

## A Fish Called Bad Eyes

**Larry Golicz**

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*A Fish Called Bad Eyes is an entertaining story for young readers that imparts important ocean knowledge.*

In Larry Golicz's imaginative tale *A Fish Called Bad Eyes*, a bespectacled fish reveals his curiosity and caution as he befriends both humans and ocean dwellers beneath the water's surface. Ultimately, he brings together a community of Pacific Coast reef inhabitants to help save their home.

For many of the fish swimming in the Pacific reefs, a boat on the water's surface signals "terror in the sky." But when a young girl named Marsha loses her glasses over the side of one of these "floating islands," they serendipitously land on the face of a speedy little "Manini" fish known as "Bad Eyes." In a gesture of friendship, Marsha leaves her new finned acquaintance this miraculous gift.

Events and characters are introduced chapter by chapter; the effect is accumulative. From an algae-encrusted sea turtle looking for a new nesting area to an insecure eel in hiding to the Grumpy Grouper hoping to make a meal of Bad Eyes, the detailed characters and action draw interest.

Bad Eyes's inquisitive charm allows for these introductions, while his questioning dialogue weaves in an educational component that relays information about creature characteristics, habits, and the ocean's decline. Human and animal communications play out as a more telepathic means of connection. A balance of knowledge and entertainment makes this a magical and creative foray into the ocean realm of a myopic fish. The book's language is overly formal for the quirky dynamic, though.

Beyond the story's environmental focus, the book explores central themes of friendship and teamwork, and it weaves in life lessons. Bad Eyes, a small fish in a grand ocean, proves his worth, while human and marine species that are traditionally at odds come together for a common cause. Even a big-eyed, noodle-legged cephalopod brings a teachable moment, commenting that "beauty comes from what I can do, not how I look." Character interactions are brought full circle with Marsha's return in the final chapter, and the story ends on a positive note, teasing more adventures with Bad Eyes and Marsha to come.

A sprinkling of black-and-white illustrations offer momentary breaks from the text. The star attraction, with his round-framed glasses and plumped lips, is a comical sight, though the colorful beauty of the oceanscape is not captured in this medium.

*A Fish Called Bad Eyes* is an entertaining story for young readers that imparts ocean knowledge and showcases preservation tactics and concerns.

CAROL DAVALA (August 21, 2018)

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