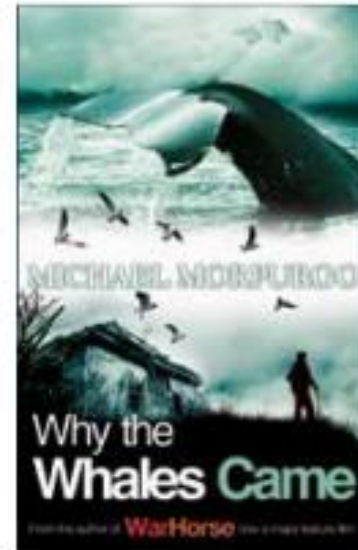


# michael morpurgo



## Why the Whales Came

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### Why the Whales Came – The Birdman

*"The little I saw of the Birdman was enough to convince me that all the stories we had heard about him must be true. He was more like an owl, a fitting creature of the dark, the dawn and the dusk. He would be seen outside only rarely in the daylight, perhaps out in his rowing boat around the island or sitting high on his cart; and even in the hottest summers he would always wear a black cape over his shoulders and a pointed black sou'wester on his head. From a distance you could hear him talking loudly to himself in a strange unearthly monotone. Maybe it was not to himself that he talked but to the kittiwake that sat always on his shoulder or to the black jack donkey that pulled his cart wherever he went, or maybe it was to the great woolly dog with the greying woollen muzzle that loped along beside him. The Birdman went everywhere barefoot, even in winter, a stooped black figure that lurched as he walked, one step always shorter than the other. And wherever he went he would be surrounded by a flock of seagulls that circled and floated above him, tirelessly vigilant, almost as if they were protecting him. He rarely spoke to anyone, indeed he scarcely looked at anyone."*

*(Why the Whales Came, Chapter 3, Page 40)*