

# JAMES C. CHRISTENSEN



There are only a few people lucky enough to create a world of their own and make you wish you could live in it, and James C. Christensen is one of them. Inspired by the world's myths, fables, fantasies, and tales of imagination, he fills his prints with wonderful people, places, and things as real as your adult dreams and as beloved as your fondest childhood memories.

He's created an island of Shakespearean characters, an entire undersea world, and a village of Mother Goose characters. But when he isn't giving life to others' worlds, he paints a place of his own. The result is a unique kinetic kingdom where recognizable human emotions are often manifested as fish or fowl, utilizing the viewer's own imagination as no other artist does.

Christensen was born in 1942 and raised just after the heyday of Hollywood. He attended the University of California at Los Angeles before moving to Utah and finishing his formal education at Brigham Young University.

Since then Christensen has had one-man shows in the West and the Northeast, and his work is prized in collections all over America and Europe. He was commissioned by both Time/Life books and *Omni* to create illustrations for their publications. He was also included in the prestigious *New York Society of Illustrators Annual* and Japan's *Outstanding American Illustrators* book.



## PELICAN KING

Did you ever have one of those days when it felt like you had a pelican on your head? It's par for the course in James C. Christensen's work, where the mystery of human emotion can be manifested as fish and/or fowl.

This once-mighty ruler, who may have fallen on hard times in the lake of life, evokes memories of the artist's most popular prints and supplies much meat for both the mind and eye. Filled with the sumptuous detail Christensen is renowned for, you could say this lovable royal is a real bird-brain.

## THE BURDEN OF THE RESPONSIBLE MAN

Did you ever feel you had the weight of the world on your shoulders – with a few asteroids and satellites tossed in for good measure? Popular fantasy artist James C. Christensen knows exactly how you feel and expresses it with his wonderful wit and whimsy in *The Burden of the Responsible Man*.

As Christensen tells us, "At the time I painted *The Burden of the Responsible Man*, I felt overwhelmed by how much everybody expected from me. I felt as if life were taking everything I had and not giving much back, just dangling a carrot to keep me going. Even this man's pet is a hedgehog that needs to be fed and taken for walks, but is too prickly to offer warm 'cuddlies' in return.

But the man's a responsible person, and so he keeps plodding along.

"That's the point. I just kept plodding, on too, and things got better. I discovered that my burdens were really blessings and challenges necessary for my growth. In the meanwhile, painting this helped me deal with my feelings."



## OLDE WORLD SANTA

When an artist researches a subject, it is usually in the interests of authenticity. But sometimes the artist makes a surprising discovery, and the research has a personal reward in addition to the artistic one. Such was the case for James C. Christensen, who delved into the origins of our Christmas traditions before creating this Christmas painting. "I knew that an American political cartoonist, Thomas Nast, had drawn the Santa with which we're familiar sometime during the 1880's. But further study informed me that our Santa is not merely a single tradition transplanted from Europe. The name 'Santa Claus' derives from Sinter Klaas, the Dutch name of St. Nicholas, the patron saint of children. Dutch children received gifts from Sinter Klaas on Christmas. Now in Germany, it was the Christ Child, or Christkindel, who brought gifts on his birthday. The children of German settlers in New York borrowed the figure of Father Christmas, or Sinter Klaas, but they called him Kris Kringle after Christkindel. There are many traditions that have been added to our Santa. He is a medley of joyful, giving traditions, the way our melting-pot society is a blend of our many cultures. So this painting is a fantasy, personal interpretation of that 'jolly old elf' who embodies not only the spirit of Christmas, but the best of America."

## THE MAN WHO MINDS THE MOON

Mankind's fascination with the moon encompasses thousands of years, from the dawn of civilization to the recent exploration of the lunar surface. Intrigued by a passage in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, James C. Christensen set out to capture the mythological essence of man's relationship with the moon. In his quest, the artist traveled back in time across continents. *The Man Who Minds the Moon* incorporates symbolism from astrology, ancient Babylonia, the Orient, Greece, the natural world, Shakespeare and medieval Europe. Although in some traditions the moon has a feminine aspect, Christensen has chosen those characteristics that relate to the "man on the moon," or, as he perceives it, *The Man Who Minds the Moon*. He likens this old caretaker or guardian of the moon to an aged Victorian gardener, who aimlessly shuffles around the flowerbeds, yet whose garden is always immaculately kept and planted. There are 16 moon-related symbols in *The Man Who Minds the Moon*. Can you find them? Answers: Astrology: sign of Cancer; Babylonia: blue beard of the moon god Sin; Orient: hare, waxing moon; Ancient Greece: Latin phrase from the Aeneid, cow, owl; Natural World: moon fish, moonstone, moon shells, ocean; Shakespeare: Moonshine's dog, lantern, thornbush; Medieval Europe: hourglass, staff.



## THE CANDLEMAN

If you wander through the cobblestone streets at night, you can feel secure in the circle of light cast by *The Candleman*. Here, the children, wide-eyed and wondering, will be safe though it's late and they're far from home. The trusty *Candleman* will escort them through the still silence of snow-covered streets by the light of his torch and his hat abrim with burning candles. In James C. Christensen's marvelous world "just a little to the left of reality," *The Candleman*, like a friendly crossing guard you may remember from your school days, keeps a loving and watchful eye on everyone in his care.

## VOYAGE OF THE BASSET

From the earliest dawn of the human race, myth and legend have added brilliant color to the rich tapestry of civilization. In each era, it falls to the artist to create a doorway from the inner universe of the imagination to the literal world of the senses. In *Voyage of the Basset*, James C. Christensen has conjured a magical cast of characters from many centuries of myth, legend and folklore – and he has discovered a few new creatures along the pathways of his

own imagination. The *Basset's* voyage chronicles the journey of one Algernon Aisling, professor of mythology. Professor Aisling, aided by a group of hard-working but meddlesome gremlins, sets sail in the summer of 1832, just a few months after Charles Darwin had set sail on H.M.S. Beagle. The wise, kindly, but rather eccentric Professor Aisling decided that he, too, would go on a voyage. The prospectus of the journey was a bit vague, because Aisling, rather than setting out to find and catalog various mythological species, merely opened himself to the wonders of the world around him. The ship's motto, *credo vides* – by believing, one sees – is both the creed of the voyage and the reason for its success. Fair winds and serendipity were their guides, and the whole thing turned out to be a lot of fun. Imagine an ogre playing (and cheating at) cards with the minotaur. Imagine Medusa being towed in a dingy, and winged frogs frolicking and the Sphinx working out a new riddle. Here is a passenger list. Do you know who's who? Captain: Algernon Aisling, professor of mythology; Crew Members: Dwarves; Crew Members and Frequent Nuisances: Gremlins; Mythological Species: Anthrophogaphus, Cockatrice, Dragon, Dryad, Faeries, Fire Salamander, Gryphon, Harpies, Hydra, Manticore, Medusa, Merhorses, Mermaids, Minotaur, Ogre (Giant), Roc (Hatching), Satyr (Pan), Sea Serpent, Sphinx, Unicorn, Wyvern, Yeti. New Species: Cowl, Pygmy Elephant, Thing-in-the-box, Winged Frogs.



# 564 PIECE SILHOUETTE JIGSAW PUZZLE



1. Baa, Baa, Black Sheep 2. Bat, Bat, Come Under My Hat 3. Cackle, Cackle, Madam Goose! 4. Cock A Doodle Doo! 5. Crow on the Fence 6. Dickery, Dickery, Dare 7. Ding, Dong, Bell 8. Georgie Porgie 9. Goosey, Goosey Gander 10. Hark, Hark, the Dogs Do Bark 11. Hickory, Dickory, Dock 12. Hot Cross Buns 13. Humpty Dumpty 14. I Had a Little Nut Tree 15. I Love Little Pussy 16. Jack Be Nimble 17. Jack Sprat 18. Lion and the Unicorn 19. Little Jack Horner 20. Little Miss Muffet 21. Little Nancy Etticoat 22. Little Tommy Tucker 23. Mary Had a Little Lamb 24. Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary 25. Old King Cole 26. Old Mother Goose 27. Old Mother Hubbard 28. One, Two, Three, Four, Five 29. Peter, Peter, Pumpkin Eater 30. Pussy Cat, Pussy Cat, Where Have You Been? 31. Ring-A-Ring O' Roses 32. Ride a Cock-Horse 33. Rock a Bye Baby 34. See-Saw, Margery Daw 35. Simple Simon 36. The Queen of Hearts 37. There Was a Crooked Man 38. There Was an Old Woman 39. This Little Pig 40. Tom, Tom, the Piper's Son 41. Tweedle-Dum and Tweedle-Dee 42. Two Little Dicky Birds 43. Wee Willie Winkie 44. Four and Twenty Blackbirds

## RHYMES & REASONS

Some of the rhymes in this collection can be dated back several centuries, and the most recent are about 100 years old. There is nothing the least bit trendy about nursery rhymes. They endure because generations of children have chanted them while skipping rope, sung them while splashing in bathtubs, and recited them authoritatively from books held upside down. Decade after decade, these discerning critics have determined which sing-songy nonsense is forgettable verse and which is worthy of the name "Mother Goose." These ditties are rich in history. Old King Cole may have been a merry old soul, as you know – but were you aware he was an actual British monarch of the 3rd century? Mary, Mary was quite contrary and was possibly Mary, Queen of the Scots. Little Jack Horner may have been the 16th century Thomas Horner, who plucked something more tempting than a plum from a pie. Other rhymes are riddles, counting-out exercises, accompaniment to sleight-of-hand tricks, and lullabies.