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## Jean Laffite and the Big Ol' Whale

By Fox, Frank G.; Fox, F. G.

Farrar Straus & Giroux, Gordonsville, Virginia, U.S.A., 2003. Hard Cover. Book Condition: New. Dust Jacket Condition: New. Color Illustrations (illustrator). First Edition. Several copies available. From Booklist Gr. 2-3, younger for reading aloud. The author of two adult books about New Orleans addresses children in this original tall tale about the Big Easy's most famous legendary citizen. Found (like Moses) in a basket on the river--the Mississippi, in this case--Jean quickly weans himself on chicory-laced coffee, and by the age of seven has performed such notable deeds as swimming the river's entire length. Here, he faces his biggest challenge--literally. It seems the Mississippi has been blocked by a huge stray whale. How to unstick this latter-day leviathan? A pinch of cayenne down the blowhole does the trick. The immense, ivory-colored whale towers over houses and local residents in Cook's swirling illustrations, but Jean is portrayed as a skinny, apple-cheeked Every Lad. As the relationship between hero and monster is never adversarial, this serves as a thought-provoking alternative to violent traditional tales, or such modern exemplars as Catherine Wright's *Steamboat Annie* and the *Thousand-Pound Catfish* (2001). John Peters Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved Review "Lively paintings match the tone..."



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