

### The Sea Monkeys

More than anything else, Suzie wanted a little puppy to cuddle, play with and take on long walks. In short, she wanted a pet, but the problem was her mom.

"Why can't I have a dog?"

"Suzie, you know we've been through this a thousand times. I have allergies to animals, and that means no pets."

Suzie knew it was true. Not only did her mom have severe allergies to animals, she was also highly allergic to practically everything that existed, including her daughter when she asked this question a million times a day.

"What about your baby brother, isn't he more fun than some silly dog?" Her mom offered in consolation.

Suzie did not agree. To her, her infant brother was a disgusting smelly little thing that did nothing but cry all day long. Before he was born, she'd had hopes of dressing him up in funny little costumes and playing with him all day, but he turned out to be no fun at all. He couldn't even crawl!

"Why can't I at least have a fish?" She demanded. "You aren't allergic to fish, are you?"

"No, I'm not. There's so much trouble, though. You have to change the water every so often and clean the tank."

By this time Suzie had practically given up hope and plopped down on her bed in despair. Gloomily, she picked up a Spider-Man comic on her bedside table. Her mom didn't approve of her comic books but she didn't care. She liked them much more than My Little Pony or Strawberry Shortcake, which the other girls in her class liked. She especially liked them because her mother didn't, and felt she was getting revenge for not being able to get a pet.

What caught her eye, however, was an advertisement in the back of the book for something called 'sea monkeys'. The caption read: "Enter the wonderful world of amazing live sea monkeys. Own a bowlful of happiness — instant pets!" In the picture was a smiling family of sea monkeys who looked more human than monkey but with funny heads and tails. The ad promised that they were "eager to please" and could be trained for tricks. The best part though was that they only cost \$5. Suzie had that much left from her last birthday. She decided to send off for them without telling her mom.

A few weeks later the parcel arrived. Inside, there was a small plastic aquarium and two little paper packets, one labeled 'eggs' and the other 'food'. She filled the tank with water, sprinkled the eggs over the top and waited. Nothing happened. She put them in the back of her closet behind her clothes and tried not to think of them for the rest of the day.

The next day she pulled them out and saw to her surprise tiny little things swimming around, like specks of dust. They looked nothing like the playful sea monkeys in the ad.

Over the weeks, they grew a bit more. Once she decided to put them on the windowsill in the sunlight to get a better look at them. Her disappointment was terrible when she finally understood they were just tiny worm-like creatures. At that moment, her mom walked into the room.

"What is that?" She exclaimed in surprise, then broke into a smile. "Sea monkeys! I had these when I was your age. I didn't even know they still sold them."

"But Mom, they don't look like monkeys at all!" Suzie said in dismay.

"No, silly, they aren't real monkeys, they're a kind of specially modified shrimp, but they're still fun and not any trouble at all to keep", her mom replied.

Susan soon got over her initial disappointment and even grew to love her new pets, which were certainly more fun than having no pets at all and especially more entertaining than her baby brother!

Sea monkeys are...

1. ...a tiny variety of monkeys that live underwater.
2. ...plastic toys that are made in the shape of little monkeys.
3. ...genetically modified shrimp that can be kept as pets.
4. ...characters from a video-game where half-human monkeys do tricks.