



Something's Fishy

Jeff Szpirglas and Danielle Saint-Onge
illustrated by Dave Whamond

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AR Quiz # 143865

About the Book

Jamie *loves* sharks. He reads about them. He talks about them. Sometimes he even pretends to be a shark. Too bad no one else wants to join his Shark Club. His peers and parents are quickly growing tired of his current obsession. When Jamie's teacher, Mr. Claxton, brings in a new class pet, Jamie is put in charge. But Jamie has an accident while feeding it, and everyone becomes upset with him. He needs to find a way to make things right. In the end, he comes up with a solution that pleases both his teacher and classmates, a solution that also gives Jamie an opportunity to share his newest obsession—lizards.

About the Author

Jeff Szpirglas and Danielle Saint-Onge are married and live in Toronto with their two favourite cats, Pekoe and Penelope. They are both teachers who enjoy reading and writing with their students and love making them laugh! Jeff has written several books, including *Gross Universe* and *You Just Can't Help It!* He likes to play soccer, listen to heavy-metal music and cuddle Penelope when she is sleepy. Danielle enjoys reading, dancing, swimming and cooking. Her newest project is trying to convince Jeff to want a dog! She will name him Otis after one of Jeff's favorite singers, Otis Redding.

About the Writing of the Book

Jeff and Danielle spend a lot of time in their car visiting their families around Ontario. One of the ways they occupy their time is to tell each other stories. Sometimes the stories are funny, sometimes they are scary. *Something's Fisby* was created during a drive to Hamilton while going to visit Jeff's parents.

Both Jeff and Danielle are teachers, and their experiences have provided them with countless classroom tales and adventures. They wanted to write a funny book that would appeal to a young audience of learners. Jeff and Danielle love reading and writing and wish to encourage students everywhere to jump into a book!

Teaching Ideas—Curriculum Connections

Prereading Ideas

- What do you think the expression “Something’s fishy” means? Try using it in a sentence.
- Take a look at the cover and make some predictions. What do you think is going to happen in the story?
- What do you think the problem is going to be in the story? How do you think the main character will solve this problem?

Classroom Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever made a mistake that made people upset? What did you do to fix the problem?
2. Have you ever wanted something a lot? What was it? Why did you want it? Did you get it in the end? If so, how did you convince people?
3. When you have a problem, who do you talk with to help solve it?
4. In the story, Jamie spends a lot of time by himself. He doesn’t have a lot of friends. How would you help Jamie make friends in the classroom?

Suggested Activities

Art

- The pictures are a very important part of this story. Make a list of all of the scenes that have pictures with them. Why do you think that the publisher decided on pictures for these pages? What makes them special? Draw your own pictures that correspond to what you think are the most important parts of the story.
- Design your own class mascot. What would it be? What would it look like? How would you make it? From papier maché? Paint? Clay? This mascot will represent the spirit and culture of your classroom. What should the class name it?

Language

- Do you agree with how Jamie solved the problem in the story? Write Jamie a letter to share with him your opinion. How would you have handled his situation?
- Write a letter to authors Jeff Szpirglas and Danielle Saint-Onge. Did you like the story? Do you have a funny or crazy story about something that happened to you at school that you would like to share?
- *Something's Fishy* describes the character of Jamie in a lot of detail. Try writing and drawing a character sketch of Jamie. What would his room at home be like? What would his backpack look like? What would be in his backpack?
- Try writing from the point of view of the teacher, Mr. Claxton. How did he really feel about Jamie swallowing the fish?
- Eva gives Jamie a bit of a hard time at school. What do you think she really thinks about Jamie? Try writing from the perspective of Eva.

Science

- Jamie loves sharks and at the end of the story he starts to love geckos too. Conduct a class research project on sharks. You could explore basic facts about them, or learn about conservation efforts to protect them. Are sharks really as scary as we think they are?
- Check out the following link: www.sharkwater.com

Social Studies

- Different cultural and religious groups around the world value and hold sacred different animals. Pick a culture and research as a class what animal that culture considers special or sacred.

Math

- Jamie loves doing greater-than or less-than math problems. He likes to draw shark jaws to show the greater number. Try making your own sharks during art and use them for comparing numbers on the hundreds chart.

Making Connections

- Have you ever wanted a pet? If you could have any pet, what would it be and why?
- Jamie's character loves sharks. This is one of his hobbies. He learns all about them. Do you have a hobby that makes you feel happy and excited?
- In the story, the class has a discussion about what kind of pet they would like. As a class, have a discussion as to what would be the best pet for your class.

Predictions

- ◆ What do you think the class will name the gecko?
- ◆ How do you think the gecko will be treated in the class?
- ◆ What problems could happen with the gecko?

Other Titles and Websites of Interest

Fear This Book by Jeff Szpirglas

My Think-A-Ma-Jink by Dave Whamond

They Did What? by Jeff Szpirglas

You Just Can't Help It! by Jeff Szpirglas

<http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/kids/animals/>

www.gale.cengage.com/InfoBits

<http://teachkidsnews.com>

Reviews

“A fun school story that should appeal primarily to boys who are ready to start tackling chapter books...Has enough of an ick-factor, and humour to engage any reader. The illustrations by Dave Whamond add a great deal of detail to this lighthearted story, and kids should be quite engaged by both them and the antics in the plot.”

—*Resource Links*

“An energetic short novel...This book was refreshing to read and will surely entertain and surprise young readers. The content is written well, and children will easily be able to relate to their own classrooms and classroom experiences. The illustrations were interesting to look at and offered excellent visuals to add to the Jamie character. The author's experience as a teacher is evident and realistic. The portrayal of the Jamie character is excellent. *Something's Fishy* will be an excellent addition to a school or classroom library. Highly Recommended.”

—*CM Magazine*

“Uses humor to great effect, and the character dynamics are striking...Whamond's [illustrations] lean towards a cleaner comic style.”

—*The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*