October 3, 2001, through February 28, 2002. The Children's Museum of Manhattan is located at 212 W. 83rd Street.

A Very Curious Q & A

Q) How popular is the character of Curious George?

A) George is known by countless children and adults all over the world. His books have sold over 25 million copies and have been translated into more than 14 languages, including Japanese, French, Afrikaans, Portuguese, Swedish, German, Chinese, Danish, and Norwegian.

Q) How is George celebrating his 60th birthday this year?

- A)** • An exciting and fun-filled fall will cap off a year of festivities for George and all his friends.
- Several new books will be available in September, including a 60th Anniversary edition of *The Complete Adventures of Curious George*.
 - A special exhibit of artwork and memorabilia from Margret and Hans Rey will begin traveling the country in October of 2001.
 - In October, Houghton Mifflin and Curious George will be sponsoring Sesame Street in select markets throughout the United States. This is the first time a major publisher will act as a sponsor for this popular show.
 - A consumer contest will kick off, in which a family of four will win a trip to Universal Studios Theme Park in Florida.

Q) What makes the 60th anniversary edition of *The Complete Adventures of Curious George* different from other editions?

A) This edition includes an introduction by critic Leonard Marcus, a special biographical essay on Margret and Hans Rey by Dee Jones, curator of the de Grummond Children's Literature Collection, and a retrospective note by former publisher Anita Silvey.

Q) Margret and Hans Rey were both born in Germany. How did they wind up in America?

A) After meeting briefly in Germany, Hans and Margret were reunited while working in Rio de Janeiro. They were married in 1935 and moved to Paris soon after. Unfortunately, the political climate in Europe was changing, and by the spring of 1940, Hitler was poised to take over Paris. Hans and Margret fled on homemade bicycles with little more than the clothes on their backs and a handful of manuscripts (one of which starred an inquisitive little monkey named Curious George) hours before German troops marched on the city. After a brief stay in Brazil, they found their way to New York City and eventually settled in Cambridge, Mass.

Q) Did the Reys like animals?

A) Both Hans and Margret were very fond of animals, and their first stop whenever they visited a new city was the zoo. They owned a series of cocker spaniels, which Hans sometimes featured in his illustrations. And Hans was well known around his summer home for rescuing injured animals and nursing them back to health. One of these animals—an orphaned chipmunk named Coffee, whom Hans had hand-fed with an eyedropper and returned to the wild—came back each summer to visit his human friends.

Q) How did the Reys work together to create their wonderful books?

A) Hans liked to say that the couple had “our books, her books, and my books,” and the process behind each of these types was different. For the books that they created together, which include the original seven Curious George stories and *Whiteblack the Penguin Sees the World*, Hans was generally in charge of the ideas and the illustrations, while Margret handled the plot and the writing. However, the lines of responsibility were often blurred on these books, and their collaborative process was more complex than these simple divisions would suggest. In addition, Hans produced several astronomy books, which did not involve Margret, and Margret wrote several books on her own, which Hans illustrated (*Pretzel*, *Spotty*).

Q) Where did Hans and Margret get their ideas?

A) Both Hans and Margret believed that ideas could come from anywhere at any time . . . while soaking in the tub, walking through the woods, reading a book, or dining with friends. A news clipping about two mice that were sent into space to study the effects of weightlessness led to George’s own space flight in *Curious George Gets a Medal*. Earlier in the same book, George’s bubbly cleaning methods were inspired by a story told to the Reys by a friend. Often, Hans would decide that he would like to see George do something particular, like visit a museum or fly through the air, and this would spark Margret’s imagination.

Q) Did Margret and Hans limit themselves to children’s books, or did their creativity find other outlets?

A) Margret and Hans founded the first advertising agency in Rio de Janeiro, which allowed Hans to produce a variety of advertising art and Margret to produce ad copy. Throughout his life, Hans also drew maps and posters, illustrated cookbooks, and designed holiday cards for businesses and for his own use. Margret had received formal art training at the Bauhaus and thus

was active in both visual and literary arts. In addition to her writing, she was interested in photography, pottery, and needlepoint.

Q) Why did Hans have to redraw all the pictures for *Curious George*?

A) Originally, Hans had created watercolor illustrations for this, his first American book. However, in order to keep printing costs down, many American publishers of this era required their illustrators to create pre-separated artwork for their books. This meant that the artist would create four different drawings for each illustration—one drawing for each of the colors of ink that would be applied to the paper. Printer's plates were created from these separations and, if all went well, the colors aligned perfectly on the printed page. In keeping with this practice, Hans was asked to create separations for *Curious George* and his original watercolors were tucked away. As the years passed and publishing methods became more sophisticated, the cost of reproducing original artwork fell. In 1998, fifty-seven years after it was originally published, Houghton Mifflin produced a collector's edition of *The Original Curious George* that was printed from Hans' original watercolors.

Q) How did *Curious George Goes to the Hospital* come about?

A) The Reys created this book at the request of officials at Boston Children's Hospital, who wanted a book to prepare children for a hospital stay. The book was difficult to write but brought a great deal of satisfaction to the Reys since so many parents wrote to tell them how effective it was in reducing their child's trauma.

Q) Why didn't Margret's name appear on all the early *Curious George* books?

A) As Margret tells it, "When we first came to America our publisher suggested we use my husband's name because the children's book field was so dominated by women. They thought it would sell better. After a time I thought, 'Why the devil did I do that?' so since then my name has appeared also."

Q) How large a role did George play in the Reys' daily lives?

A) George was, as Margret liked to say, "Not an obsession with me at all. But he is the family breadwinner; he has put food on my table for many, many years." As such, he was afforded a place of honor in their home, and there were various drawings, toys, trinkets, and the like depicting George. From time to time, too, the Reys would grant interviews about their most famous creation, or meet with their young fans.

Q) Isn't there an interesting story behind the 2000 publication of *Whiteblack the Penguin Sees the World*?

A) Anita Silvey, who at the time was the publisher for Houghton Mifflin children's books, discovered the unpublished manuscript at an exhibition of the Reys' papers presented by the de Grummond Collection at the University of Southern Mississippi. As Anita tells the story, "I noticed a case enclosing an intriguing watercolor drawing labeled 'Unpublished work of H. A. Rey.' Within a few minutes, Dee [Jones, curator of the de Grummond Collection] produced the original sketches for a book . . . suddenly I realized that the Reys had clearly brought a fifth book from Paris." Houghton Mifflin published this "lost" manuscript amidst much excitement and acclaim.

Author Endorsements

Still Curious After All These Years

"For me, before there was Captain Kangaroo and before there was Miss Margaret's 'Magic Mirror' (that seemed to see everyone at home except me—but I'm not bitter), there was the fabulous curious monkey and the man in the big yellow hat. They took me places and allowed me to have adventures with them. I will always be indebted to Curious George."
—Whoopi Goldberg, Actress and Comedienne

"Best wishes for a happy birthday and many, many more to come."
—George H. W. Bush, Former president of the United States

"Curious George is an ageless phenomenon and a cherished part of family libraries in homes in every part of the country. George reflects the energy, innocence, and enthusiasm of the nation's youth at their best. He appeals to the inner child in each of us, and I always look forward to reading about him with my own grandchildren today.

I adopted the famous phrase 'Where is George?' and used it in my address to the Democratic National Convention in 1988 to ask 'where is George' Bush during the years when he was vice president and so many controversial policies were adopted by the administration of President Ronald Reagan. But Vice President Bush had the last laugh—he was elected president in November 1988, and a friend sent me a photograph of a local billboard making the point.

Congratulations on turning sixty to an enduring American Hero—Curious George!"
—Edward M. Kennedy, Massachusetts senator

"In my youth I remember watching Curious George on Captain Kangaroo. I always wished I had my very own mischievous monkey. I really liked George because he always got in trouble, and I thought the man in the yellow hat was pretty cool too. In fact, I have become a mischievous, hat-wearing adult . . . an attribute I credit directly to Curious George."
—William Joyce, Author and Illustrator