



The Great Garage Sale

Marilyn Helmer
illustrated by Mike Deas

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About the Book

DJ is back in action! With his wild imagination and enthusiasm, DJ, the hero of *Adventures at Camp Lots-o-Fun*, deals with one disaster after another—Super Stackers, “weeding” his mom’s garden, facing Tiger the Terrible and a misspelled sign. But when DJ mistakenly sells the wrong box of jewelry to his new friend Sam at his Grandma’s garage sale, those disasters seem minor. Riding his beloved skateboard, Speedwell, DJ sets out to search for Sam, which is a challenge in itself. When he finally finds Sam, DJ is not prepared for the enormous sacrifice he will have to make to get the jewelry box back.

About the Author

Marilyn Helmer was born in St. John’s, Newfoundland, grew up in Montreal, and now lives with her husband near Belwood, Ontario. She is the author of many children’s books including picture books, early readers, novels, riddle books and retold tales. *The Great Garage Sale* is Marilyn’s fifth book with Orca and her fourth in the Orca Echoes series. For more information, please visit www.marilynhelmer.com.

About the Writing

Marilyn loves garage sales and remembers going “garage saling” with her young children many a Saturday morning. Her family held a number of garage sales themselves over the years. With a few memorable incidents in mind, Marilyn decided that a garage sale filled with more disasters than bargains would be the perfect setting for fun-loving and free-spirited DJ. Add to that a couple of problem-os and leave it to DJ to sort everything out in the end.

Teaching Ideas—Curriculum Connections*Prereading Ideas*

1. What would you do if you made a mistake and someone else was being blamed for it? Would you own up to the mistake, even if you knew it could get you in trouble?
2. Have you ever had a really bad day when everything seemed to go wrong? What happened that day? Did some of the things get straightened out in the end?
3. Have you ever been to a garage sale? Did you buy anything? Have you and your family ever had a garage sale? Do you think a garage sale is a good place to find bargains?
4. Have you ever, by mistake, given away or lost something important that belonged to some else? How did you resolve the situation?
5. Let's say a friend asks you if you like something they are wearing, for example a new T-shirt or a new pair of shoes. If you do not like it, will you be honest and tell them your true feelings? Can you think of a way to give a negative opinion kindly?

Classroom Discussion Questions

1. There is a saying "First impressions count." Do you agree with that statement? If you met someone for the first time and didn't like them, would you give that person a second chance?
2. Let's say a friend asks you to do a favor for them that you really don't want to do. Would you make up an excuse and tell your friend you can't do it? Or would you do the favor because that person is your friend?
3. Do you think it was fair of Samantha to force DJ to give up his skateboard in order to get Ms. Rowbottom's jewelry box back?
4. Although DJ is devastated at the thought of giving up his skateboard, he does because "a promise is a promise" (ch. 10). What does that tell you about DJ's character?
5. What are some of the ways you could make a person who has just moved into your neighborhood or is new at your school feel welcome?

Suggested Activities

- Everyone loves photos. In chapter 2, the illustrator Mike Deas shows a photo of DJ's friends hanging on the wall. Bring in a photo or two of your friends or family and tell the class about the people in the photo. Or bring in a photo from a holiday or event and tell the class a story about it.
- Create a Question and Answer sequence for Samantha. For example, how did she feel about moving to a new home and leaving her friends behind? Have her describe her old house or tell a funny story about her cat, Hairball.
- Pretend you are having a garage sale. Make a sign advertising the sale so people will want to come. Have each student make a list of 8 to 10 things they could sell at the garage sale and decide on a price for each one. In groups, have the students

decide if the prices are realistic. Are they willing to bargain and reduce their prices? If so, by how much?

- Think of another incident that could have happened at DJ's grandma's garage sale and write about it. For example, what if DJ saw a kid walking off with something he/she hadn't paid for? What would he have done?
- DJ has trouble weeding his mom's garden because he can't tell a flower from a weed. Make a booklet of some common garden flowers and common weeds with illustrations.
- Have small groups of students role-play the scene in chapter 8 when Ms. Rowbottom discovers that DJ has sold the wrong box of jewelry.

Other Titles of Interest

Backyard Bandit Mystery by Beverly Lewis (The Cul-de-Sac Kids #15)

Big Nate on a Roll by Lincoln Peirce

The Millionaire Kids Club—Garage Sale Riches by Susan Beacham and Lynnette Khalfani-Cox

Yard Sale by James Stevenson

Yard Sale by Mitra Modarressi

Other Books by the Author from Orca Book Publishers

Adventures at Camp Lots-o-Fun (Orca Echoes)

The Fossil Hunters (Orca Echoes)

Sharing Snowy (Orca Echoes)

Reviews

Adventures at Camp Lots-o-Fun

“Marilyn Helmer has created a rollicking tale. DJ's antics will carry readers along swiftly with lots of chuckles throughout. The pictures by Mike Deas are action-packed and just a bit goofy.”

—*Canadian Children's Book News*

The Fossil Hunters

“*The Fossil Hunters* is a story about friendship, and the problems that sometimes happen when a little jealousy gets tossed in. Part of the Orca Echoes series, this is a lovely book for young readers from Grade 1 up!”

—*CM Magazine*

Sharing Snowy

“*Sharing Snowy* is a wonderful story written in small easy to read chapters. Any child beginning to read chapter books would feel very confident reading this story.”

—*CM Magazine*